

IRELAND

Ireland Aid, <http://www.irlgov.ie/iveagh/irishaid/default.asp>

1. Describe your country's/agency's overall strategy or approach in using ICT for Development

a) Overall strategy

Ireland is currently preparing a strategy for addressing ICT in its development assistance programme. A Taskforce has been set up under the Minister of State to bring this process forward. This will be based on the experiences gained through our six priority country bilateral programmes, on consultations with our development partners and on two pilot interventions to be initiated this year.

b) Guiding principles for use of ICT for development

The focus of our development assistance programme on poverty reduction will lead to a strategic approach that sees ICT as a key tool for sustainable impact on poverty rather than as an issue or development priority in itself. Integration of ICT into PRSPs will be critical and care will need to be taken to ensure that such integration results in a strong poverty focus for ICT development rather than the identification of ICT dissemination as a priority for poverty reduction

c) Objectives

The objective of the strategy is to identify opportunities and outline approaches for Ireland Aid to ensure that the potential of ICTs, as an instrument and resource for capacity-building, innovation, information exchange, transparency and accountability, is utilised in its current and future development programmes and policy and in its day-to day activities in ways that contribute directly to its objectives of participatory development, sustainable poverty reduction and partnership.

d) Areas of application

e) References and web-links to any relevant strategy documents or guidelines

2. Identify the main modalities for ICT integration in your overall development strategy

a) Modalities for ICT integration and programme delivery

Delivery of support for ICT development should be in accordance with national and sectoral development priorities. At sectoral level ICT development should be contained in, and in line with, sectoral development priorities; and delivery of support should be through SWAps or other co-ordinated delivery mechanisms.

b) Partnership, including the private sector

Our strategy will need to recognise the importance of national ownership as a prerequisite for sustainability and hence the need for developing country Governments to formulate their own ICT development strategies. Donor strategies should be process-type strategies aimed at promoting capacity for national policy and strategy debate and decision-making regarding ICT among developing country partners and not seek to define prescriptive

packages for ICT roll-out as a component of aid delivery. Our strategy will seek to develop and work within national ICT development strategies/policies and not pre-empt or circumvent them. Thus, support for national capacities for regulation of ICT and, sectorally, for the management of ICT acquisition and development are likely to be key elements of our strategy.

c) Participation, if any, in joint or multi-donor ICT for development programmes

Member of the UN ICT Taskforce

d) Estimate of a global amount of funding with indications on the timeframe it covers

Most Irish Development Assistance is delivered through joint programme modalities. Funding for ICT constitutes a component of this and as such is not easily distinguishable or attributable to a single donor.

e) Lessons learned from your country's/agency's experience

Experience from our bilateral programmes has indicated the need for a systematic approach to the sustainability of ICT related interventions. Infrastructural constraints related to the telecommunications networks in developing countries restrict access to, and raise the costs of, the operation and use of ICT based services. The limited availability in developing country internal markets of adequate hardware and software services raise costs, threaten the technical sustainability outside of a limited geographical area and often expose purchasers to monopolistic practices.

f) Cases that are particularly illustrative/examples of best practices

3. Describe the institutional arrangements made by your country for mainstreaming ICT within its development strategy

a) Main agencies involved in ICT for development (e.g. development co-operation agency, ministries, research institutes)

b) The agencies' roles in the various stages (e.g. strategy, operations)

c) Contact details of your country's/agency's ICT for development focal point

4. Country/regional focus of the ICT-enhanced development strategy

a) General description of regional and country focus

Ireland's bilateral development assistance is concentrated on 6 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. (Ethiopia, Uganda, Zambia, Tanzania, Mozambique & Lesotho).