KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA

Nation Region King

Draft

Information Communication Technology Policy of Cambodia

Royal Government of Cambodia

Contents

FOREWORD

Policy Context

Cambodia is in the development stage in every sector and the poverty reduction has been recognized as one of the priority actions of the government. Therefore, for the development of the country and reduce the poverty the the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has identified the following as priority actions as below:
- – maintaining macroeconomic stability;
- – improving rural livelihoods;
- – expanding job opportunities;
- – improving human capacities;
- – strengthening institutions and improving good governance;
- – reducing vulnerability and strengthening social inclusion;
- – promoting gender equity; and
- – priority focus on population

In order to contribute for achieving the priority action above the RGC will establish its policies on Information and Communications Technology to directly or indirectly address socio-economic development, human development and poverty alleviation in particular.

Introduction

The world today is transforming into a global society driven by a phenomenal increase in the exchange of information between individuals, groups, regions and nation states. It has truly become an information society in which information and communications technology (ICT) is playing an important and indispensable role in creating, fostering, disseminating and promoting shared knowledge. It would probably have taken many more years for Cambodia to reach a sufficient state in the global information society, had it not been due to the rapid advancement of ICTs such as radio, television, the Internet, and other innovative technologies. Modern technology and the high level of mobile penetration in recent years is an indication of trends and demand for access to come.

Advancements in technology offer great potential benefits; however, there is a risk that these benefits will only be distributed to the advantaged and to those who already have access. While mobile penetration is high in major cities such as the capital, Phnom Penh – where Internet access is also readily available, as well as other value added services – remote provinces still lack basic telephony (not even analogue systems). Although the gap between the city and rural area may seem significant in nominal terms but there is at present a great opportunity for the rural area to benefit from ICT. More importantly, a gap between the digitally enabled and those who are going to be left behind because of their lack of education, training and ICT skills. Therefore, development of human capital will benefit to general population to be able to use national language in ICT. Low-cost flexible software that Cambodia can adapt to its own needs, as in the case of Free and Open Source software (FOSS) will help increase the impact of local language computing, while discharging Cambodia of the heavy weight of having to pay large amounts of money for widely used computer software. Reducing the temptation for piracy will lead us to become an asset member of WTO and to respect all our international engagements.

The benefits that ICT can deliver to the people are what matter most and this has to be continuously pursued. In this regard, the Royal Government of Cambodia is determined to foster the ICT adoption and the implementation of ICT for socio-economic development.

In the information society and economy, knowledge and information play as important a role as land and capital. New technologies, transparent competitiveness, growing availability of appropriate technologies, the growth of markets and establish appropriate policy will increase the earning capacities of people.

1. Leadership and National Commitments

The Government under the leadership Prime Minister will:

    1.1   Embrace and exploit ICT to increase economic, industry and agriculture growth and to improve the quality of peoples' lives and also to fight poverty, disease and illiteracy in the country.

    1.2   Direct and guide the Ministry of Economy and Finance and discuss with donors to allocate necessary budgetary and human resources for the ICT sector on a sustained basis.

    1.3   Foster and enhance bilateral, regional and international cooperation in the field of ICT.

    1.4   Support special initiatives to encourage public private and civil society partnerships in the ICT sector with an objective to reach every section of the society.

It will thus foster an enabling environment so as to develop entrepreneurship and to facilitate the private sector in taking the lead in economic development.

1.5 Commit to administrative reform by using ICT in order achieves the better outcome and faster development of the country.

1.6 Ensure and safeguard the national heritage, culture, and traditions and the environment in the process of ICT development.

2. Legal and Regulatory Frameworks

In this policy on legal and regulatory frameworks the government will:

2.1 Establish necessary and appropriate regulatory environment to promote full exploitation of ICT in the country.

2.2 Put in place required regulatory frameworks for the relevant ICT sectors, including broadcasting, contents, telecommunication, e-banking, e-commerce, information security sectors and other sectors.

2.3 Establish appropriate legal mechanisms to check and control indecent use of ICT such as spam, virus, fraud, copyright violation, denial of service, pornographic, unauthorized entry, damage the system, damage the content, privacy infringements, misleading media content, and inappropriate broadcasting etc.

