

**Country Report
Bangladesh**

ICT Human Capacity Building

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1. Introduction

Information & Communication Technology has been identified as an important tool to achieve prosperity through improved quality of management and efficiency in public and private sectors. The government of Bangladesh in an effort to harness the power of ICT formulated its National ICT Policy in year 2002. The government in year 2008 formed a committee to review the achievements and formulate a new National ICT Policy. The committee after meeting with the stake holders proposed a new National ICT Policy to the government. The proposed policy is now in the final stages of approval.

The new policy took account of all the technological and socio-economic development to propose the policy incorporating the government's declared policy on Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper based on the commitments made in WSIS and the mandates of MDG. Accordingly, development of Human Capacity has been given high priority in the National ICT Policy.

2. Initiatives Regarding Human Capacity Building

National Policy on ICT: Capacity building, in general, is identified as a key element to achieving national goals. While human capacity building was given the top priority, infrastructure building was also considered vital as a pre-requisite of the other ICT activities. Important objectives pertaining to the human capacity building declared in the proposed National ICT Policy under Education and Research are:

- Assess skills of ICT professionals and meet gaps with targeted training programs to overcome the short-term skills shortage in the ICT industry and adopt continuing education and professional skills assessment and enhancement programs.
- Encourage closer collaboration between academia and industry to align curriculum with market needs.
- Establish an ICT Centre of Excellence with necessary long-term funding to teach and conduct research in advanced ICTs.
- Extend the reach of ICT literacy throughout the country by incorporating ICT courses in secondary education and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programs
- Enhance the quality and reach of education at all levels with a special focus on Mathematics, Science and English
- Ensure ICT Literacy for all in public service
- Boost use of ICT tools in all levels of education including ECDP, mass literacy and lifelong learning
- Ensure access to education and research for people with disabilities and special needs using ICT tools

- Ensure that all universities provide global standard ICT education and introduce Postgraduate Programs in ICT education to encourage research and innovation
- Besides, the Government has taken various initiatives in this area.

Creating Institutional Framework: ICT has been declared as a ‘thrust sector’ by the Government. A national ICT Task Force has been constituted with a view to provide the top-level guidance for initiating and coordinating ICT activities. The Government, in 2003, launched a program called Support to ICT Task Force (SICT) at Ministry of Planning for providing administrative and secretarial support to the ICT Task Force in planning, designing, and implementing various ICT projects, particularly e-Governance projects. Government also has reorganized the former Ministry of Science & ICT as the Ministry of Science and ICT and taken measures to strengthen Bangladesh Computer Council, the apex body of the Government that works for promotion and adoption of ICT in the country.

Human Resources Development: Since early 90s, tremendous enthusiasm has been generated among the new generation about ICT. Since then public universities have started to offer undergraduate, post graduate and postgraduate diploma courses in ICT. Information technology has been introduced as a subject in the mainstream educational tracks in secondary and higher secondary levels.

As a result, many ICT training institutes have started operating in the private sector. In the public sector, BCC is one the bodies mandated to carry out human resources development activities. BCC carries out its training programs through its central office in the capital city and six divisional offices. In the capital, South Korea through KOICA has built a training facility named Bangladesh-Korea Institute of ICT in the BCC’s head office. The training programs are carried out in Bangladesh-Korea Institute of ICT, an institute built with a grant assistant from Korea Government. Till now about 35,000 people have been trained in various ICT applications by BCC. The training programs are being organized by BCC and various government and donor projects. Besides, BCC has launched 1-year Diploma and Post-graduate diploma courses for developing skilled manpower for the ICT industry.

With a view to develop ICT capacity of the public sector for making the Government’s e-Government initiatives a success, different ICT training for government officials was organized by BCC. It started in September 2005. The e-Government training is designed to prepare the officials to handle the e-Governance activities of varying complexities. Till now 800 government officials have received this training.

National ICT Internship: The Government also funded a program called National ICT Internship. This is intended to develop the skills of the ICT graduates required for the highly competitive global market. Under this program selected ICT graduates are placed in different ICT companies to get the opportunity to become ready for the global ICT market. In the last two years about 600 ICT graduates have been trained under this program.

ICT Professional Skill Assessment and Enhancement Program (IPSAEP): The industry, academia and the government after long deliberation on expanding the employment opportunity through growth of local industry developed a plan to make the fresh graduates ICT industry ready through ICT Professional Skill Assessment and enhancement Program. The government has already approved the program and is scheduled to begin very soon.

3. Country Needs

Bangladesh has already started using ICT in various arenas. The country has successfully developed National Voter Roll with photograph and National ID Card using indigenous design. Public procurement reform is taking place and methodology for e-procurement is now being framed. The government has initiated project for Machine Readable Passport and Machine Readable Visa. All these activities has generated demands for better infrastructure and human capacity. In order to achieve the demands the government has taken to connect all government offices in the country through a secure government network. In this regard the government has signed a loan agreement with South Korea for financing under EDCF scheme.

Judging by the number of the development projects and the demand for skilled manpower requirement in public and private sector Bangladesh needs to train large number of fresh graduate on ICT skills. These skill sets have to be accredited to make the skill sets acceptable globally. The government of Bangladesh looks forward for cooperation in this area.

4. Advice on the national roll out of the Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders in your country

The UNAPCICT can consider Bangladesh Computer Council, Public Administration Training Center and Jatiyo Sangsad (National Parliament), Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development for rollout of Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders.

5. Focal Points for cooperation with APCICT

- (1) Ministry of Science and ICT;
- (2) Bangladesh Computer Council;
- (3) Ministry of Planning;
- (4) Ministry of Education;