Frequently Asked Questions about Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships in ICTs for Development

A guide for national ICT policy animators

Lishan Adam

Tina James

Alice Munyua Wanjira

SEPTEMBER 2007

APC dedicates this guide to the people with whom we worked on national ICT policy advocacy in Africa from 2004 to 2006. Most of them are still contributing to national policy change.

Lishan Adam

Goretti Z. Amuriat

Dawit Bekele

Fatima Bhyat

Abebe Chekol

Willie Currie

John Dada

Anriette Esterhuysen

Coura Fall

Lina Gjerstad

Tina James

Michel Lambert

Alice Munyua

Jean-Claude Mwepu

Johnson Nkuuhe

Claire Sibthorpe

Jummai Umar

Kate Wild

David Woolnough

Table of contents

1. About this guide

Recent years have seen significant interest in the development of multi-stakeholder partnerships and multi-stakeholder processes that aim to address various developmental challenges. These have spanned a range of application areas, from environmental protection to social inclusion; from global initiatives to local and national partnerships; from alliances between the private and public sectors to the inclusion of a broader range of partners from civil society, grassroots organisations and the media; in policy development but also implementation and service delivery.

Partnerships between the public sector, the private sector and particularly civil society in promoting information and communication technology (ICT) policy are a relatively new venture. The mechanisms, management and governance of such partnerships, from loose arrangements to more formal mechanisms, are still relatively new and not always fully understood. This guide is an attempt to add to the growing body of knowledge and experience on multi-stakeholder processes and partnerships, based on the practical experiences encountered during the three-year CATIA programme[1] on ICT policy advocacy. It presents guidelines that may assist national ICT policy facilitators in coming to grips with the complexities of multi-stakeholder relationships and the attainment of common goals and objectives. It considers practical issues for the establishment of a multi-stakeholder process for ICT policy and looks at how multi-stakeholder partnerships work, what has been successful and what has not, and offers some practical suggestions on how to make them more effective. Practical experiences from two African countries – the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Kenya – are used to illustrate two possible approaches.

2. Background

The public sector has been the major force behind most ICT policy and national ICT strategy initiatives in Africa over the last decade. However, **it is becoming increasingly clear that the success of ICT in development cannot be met without the active participation of civil society, the media and the private sector.**

The main ingredients of ICT for development include a range of areas that need to be addressed – an enabling policy and regulatory environment, access to basic infrastructure, accelerated development of basic ICT skills, development of appropriate content, ICT applications for development, and advanced ICT research and development to provide innovative solutions applicable in developing country contexts. Such a wide range of requirements needs strategic alliances between different actors at national, regional and international levels. No single sector in society can deliver services to address the complexities of sustainable development; nor can public initiatives alone meet ICT for development challenges. **As a result the multi-stakeholder approach has become preferred to a traditional top-down approach for promoting policy changes and managing accountability in the implementation of ICT programmes.** The understanding that the "voices of the commons" are a strong catalyst for change and a key for meeting these ICT for development challenges has given rise to the increasingly pivotal role of civil society organisations (CSOs) drawn from non-governmental organisations, faith-based institutions, grassroots organisations, professional associations, trade unions, consumer groups, research institutes, think tanks and the media. Their involvement in multi-stakeholder processes with the private sector and policy-makers has given rise to a new form of multi-stakeholder partnership that has created a positive force for driving forward ICT policy and ICT for development (ICT4D) programmes around the world. Some governments have launched their own partnership programmes, reaching out to other stakeholders in order to enhance their work in ICT policy, planning and programme implementation.

---

1 The CATIA (Catalysing Access to ICTs in Africa) programme ran from 2003 to 2006, supported by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), with additional support from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida). The experiences in this handbook are based on the ICT policy advocacy component, which was implemented by the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) in five countries (Kenya, Ethiopia, Senegal, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo).

3. What are multi-stakeholder partnerships for ICT policy?

Multi-stakeholder partnership is a very broad term that describes groupings of civil society, the private sector, the public sector, the media and other stakeholders that come together for a common purpose, which here refers to the intent to drive changes in ICT policy development and ensuing implementation. In such partnerships the partners have a shared understanding that they play different roles and have different purposes, but that they can pursue collective goals through collaboration and common activities to achieve such goals. These partnerships are voluntary, with participation driven by the perceived benefits they may see emerging from the process. Such partnerships are increasingly being used to challenge and lobby for change in policy processes. This is, in a number of cases, underpinned by collective research funding to support a particular position in the policy process and to raise general levels of awareness and knowledge about the issues under consideration.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships show a range of modalities – from loose forum-like structures allowing for active debate and the exchange of knowledge and experience, to more formalised structures based on the creation of a legal entity with appropriate governance structures to ensure transparency and accountability. The multi-stakeholder partnership is often viewed as a network approach. However there is a substantial difference between networks and multi-stakeholder partnerships. Networks rely on the membership of like-minded institutions that share a common purpose for core activities, while multi-stakeholder partnerships aim to band institutions with different agendas together to address common issues that may affect them or their stakeholders. Networks tend to be self-organising, evolving in response to complex realities facing them or their constituents. They are highly dependent on informal leadership to achieve their purpose. Multi-stakeholder partnerships can be regarded as networks with some formal element (e.g. a name or collective identity, guiding principle and small secretariat). Multi-stakeholder partnerships are often created by agents (champions, external donors, etc.) to address specific policy challenges.

