

Draft ICT Policy Cambodia

The world is today transforming into one society driven by a phenomenal increase in the amount of communication between civilizations and information shared between individuals, regions and countries. It has truly become an information society in which information and communications technologies are playing important and indispensable roles to create, foster, disseminate and promote knowledge. It would probably have taken many more years for countries like Cambodia to reach the current state of info-civilization¹, had it not been due to the rapid advancement of ICTs such as radio, television, Internet, and other innovative devices. Cambodia already boasts of having a very high mobile phone penetration and car battery operated television sets are often used in villages.

The advancement in technologies has also pushed many countries behind and disparities between different geographical regions of the same economy or between economies have been broader. In Cambodia while the cities like Phnom Penh have mobile telephones, Internet access and other value added services, remote provinces are yet still not having enough basic analogue telephone systems. However, this gap between urban and rural areas is relative to each other. While the disparity may look significant in nominal terms, the real benefits reaped by the 'disadvantaged' are huge. The benefits that ICT brings to people are what matter most and this has to be continuously pursued. In this regard, Governments are directly responsible to foster such growth and development and it is no different for Cambodia.

In an info-civilized society, knowledge and information play as important a role as land and capital. New technologies, transparent competitiveness, growing availability of appropriate technologies and the growth of promising markets as the earning capacities of people rise, all compliment development for good. This information revolution offers developing countries like Cambodia huge advantage and promise. Growth in ICT sector can only be sustained when the country has forward-looking and ambitious policies in place.

Policy Context

Cambodia ranks 130² out of the 173 countries in the United Nations Human Development Index. Poverty is recognized as a grave concern for the country. There is a very evident disparity in the distribution of wealth among the different sections of the society. Economic opportunities are still limited with dismal foreign investments and internal problems resulting in its weak performance in domestic investments.

The priority poverty reduction actions³ are:

- Maintaining macroeconomic stability;
- Improving rural livelihoods;
- Expanding job opportunities;
- Improving capabilities;
- Strengthening institutions and improving governance;
- Reducing vulnerability and strengthening social inclusion;
- Promoting gender equity; and
- Priority focus on population

¹ Info-civilization is an information society that has strong relation to productive civilization

² 2002 ranking

³ World Bank: <http://www.worldbank.org>

The country will build up its policies on information and communication technologies to directly or indirectly address human development and poverty alleviation in particular.

Therefore, the Government of Cambodia endorses the following policy statements for information and communication technologies:

1.0 Policy On Leadership and National Commitment

1.1

The Royal Government of Cambodia, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, will embrace and exploit ICT to increase the quality of peoples' lives and also to fight poverty, disease and illiteracy in the country.

1.2

The Government will establish necessary and appropriate regulatory environment to promote full exploitation of ICT in the country.

1.3

The Government will direct the Ministry of Economy and Finance and its donors to allocate necessary budgetary and human resources for the ICT sector on a sustained basis.

1.4

The Government will actively foster and enhance bilateral, regional and international cooperation in the field of ICT and shall set a clear precedence in regional and international cooperation in regard to the ICT sector.

1.5

The Government will build up and support special initiatives to encourage public-private-civil society partnerships in the ICT sector with an objective to reach every sections of the society.

1.6

The Government commits to the administrative reform in pursuing the convergent technology and its dynamic development.

1.7

The Government will ensure that national heritages; culture; traditions and the environment are adequately safeguarded in its pursuit to ICT development.

2.0 Policy On Legal and regulatory frameworks

2.1

The Government will ensure the continuous and active engagement of the development of ICT by the Prime Minister.

2.2

Government shall promote the use of ICT in both public and private sectors to encourage transparency competitiveness and overall efficiency of their functions and procedures.

2.3

The mandate to the National Information Communications Technology Development Authority (NiDA) as a promoter and regulator of ICT services in the country will be re-enforced. Government encourages all agencies to engage NiDA actively in their respective agencies ICT plans.

2.4

The Government shall put into place required regulatory frameworks on all relevant ICT sectors including telecommunications and media of all types.

2.5

Government supports and will promote deregulation of the telecom and other relevant ICT sectors.

2.6

Government supports the use of broadband technologies for the provision of more value-added ICT services.

3.0 Policy On Human Capacity

3.1

The Government will support and develop appropriate programmes and activities to develop the overall human capacity on information and communication technologies (ICTs) and ICT will be recognized as a productive tool of learning at all levels of society

3.2

The Government shall promote and support more Community Information Centers (CIC) in the country.

3.3

The Government will support the use of ICT for formal and non-formal education, skills development and adult learning regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability or location.

3.4

Government shall mandate the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports to provide all teachers in public and private schools the basic ICT training. Government shall allocate or mobilize additional resources and facilities to meet this objective.