3. Policy on Human Capacity Development

For development of human capacity the government will:

3.1 Support and encourage appropriate programs that aid in the rapid development of education and training programs using ICT as a force multiplier.

3.2 Support and encourage private sector initiatives and involvement to develop and spread primary, secondary and higher education, especially training skill development in general and ICT.

3.3 Ensure that the process of human capacity development and education program in ICT is high quality possible. NiDA, Ministry of Education Youth and Sports, Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training and other relevant training institutions will be tasked to collaboratively devise and develop curricula, accreditation (for ICT) and the delivery means for reaching out across the country.

3.4 Promote access to ICT nationwide by adopting a two pronged approach. Firstly, it will promote and support general access methods like the Community Information Centers (CIC). Secondly, it will standardise the Khmer script for widespread access to ICT across Cambodia. The Government will mandate NiDA to produce and encourage the production of computer applications in Khmer language, in order to facilitate adoption of ICT in education and in all sectors of society.

3.5 Foster the use of ICT for formal and non-formal education, skills development and adult learning regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability or location.

3.6 Mandate the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports and Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training to provide teachers and e-Learning and distance learning platforms for public and private schools. Government shall allocate or mobilize additional resources and facilities to meet this objective and to promote the use of all technologies, including the Internet, radio and television, and satellite-based distribution as teaching and learning tools for all citizens, with particular focus on teachers, students, youth and the unemployed.

3.7 Introduce the Education Management and Information Systems (EMIS) in a phased manner into the education sector to bring about more transparency, efficiency and productivity.

3.8 Encourage and support ICT training and development of knowledge and its active use for all public servants. For this purpose a comprehensive program will be devised on an ongoing basis.

3.9 Use ICT in support of various important outreach activities such as women empowerment, de-mining campaigns, and HIV/AIDS awareness.

3.10 As a part of a comprehensive e-learning, distance and collaborative education and learning program, the Government will design a nationwide networking programme for linking different levels of education and training institutions via broadband. For this purpose, NiDA will closely work with the Ministries of Education Youth and Sports, Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training and the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunication, the Private sector and various Donor agencies.

3.11 Promote modern software technology for efficiency in education, as well as to promote skill development and professional capacity building.

3.12 Support and promote programmes such as SchoolNet, ICT Resource Centre and public ICT kiosks under the aegis of relevant ministries, with an objective to increase the overall ICT capacity and provide access to locations throughout the country, specially the rural areas.

4. Policy on Standards, Software and Content

To achieve the policy on Standards, Software and Content the government will:

4.1 Choose a two-pronged approach (namely Proprietary Software and Free and Open Source Software) to the introduction and use of software. The government will work closely with international software companies to radically bring down the cost of propriety software so that piracy can be discouraged. The government will promote the education, training and implementation of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) in ICT in all areas where the implementation can be seamlessly and reliably undertaken. To this end, NiDA will prepare programmes for introducing computer programming and software development into mainstream education in collaboration with the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports and Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training and other relevant institutions. This very important step will enable Cambodia to not only be regarded as a country where Intellectual Property Right (IPR) is protected but will also help in providing alternate solutions, broaden the skills and capacities of ICT professionals, and ensure information Security.

4.2 Develop and adopt a standard Unicode-based Khmer characters system to be adopted in all ICT applications and systems. Other aspects of this important issue such as keyboard, lexicon, sorting, etc will also be standardised and codified. The Government will take international ownership of all aspects of Khmer (in Unicode, etc) such that this can be freely used and not be liable for payments for its use in any form.

4.3 Use of local language in ICT applications for the rapid development of ICT and at the same time continues encouraging the learning of the English language and its application in ICT.

4.4 Actively promote the development of relevant Cambodian content in all media, including all computer-based systems and networks. It will take the lead in creating all Government websites in a bilingual (Khmer/English) format for the rapid assimilation and use in all sectors from the government to citizen.

4.5 Support and encourage the development and use of relevant ICT applications in the public and private sector.

4.6 Authorize NiDA to develop and standardize open databases, and introducing productivity solutions in government such as office automation for ensuring long term consistency and growth,

4.7 Support and encourage government agencies to develop their respective networked applications. NiDA shall oversee the standardization of these application systems in order to integrate them with the umbrella of the Government Administration Information System (GAIS).