Table 1 shows some of the similarities and differences between networks and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

> Partnerships are defined as voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both state and non-state, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and to share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits.
>
> *UN General Assembly, 60th session, Report of the Secretary General. UN Doc A/60/214.*

TABLE 1. CHARACTERISTICS OF NETWORKS AND MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS		
CHARACTERISTICS	**NETWORKS**	**MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS**
Membership	Institutions with somewhat similar core objectives and agendas and those with shared interest in exchanging ideas, generating knowledge or mobilising capacity for collective action	Institutions that may have different agendas but are brought together because of a perceived common purpose
Areas of focus	Research, information sharing, implementation of strategies	Advocacy, policy-making and implementation
Management and governance	Network manager or sponsoring institution Self-governing, self-regulating Dependent on informal leadership	Tend to be managed by civil society organisations, development agencies, organisations that play a facilitating role Generally have a name and identity Presence of a secretariat to facilitate the functioning of the partnerships
Purpose	Joint value creation by all members, identification of strategies to engage with decision-makers	Advocacy for change, implementation of change
Duration	Medium and long term	Short and medium term

There is some overlap between what are defined as multi-stakeholder partnerships and those that are networks and the boundaries can be blurred. Multi-stakeholder partnerships often give rise to long-term networks, which play an ongoing role in policy formulation, critique, debate, dialogue, monitoring and implementation. Multi-stakeholder partnerships could lead to:

- A further voluntary association of like-minded organisations that form their own network to pursue specific goals such as exchanging knowledge or practices, and/or

- More fluid, less formal and organic structures that emerge and grow out of multi-stakeholder groups and adapt to achieve specific outcomes.

The Kenya ICT Action Network (KICTANet)

The impetus for a multi-stakeholder process in Kenya arose from a recommendation of the World Summit on the Information Society and long-standing collaboration between civil society and the private sector in advocating for different ICT policy changes in Kenya over the last two decades. KICTANet was initiated by civil society organisations in October 2004 during a meeting organised by the Media Council, APC, the DFID-supported CATIA programme, TESPOK (Telecommunications Service Providers Association of Kenya), Summit Strategies and the Kenya WSIS Civil Society Caucus. These organisations together with the Kenya ICT Federation (KIF) formed the initial members of KICTANet.

The initiators of KICTANet were facing common problems relating to ICT policy in Kenya and felt that their individual goals could be achieved by focusing on the collective goal of sharing resources and skills, stimulating debate and catalysing the policy process. Through interaction with stakeholders, awareness creation, mobilisation of the private and public sectors and civil society around policy issues and encouragement of synergies, KICTANet was able to achieve trust and social legitimacy among policy-makers, international institutions and the general public in Kenya. KICTANet played a catalytic role in facilitating ICT policy changes in the country.

Likewise, loosely coupled networks can in turn lead to the creation of more formalised multi-stakeholder partnerships, policy spaces and a means of negotiating with state and international institutions. A good example can be seen in the case of Kenya, where KICTANet started out as a loose association of interested individuals but eventually became a more formalised institution, as this was felt to be a more appropriate mechanism to gain legitimacy and credibility in ICT policy negotiations.

In the ICT sector, the multi-stakeholder partnership approach has been used by donor agencies to work together in promoting policy changes or ICT appropriation for social and economic development. One such arrangement is the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP),[2] which brings together public sector, private sector and civil society organisations with the goal of sharing knowledge, expertise, experiences and resources. Members of the GKP comprise governments, bilateral donor agencies, private sector companies, networks and multilateral/international institutions that are committed to harnessing the potential of ICT for equitable and sustainable development.

However, **the key impact of multi-stakeholder processes is largely at the national level where the centre of gravity lies for ICT policy support.** National ICT for development challenges that demand multi-stakeholder partnerships are numerous. They range from a lack of enabling policy and regulatory environments that promote investment, inadequate content and applications that meet key development challenges, particularly the livelihoods of the poor, limited research capacity in the ICT sector, limited skills bases, inadequate national backbones and limited access to rural and remote areas.

