

Report of the National Scan-ICT Phase II Workshop – The Gambia

29 - 30 November 2005

Palm Grove Hotel, Banjul, The Gambia

I. BACKGROUND

A lot of progress is being made in a number of African countries in terms of implementing ICT4D programmes. However, our policy makers still find it difficult to develop appropriate strategies due to lack of accurate, timely and reliable data/statistics on ICT4D. Measuring ICT4D and finding the right indicators (both core and impact indicators) is a big challenge in African countries. Either data/statistics is not available or it is outdated. With the increasing number of ICT4D activities and initiatives in the region, it has become increasingly important to put in place appropriate mechanisms/frameworks for measuring ICT4D so that policy makers and planners can make informed decisions.

Recognizing this fact, ECA and its partners launched the Scan-ICT programme in November 2000 as a collaborative project between ECA and the Acacia programme of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), with financial support from the European Union (EU) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation (NORAD). Scan-ICT monitors the penetration, impact and effectiveness of ICT applications in pilot countries across Africa, providing added value to the AISI implementation at the national, regional and global levels. It is a multi-partnership initiative that seeks to build support for the phased development of a comprehensive African capability to define, collect and manage key information needed to support the growing investment in ICTs as well as the transition of Africa to an Information Society. In addition, Scan-ICT describes an opportunity to build capacity in Africa -- the capacity for Africa to influence ICT investments, to extend their impact, to develop sound policies and to encourage the development of made in Africa solutions, applications and content. The goal is to create a pan-African ICT network that would collect, analyse and disseminate all levels of ICT related knowledge in an open manner. The first phase of the Scan-ICT programme, which involved six countries ended in 2004. (<http://www.uneca.org/aisi/scanict.htm>).

Based on the set of ICT indicators adopted by African countries at the second African Regional Preparatory Conference for the WSIS, held from 2 - 4 February 2005 in Accra (Ghana), and the lessons learnt in the first phase of the project, an improved methodology for Scan-ICT Phase II was developed by ECA for use by the implementing countries. The Government of Finland and ECA launched the second phase of the project in June 2005.

The countries selected to participate in the second phase of Scan-ICT in accordance with the attached Terms of Reference include Cameroon, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Mauritius, Mozambique, Rwanda, Swaziland and Tunisia.

In implementing its Scan-ICT activities in The Gambia, the national focal point is expected to:

- Set up a Committee/Task Force composed of statisticians, NICI implementers, ICT experts, ISP personnel, staff of regulatory bodies and also higher learning institutions, private sector and civil society
- Ensure linkages with various ICT initiatives such as national and sectoral e-strategies
- Develop gender mainstreamed indicators and benchmarks
- Collect and analyse both primary and secondary data
- Enter into alliances with major stakeholders, which are responsible for data collection in various sectors.

Based on these requirements and to discuss modalities of the implementation, a national Scan-ICT workshop was organized from 29 – 30 November 2005 in Banjul, The Gambia.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

The workshop is organized in line with the implementation of the Scan-ICT Phase II, and as a response to a proposal from the Government of The Gambia for launching the Scan-ICT process in the country. Specifics objectives of the workshop include:

- adopting a working methodology for implementing Scan-ICT
- identify ICT indicators for The Gambia to be used in the Scan-ICT
- creating awareness on the need for measuring ICT4D at national, regional, and international level
- sharing information and knowledge on ICT data collection exercise in the various socio-economic sectors of The Gambia
- informing various stakeholders on the Scan-ICT framework and seek their active participation in the process
- putting in place the necessary institutional arrangements for the implementation of the project.

III. PARTICIPATION

Over 30 participants drawn from government, private sector, civil society organizations attended the workshop. High-level officials were present at the opening ceremony including the Secretary of State for Communication, Information and Technology, and two Permanent Secretaries from the Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs and the Department of Communication, Information and Technology. List of participants is enclosed in Annex 1.

IV. OPENING SESSION

The official opening was made by H. E. Mme. Neneh MacDouall-Gaye, Secretary of State for Information and Communication. In her opening remarks, the Mme. MacDouall-Gaye said that the Government of Gambia is fully committed to promoting the Information Society and making effective use of ICTs for attaining its development objectives. She also stressed the strong need for measuring and monitoring the progress made in implementing ICT programmes so as to ensure the benefits and impacts of such programmes, and demonstrate the linkage to the overall development objectives of the country. In addition, Mme. MacDouall-Gaye extended her appreciation and gratitude to ECA and its partners for their continuous support and assistance in implementing Gambia's ICT4D programme.