4.8 Supports the application of ICT for better and more transparent and efficient governance. Toward this end, the current Government Administration Information System (GAIS) project will be integrated into future plans. The Government will use the resources of NiDA and all its ministries for its expansion and utilization to all provinces in the country.

4.9 Effective use of technologies such as video conferencing and use of secure email will be actively implemented and encouraged in government.

4.10 Ensure that all processes and procedures within and between state agencies benefit from the coordinated use of ICT systems and applications.

4.11 Continuously monitor and ensure that official information and content about the country are homogenous and correct.

4.12 Expand capacities of rural areas to develop and manage using new information and communication technologies.

4.13 Create a standard reporting system for managing activities of all public service.

4.14 Establish ICT procurement policies aimed at assuring that applications purchased or developed by the government are secured, are localised to the Khmer language whenever possible, and are the best available value, and can be managed by local company. FOSS should be considered as an option.

5. Policy on Infrastructure

To achieve the policy on infrastructure the government will:

5.1 Recognises the importance of a strong, reliable, ubiquitous telecommunications network as being a key to the development of the country in general, and ICT in particular. This network should provide efficient and affordable service for voice, data and video services through out Cambodia. All means available for space and terrestrial based systems will be used.

5.2 Continuously install and upgrade reliable, modern and appropriate ICT infrastructure across the country through the MPTC. In order for MPTC to be a strong backbone for spreading and supporting plans of the government for ICT, it will create policies, environment and support systems to help grow the network.

5.3 actively promote competition from the private sector and will provide incentives and encourage investments from the local and foreign businesses and financiers for the development of the ICT infrastructure and to provide choice and quality for the citizens of Cambodia.

5.4 Facilitate the use of modern technologies and will invest and encourage the use of Internet Protocol (IP) based technologies for the creation and expansion of systems and networks in Cambodia.

5.5 Effectively utilise the benefits of IP technology by establish the Cambodia Network Information Center (KHNIC). NiDA will work closely with MPTC, and the Asia-Pacific Network Information Center (APNIC) to carry out this activity and manage it.

5.6 Supports the use of broadband technologies for the provision of multiple services. The government will consult the public on the development and announcement of a National Broadband Policy.

5.7 Support and encourage programs in the all sectors (public/private) that encourage the intelligent and properly planned use of ICT in their operations. It will ensure that all ICT infrastructure and systems are utilized to their maximum capacities.

5.8 Authorize NiDA to lead and in charge for preparing and creating ICT Master Plan for the nation. To this end, MPTC will take care of the technical details for telecommunication area, whereas NiDA will take care of the development of end applications.

6. Policy on Enterprise Development

To achieve the policy on enterprise development the government will:

6.1 Reduce the import tax rate on ICT equipment and systems to a very minimum (leading towards a zero tax rate). NiDA, MPTC and the Ministry of Economy and Finance, and relevant department shall work closely to carry out this exercise.

6.2 Allow 100% equity shareholding of ICT enterprises by foreign partners. NiDA and the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) shall work closely to expedite and implement such this policy.

6.3 Create regulations and a favourable environment for ICT enterprise development through special tax incentives.

6.4 Provide, encourage, and support e-commerce facilities by enabling the necessary legal frameworks e-transactions and e-banking. The Government will introduce reforms and re-organization of banking and financial institutions to boost credibility and trust for the systems.

6.5 Take appropriate measures to ensure efficiency, privacy, security and reliability of e-commerce systems based on international interoperable standards, for electronic transactions, systems in its domain. The government will also assist and help the private sector in specifying and building information security systems.

6.6 Provide special support to small and medium enterprises to adopt and use automation tools (e.g. inventory management).

6.7   Establish ICT parks and specially demarcated areas to provide a conducive environment (power, security, low-cost bandwidth, and economical telecommunications) to encourage entrepreneurships and enterprise development.

6.8   Support local production of ICT hardware in the country.

6.9   Put in place special investment package guidelines for investors in the ICT sector.

6.10   Encourage financial institutions such as banks to devise lending mechanisms to promote loans for small entrepreneurs in the ICT sector.