

5.4 Affordability

Universal Access to and affordability of ICTS are inextricably linked. Until ICTS become more affordable in the Gambia, the objective of building masses IT literate population cannot be achieved. In the Gambia, the cost of computers and the price of accessing the Internet are one of the main issues that impact on the spread of ICTS. Purchase of equipment is still far beyond the reach of the average citizen. The high price tags compared to other basic necessities in life act as a barrier to access and becomes prohibitive. In The Gambia, the introduction of a zero-tariff on computer equipment brought in a glimmer of hope. However the effect and benefit of this action is yet to be gained as the dream of cheap computers has just remained a dream.

For Internet access, the prices in the Gambia are still a lot cheaper than other African countries but for the masses to be able to access the Internet on a more frequent basis, the price has to surely come down more.” It is also envisaged that with the liberalization of Gamtel and effective administration of the Universal Service Fund by PURA both service providers and consumers will benefit in terms of cost reduction.