3.5

The Government will promote radio and television as teaching and learning tools for all citizens with particular focus on students and youths.

3.6

ICT shall be rigorously introduced in school management systems to bring about more efficiency and productivity.

3.7

Government shall introduce standard ICT curriculum such as regular computer syllabus in educational system throughout the country.

3.8

Government shall encourage and support ICT knowledge for all public servants and will use ICT in support of various other important activities such as women empowerment, de-mining campaigns and HIV/AIDS awareness.

3.9

Government will encourage and support close networking among various training institutions in the country.

3.10

Government will actively seek the participation of civil society entities such as NGOs and NPOs in national capacity building in ICT.

3.11

Government will promote Open Source system(s) in ICT to cut costs in a long term but also to broaden the skills and capacities of ICT professionals.

3.12

Government will support and promote for programmes such as SchoolNet, ICT Resource Center and public ICT Kiosks under aegis of relevant ministry, with an objective to increase the overall ICT capacity of the country

4.0 Policy On Content

4.1

Government will actively promote the development of relevant Cambodian content on all ICT systems.

4.2

In pursuant to government policy, Government will support and encourage the development and use of relevant ICT application systems.

4.3

Government supports the e-Government system and will mobilize resources for its expansion to all provinces in the country.

4.4

Government will ensure that all work procedures within and among state agencies benefit from new ICT systems and applications in place.

4.5

Government will develop suitable policy directives to encourage each agency to develop and promote quality content on ICT systems.

4.6

Government will encourage communication between government agencies and government servants to be conducted via e-mails and electronic memo systems etc.

4.7

Government will support and encourage government agencies to develop respective networked application systems. NiDA shall oversee the standardization of these application systems in order to integrate within the umbrella of the e-Government system already in place.

4.8

Government will continuously monitor and ensure that official information and content about the country are homogenous and correct.

4.9

Government should develop, support and adopt a standard UNICODE based Khmer characters system to be adopted in all ICT applications and systems.

4.10

Government is committed to developing the capacities of rural areas to develop and manage content on ICT systems.

4.11

Government will establish appropriate legal instruments to check and control indecent use of ICT such as spams, viruses, web squatting, fraud, copy right violation, denial of service, unauthorized entry, privacy infringements, misleading media content, and inappropriate broadcasting.

4.12

Government will streamline a standard reporting system for all public service activities.

5.0 Policy On Infrastructure

5.1

Government will continuously install and upgrade reliable and appropriate ICT infrastructures throughout the country.

5.2

Government will actively promote private sector and foreign investments in the ICT infrastructure sector.

5.3

Government will establish the Cambodia Network Information Center that maybe called CAMNIC. NiDA will work closely with MPTC, Camnet and the Asia-Pacific Network Information Center (APNIC) to carry out this activity and manage it.

5.4

Government will allow and streamline the use of Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) Session Initiated Protocol (SIP) and any other latest technologies throughout the country.

5.5

Government will support and encourage all universities and government agencies to establish computer networks and install other ICT systems.

5.6

As a promoter and regulator of ICT activities in the country, NiDA shall be the responsible agency to manage Country Code Top Level Domain - ccTLD(.kh). In doing so, NiDA shall work closely with all relevant agencies.

5.7

Government will ensure that all ICT infrastructures and systems are utilized to their maximum capacities.

6.0 Policy On Enterprises

6.1

Government will reduce the import tax rate on ICT equipments and systems. Ministry of Economy and Finance and its Tax and Customs Excise Department will work closely with NiDA and Ministry of Post and Telecommunication to list such equipment.

6.2

Government will allow 100% equity shareholding of ICT enterprises by foreign partners. The Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) shall work closely with NiDA to expedite and implement such a policy.

6.3

Government will create policies and favourable environment for ICT enterprise development through special tax incentives.

6.4

Government will support and encourage and promote e-Commerce facilities.

6.5

Government will provide special support to small and medium enterprises to adopt and use e-Commerce systems.

6.6

Government will take appropriate measures to ensure efficiency, privacy, security and reliability of e-commerce systems based on international interoperable standards, especially for electronic payment.

6.7

Government will take appropriate measures to ensure ICT will be used in all sectors for efficiency, privacy, security, safety and reliability based on international interoperable standards, for the purpose of rebuilding the country.

6.8

Government will introduce reforms and re-organization of banking and financial institutions to boost credentials and trust for the new economy.

6.9

Government will establish ICT Technology Park to coordinate and encourage entrepreneurships and enterprise development.

6.10

Government will work out supportive policies on local production of ICT hardware.

6.11

Government will put in a special investment package guidelines for investors in the ICT sector.

6.12

Government will encourage financial institutions such as banks to devise lending mechanisms to promote loans for small entrepreneurs in the ICT sector.