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) has been influential in stimulating national multi-stakeholder approaches to ICT policy development and application. The Geneva Phase of WSIS in 2003, among others, recommended that all countries implement the Plans of Action emerging from the Summit through a network approach and report back to the Tunis Phase in 2005. **WSIS did not only prompt governments to reach out to the private sector and civil society but also, in some cases, enabled civil society to assume leadership roles in ICT policy development.**

---

2 www.globalknowledge.org

Multi-stakeholder partnerships can be sponsored by the public sector, civil society or the private sector, or a combined effort from all of them. Networks can and have been started by civil society organisations, government, the private sector and individuals. They can be global, regional, national or local, or can operate at different geographical levels at the same time. **The question of who should initiate or drive a multi-stakeholder process is dependent on the local setting and context; but it has become clear that civil society-driven partnership models fare better than the public sector models.** The multi-stakeholder partnerships in Kenya and the Democratic Republic of the Congo were both sponsored by civil society organisations; but the public sector and the private sector were involved, to varying degrees, from the early stages of their formation.

4. What are the goals of a multi-stakeholder partnership?

The core theme of multi-stakeholder partnerships is joint value creation by all the participating members. Multi-stakeholder partnerships are important to bring about policy change, share risks, and find innovative and synergistic ways to pool resources and talents, based on each participant's strengths. Multi-stakeholder processes are longitudinal and iterative initiatives that are developed to deliver mu-

tual benefits for all that are engaged in the process on a long-term basis. The purpose is to pursue a shared vision, maintain a belief in favour of joint problem solving, and add value to the challenge under consideration beyond that which can be achieved through the efforts of individual initiatives. **The main goal of a multi-stakeholder ICT process is to see change in policy and implementation.** A good example can be found in the Kenya ICT policy process where the joining of forces from the private sector and civil society resulted in a combined effort that surpassed any change that could be effected by either of the sectors on their own.

The specific goals of multi-stakeholder partnerships in ICT policy development are to:

- Identify specific ICT issues that affect social and economic progress and which need priority attention

- Carry out joint analysis and research which will better inform the policy formulation process and subsequent implementation

- Pool resources, talents and other capabilities of a diverse range of stakeholders, thereby strengthening the capacity to effect change

- Share information on problems and solutions, and promote greater levels of understanding and trust between the various stakeholders

---

Goals of La Dynamique Multisectorielle pour les Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication (DMTIC)

The creation of the DMTIC, a multi-stakeholder ICT policy advocacy group in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was facilitated through the DFID-supported CATIA programme. In 2004, based on the experience of other countries, the CATIA programme on policy and advocacy, implemented by APC, identified Alternatives as national facilitator for policy advocacy work in the DRC.

In February 2005, Alternatives brought key stakeholders from civil society and the private and public sectors together to articulate national ICT challenges and embark on research and advocacy work. The major ICT issues identified by the DMTIC were:

- Development of a national backbone infrastructure

- Development of a national ICT policy and strategy
- Fostering ICT regulation and legislation
- Promotion of content and applications to advance post-conflict social and economic development
- Distribution of ICT equipment and resources to improve access to computers and the internet.

The DMTIC began its policy advocacy work by conducting research on a national backbone network through funding from the IDRC. The study is expected to create the basis for lobbying decision-makers for policy changes, and for the private and public sectors to roll out the urgently needed broadband backbone infrastructure in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

- Develop guidelines for best practices, written inputs into policy processes or action plans for the implementation of ICT policy changes

- Build the capacity of citizens to gain confidence, knowledge and skills, which in turn will enable them to participate more fully in the policy development process

- Lobby policy- and decision-makers for change

- Raise the level of awareness of ICTs through collaborating with the media

- Evaluate and monitor progress of change and subsequent policy implementation

- Address other ICT issues that are relevant to socio-economic progress.

5. What are the benefits of multi-stakeholder partnerships?

Multi-stakeholder partnerships do not only bring key stakeholders together to discuss policy issues, build consensus and implement solutions, but also help to improve equity between players, and promote transparency and participation of the public in the ICT policy process. The multi-stakeholder process uses a wide range of methods and tools of engagement including face-to-face meetings, online discussions, training workshops and the formation of working groups to prepare briefing papers, inputs into policy processes and background research on priority ICT topics. In general:

- **Multi-stakeholder partnerships promote inclusivity and equity in ICT policy and implementation.** The approach facilitates the participation of all interested parties in the process in an equitable manner – from issue identification, preparation of supporting research, knowledge sharing, development of action plans and assigning tasks to monitoring the progress of policy changes. Both the DMTIC and KICTANet promote equal participation of the private sector, the media, researchers, civil society and the public sector in the discussion of ICT policy issues and implementation of solutions.

