

## **3.2 Projects for ICT Development in The Gambia**

### **3.2.1 AU-E-Network Project**

This project is financed by Government of India through the African Union Commission with the objectives of linking the referral hospital (RVTH and Bansang hospitals) with medical centres in India and it also aimed at linking the University of the Gambia (UTG) with the Indian Universities.

The above objectives could be achieved through the provision of online medical and educational services, access to advance education and medical services abroad and to provide the facilities and linkages for broadband video conferencing.

### **3.2.2 Construction of Technology Park**

The construction of Technology Park, a major component of Silicon Valley Initiative, is aimed at attracting multinational ICT businesses into the country and to develop other ICT related initiative. This project is being funded and supported by governments of Egypt and Taiwan. Apart from the signing of an MOU with the government of Egypt, the government was able locate a project sites and now in the process carrying a feasibility study.

### **3.2.3 The Biometric Project**

This involves electronic processing of National ID, Passports and personal registration documents and authentication by upgrading those documents for better security and efficient service delivery. The initiative is to be contracted to Biometrics International Group (BIG) which intends to build, operate and later transfer the project. Great achievement was made in the finalization of agreement and preparation of a cabinet paper requesting approval to sign contract with BIGs initiative.

### **3.2.4 The e-Government Project**

E-Government strategy formulation and implementation supported by ECA is mainly aimed at providing effective and efficient public service delivery system for the civil

servants and the general public. The implementation of the e-Government strategy by 2005 called for the establishment of an e-Government Directorate that will be responsible for the overseeing the e-Government programmes, creation of government websites in all the Department of State (DoS) and the implementation of e-Government pilot project by end of December 2010. Process has been made in the identification of focal points, hosting of DNS by GAMTEL under .gov.gm domain and the piloting of government email services e.g. @doscit.gov.gm. However, constraints in funding and lack of adequate equipment are major bottle net implementation of the project. Government have made advance efforts in introduce biometric-electronic processing of national ID, passport and other national document ect.

### **3.2.5 ICT4D Project**

This is an ECA supported initiatives aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of the knowledge of ICT as a tool for development focusing on the e-Government and NICI frameworks. ICT development campaign is been done through broadcasting electronic and print media.

### **3.2.6 NICI Policy and Plans Development**

The development and the formulation of NICI Policy and Plans was mainly aimed at recognising the areas where ICT would contribute to the attainment of the overall objectives of the Vision 2020 and the PRSP document under four strategic issues as thus:

- (a) Enhancing the Productive Capacity of the Poor;
- (b) Enhancing Access to and the Performance of Social Services;
- (c) Local Level Capacity Building and;
- (d) Promoting Participatory Communications Processes.

The NICI policy formulation and development process was carried out in two phases:

- Phase 1 calls for consultative meetings of NICI Core Group, IT business houses to record their view on NICI policy; academia group such as University of the Gambia, Management Development Institute (MDI); Gambia Technical Training Institute (GTTI), etc. ; regulatory bodies such as The Gambia Divestiture Agency (GDA) and the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) ; other Government Parastatal; civil society organizations, youth organization; media houses; local government representatives.
- Phase 2 involves series of validation of the proposed NICI pillars; sectoral objectives; ICT mediated specific goals and challenges. The NICI implementation is now at an advance stage developing plan base on the action plan.

### **3.2.7 Telecommunication Bill**

A draft Telecommunication bill has been formulated. The purpose of the bill is to create a legal and enabling environment to improve the quality and service delivery of telecommunication services. The bill when it becomes law will clearly delineate the complementary rolls of various stakeholders.

A draft copy of the bill was circulated for review and comments. Final comment would be incorporated by the Legal Drafts person at the Attorney General's Chambers and Telecoms Bill would be tabled in parliament for enactment in December 2007.

### **3.2.8 GAMTEL's ICT Development Projects; 2005-2006**

Gamtel has, over the years, pursued policies that have allowed it to provide relevant and affordable services to the people of Gambia whilst at the same time grow revenue. By carefully balancing these two major objectives, Gamtel has been able to undertake projects with enormous socio-economic benefits to our people throughout the country without jeopardising its sustainability. Gamtel's current global expansion strategy aims to rehabilitate, expand and consolidate its existing copper-based urban networks as well as explore recent break-through in wireless technologies to bring communications facilities to over 70% of The Gambian population, most of whom are rural folks engaged in subsistence farming. These are similar strategies that have been successfully used in Asia

to improve office and business efficiency as well as give rural schools access to other learning centres and resources, facilitate hospital referrals for rural health centres as well as give farmers access to relevant market information and best agricultural practices. In the light of the above considerations, Gamtel between 2003 and now, embarked on the following projects:

#### **3.2.8.1 Crash Programme**

The main objective of this project is to secure Gamtel's networks located within the Greater Banjul Area (GBA) through the deployment of a self-healing fibre-optic cable ring network and connecting the main catchment areas from SK exchange through 5K market, Bundung exchange, Abuko Earth Station, Yundum Exchange, Banjul International Airport, Yaram Bamba Estate, Nemasu, Wellingara, Brussubi, Kotu and back to Serekunda. In addition to this, two CNE5 of 512 line capacity each were to be deployed in Brufut and Garawol respectively; and a 3,500 line copper network created around the Serekunda market and Senegambia areas.