Mr. Afework Temtime from ECA made an opening remark on behalf of the Executive Secretary of the ECA and Officer-In-Charge of DISD/ECA. The statement reaffirmed ECA's commitment towards collaborating with the Government and people of The Gambia in attaining their development objectives through the development, deployment and effective use of ICTs. Furthermore, some of the activities such as the development and implementation of Gambia's NICI, the e-Government programme, and the current Scan-ICT Phase II programme, were highlighted as concrete examples of ECA's collaboration and commitment to The Gambia. Background to the Scan-ICT programme and ECA's involvement in the process both at regional and international level were highlighted.

Mr. Alieu Ndow, Director of Central Statistics Department has also made an opening remark focusing on the importance of statistics in measuring the information society, and the support that can be provided by CSD in the implementation of Scan-ICT in The Gambia. He pointed out that ICT indicators are being integrated in the upcoming Economic Census of the country. Mr. Ndow has also given some indicative figures on the role of ICTs on the economy by mentioning that communication contributes 12% of the GDP. He stressed the strong need to address the issue of information poverty, access and infrastructure, capacity building in data collection and analysis, and integrating ICT indicators in the other socio-economic sectors.

The opening session was chaired by the Permanent Secretary Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs Mr. Abdou Touray.

V. PRESENTATIONS

A series of presentations were made focusing on the overview of the Scan-ICT project and the need for ICT indicators, and data collection and dissemination exercises in the various sectors of the economy. In addition, perspectives from the private sector and civil society were also presented. The agenda of the workshop is attached in Annex 2.

VI. DISCUSSIONS

The discussions focused on the challenges in collecting and disseminating ICT data in the various sectors of the economy, identifying ICT indicators and methodologies for implementing

Scan-ICT in The Gambia. Following extensive discussions in the various sessions, a number of suggestions and comments were made which are summarised below:

Indicators and methodology:

- The workshop participants examined and identified the key ICT indicators for The Gambia based on the regional core list of ICT indicators. It was decided that these indicators will be used for Scan-ICT Gambia. These are attached in Annex 1.
- Some of the identified ICT indicators should be integrated in the upcoming national Economic Census, and eventually in the sectoral surveys of each of the socio-economic sectors.
- Secondary sources based on recent surveys conducted in the sectoral departments will be used as the main source of information for collecting data on the ICT indicators.
- Specialised survey will be carried out to fill the gap that exists in addressing the identified indicators
- The established survey instruments of CSD adapted to the identified ICT indicators will be used for conducting the surveys

Role of stakeholders

- The private sector, civil society, and other stakeholders should be actively involved in the process. The need for involving the national library specially with respect to disseminating the results was also highlighted.
- The need to involve the grass-root communities was also noted as key factor for accuracy and reliability of the data collected.

Gender disaggregated data

- Participants stressed the need for ensuring that all the data collected under each indicator should be gender disaggregated so that proper analysis can be made later

Local capacity building

- It was noted that there is a strong need to build the local capacity in terms of both ICT data collection and developing local ICT products. Local products and services need to be encouraged.

Sustainability and awareness creation

- Participants stressed the need for sustaining the process and strongly supported the efforts being made in Scan-ICT phase 2 to integrate ICT data collection and analysis in the regular work programme of the Central Statistics Department.
- It was strongly recommended that advocacy programmes to create awareness among the policy makers on the important role ICTs play in socio-economic development of the country in general, and the need for measuring ICT4D in particular.

VII. PLANS, THE WAYFORWARD AND CLOSING

Mr. Ebrima Jobe presented the envisaged plan for implementing Scan-ICT in The Gambia. He pointed out that based on the discussions of the workshop, the following activities will be carried out :

- Develop a Scan-ICT Gambia methodology document describing the priority theme areas, selected indicators, data collection and analysis methodology, development of survey instruments, geographical coverage, publication and dissemination of the findings
- framework Integration of the identified indicators in the Economic Census and conduct a survey to fill the gap
- Conduct analysis of the findings, and prepare the report
- Develop and Scan-ICT Gambia database and website to document the findings

In closing the workshop, Mr. Alieu Ndow, Directors of CSD said that CSD is fully committed to making the Scan-ICT project a success. He thanked the participants for their contributions and ECA for the technical assistance provided and for collaborating with the Government of Gambia in this very important endeavor.

Mr. Afework Temtime also thanked the participants and the organizers for the fruitful deliberations and active participation in the workshop. He also stressed the need to continue the dialog virtually or through a similar workshop, and contribute ideas and assist in the data collection and analysis process to make Scan-ICT Gambia a big success.

VIII. MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE WORKSHOP

The main outcomes of the workshop can be summarised as follows:

- Enhanced awareness on issues related to measuring the Information Society, including the Gambia Scan-ICT processes and documents
- Better understanding of the roles of stakeholders in the implementation of the project
- Institutional arrangement created and a plan of action developed for the implementation of the project
- Consensus reached on the Scan-ICT methodology framework and preliminary list of core and extended ICT indicators to be used for The Gambia