#### **3.2.8.2 Alcatel Stage 1 Project**

The main objective of this project is to expand the switching, control and transmission matrix of Banjul and Serekunda exchanges which had been exhausted. The inter-exchange links to cater for increased inter-exchange traffic needed to be increased to cater for increased rural and mobile traffic. The V5.2 interfaces at both Banjul and Serekunda exchanges needed upgrading and new software loaded to enable them to connect 5,000 rural wireless customers each. Switching capacity of both exchanges needed expanding to allow for the connection of up to 25,000 new customers. A 256 concentrator was to be deployed to provide communication services to Samba Kunda and YBK. Project successfully implemented and working.

#### **3.2.8.3 Airspan Project**

The main objective of the Airspan project was to replace a similar, but obsolete, wireless local loop system, the IRT 2000, as well as prevent the imminent collapse of the entire rural telephone network In the North Bank Division due to the obsolescence of the radio

network in the area. The scope of the project was later increased to provide telephone services to about 800 villages throughout the country.

The Airspan project was successfully deployed and all the vulnerable networks in more than 36 villages that had obsolete radio equipment were successfully transferred onto it without much of a problem. Its expansion into other parts of the country is to bridge the access gap between the urban and rural areas of the country. Thus far, about 266 villages are now connected to the Airspan network and the recent receipt of 200 Subscriber Terminal (ST) kits that are being distributed to the different Regional Managers would allow the connection of another 200 villages

#### **3.2.8.4 CDMA Pilot Project**

The main objective of this pilot project was to see how best it would help in reducing the ever increasing demand for telephones through the use of wireless access technologies. The project consisted of a 10,000-line switch and four access Base Transceiver Stations (BTS). The project was to provide both voice and high speed data access in deployed areas.

The project was successfully implemented and commissioned according to plan. Initially the four BTS5 were deployed in Abuko, Brikama, Soma and Basse. Thus far, the system has performed beyond all expectations and a decision taken to expand it by about 100,000 lines with new broadband features. Its coverage was also to be extended to other parts of the country, with at least one BTS deployed in each of the administrative divisions.

#### **3.2.8.5 Internet Resource Centre**

The main objective of this project was to replace the obsolete management system of the Internet to be able to offer such services as e-commerce, e-Health, e Education, e-Government etc, provide whole sale of Internet services, server hosting and co-location, encourage private content providers, Application Service Providers (ASPs) and virtual

(non-facility based) Internet Service Providers (ISPs) the platform to viably set up and operate their businesses in a more secured environment with minimum investment on their part.

#### **3.2.8.6 Internet MPLS Backbone**

The main objective of this project is to replace Gamtel's old, obsolete and un upgradeable backbone to enable it to provide a fully secure, upgradeable and redundant Internet Network as well as provide the necessary infrastructure that would allow for the cost effective setting up of call centres for Gamtel and private sector use. It will provide for a better management and control of Internet bandwidth usage, enable the support of Internet services such as e-education, e commerce, e-government, e-health etc.

#### **3.2.8.7 Intelligent Network (IN) platform**

The main objective of this project is to replace the existing obsolete pre-paid service node with a convergent IN platform with more up to date features such as pre-paid telephony, advance free phone services and to create more business opportunities for re-sellers. This system, for use by both Gamtel and Gamcel, would offer the management of pre-paid cards, pre-paid telephony, number portability, mass calling, tele-voting etc, thereby significantly improving our finances.

#### **3.2.8.9 Gambia Telecommunications and Multimedia Institute (GTMI)**

The main objective of this project is to construct a Building for class room blocks, offices, labs, cafeteria etc, provide tools for jointing and testing of copper cables, fibre optic cables and PC repairs. Although already a Cisco-approved Regional Academy, with responsibility for Sierra Leone and The Gambia, this approval is a carry-on program and involves regular reviews and renewals. Another objective is acquire a Cisco lab bundle to enable it offer PC repairs, networking, web designing etc. and offering automatic upgrades of hardware and software through annual subscriptions to CISCO or its recognized partners. The GTMI is already offering courses locally through e-learning with certification by a number of universities. It is planned that such collaboration would

be extended to the point that it can even run some technology-related courses for the University of The Gambia while at the same time offering it access to some of its facilities.