- **Multi-stakeholder partnerships expand the analytical capability to address ICT policy issues.** The involvement of a wide range of stakeholder groups enables the development of a more comprehensive analysis of policy issues than any single stakeholder group can achieve. For example, the involvement of the Post and Telecommunications Corporation of the DRC in the DMTIC was useful in bringing out the challenges that the government faces in rolling out broadband infrastructure and discussing projects that were in the pipeline. In the case of KICTANet, the collaboration of civil society and the private sector resulted in better understanding of the issues regarding universal access. Similarly the collaboration with media decision-makers has resulted in a better understanding of areas of mutual concern in the Media Bill and the ICT Policy Bill.

- **Multi-stakeholder partnerships promote grassroots mobilisation and participation.** Their simple existence encourages the participation of civil society and community-based organisations in the policy debate. Multi-stakeholder partnerships also help in raising the awareness of the key actors and their constituencies.

- **Multi-stakeholder partnerships promote the development of focused and holistic action plans.** Both KICTANet and the DMTIC focused on only a few issues at a time. In the case of KICTANet, one of the first activities undertaken was to prioritise the areas on which it would focus. In the early days, this was aimed primarily at moving the ICT policy process forward, but after the ICT policy was drafted, the focus moved onto other areas such as voice over internet protocol (VoIP) and more recently the Media Bill.

- **Multi-stakeholder partnerships foster the sharing of skills and innovation.** Bringing stakeholders with different perspectives together encourages all participants to see problems in new ways and enables the development of new and innovative strategies for change. The participation of civil society, the public sector and the private sector in the development of a national broadband plan for the DRC was educative for all stakeholders. Similarly the participation of KICTANet members in the Kenyan ICT policy process was useful for negotiating the deregulation of VoIP.

- **Multi-stakeholder partnerships provide an important platform for training a new crop of experts** who help to sustain the partnership and animate the policy debates on an ongoing basis. This can take place either within the partnership or outside it, when these experts move on to new positions in the ICT arena. Capacity-building is therefore a very important outcome of the multi-stakeholder process, even when this is not explicitly built into the process. This was particularly evident in the CATIA policy advocacy process. Without exception, each of the animators involved at the national level in these processes emerged with a deeper and more extensive knowledge of ICT policy processes and the key issues. All have subsequently been able to participate at a more sophisticated level in national (and international) debates and some have moved on to more senior positions since the CATIA programme ended in 2006.

- **Multi-stakeholder partnerships create a balance between market orientation and development orientation.** The participation of civil society and the public and private sector helps to maintain a strong balance between commercial and public interests, ensuring that delivery genuinely focuses on sustainable outcomes. KICTANet was able to bring out the social and public dimensions through its focus on universal access in the Kenyan ICT policy process. The fact that the commentary on the initial ICT policy document was drafted by a multi-stakeholder group carried more weight with government decision-makers because it was seen as coming from a representative body. Many of the recommendations made by KICTANet were eventually incorporated into the final policy document.

- **Multi-stakeholder partnerships encourage good governance.** Partnerships provide an opportunity for different groups to identify conflicts, gaps or overlaps between their respective policies and programmes, and to better coordinate their work going forward. The inherent tension created through the coming together of partners with different goals and purposes can be used to good effect to ensure greater levels of transparency and accountability.

- **Multi-stakeholder partnerships enable participants to leverage their financial resources.** They are useful on a number of levels during the policy formulation process: a) for pooling financial resources during ICT policy processes to ensure that policy recommendations are backed up by solid background research to support particular approaches in the development of an ICT policy; and b) for the combined undertaking of participative processes such as workshops and think tanks, awareness raising campaigns through the media, the creation of online discussion lists, and the preparation of briefing papers.

Once the ICT policy has been formulated and validated, multi-stakeholder partnerships become important for developing public-private partnerships, especially in the implementation of sustainable ICT projects. They can help to identify how public money can best be used to leverage private investments.

- **Multi-stakeholder partnerships motivate both leaders and laggards.** They create platforms for encouraging those with limited commitment and for bringing progressive actors together. Success tends to breed success. In the case of KICTANet fewer than ten organisations participated in the original start-up of the network in 2004. The numbers have increased two-fold and since 2006 include increased participation from a broader range of players, including media owners.

- **Multi-stakeholder partnerships promote ownership and commitment for action.** They enable participants to gain a better understanding of the need for change, feel ownership for a proposed plan of action and create a platform for peer pressure to ensure delivery of outcomes.

- **Multi-stakeholder partnerships help to develop trust among groups that are usually suspicious and hostile towards each other.** Civil society, government and the private sector are traditionally suspicious of each other. The media, a relatively new player in ICT policy processes, in turn brings in suspicions relating to the accuracy of reporting and exposure of decision-makers, which is often not welcomed. This model promotes trust and encourages further partnership outside the core partners. For example, KICTANet has been able to bring the media into the ICT policy processes through a) creating opportunities for the training of journalists on ICT matters; b) working with

media editors and owners to raise understanding of the importance of emerging ICT policy issues relating to technology convergence; and c) creating opportunities for close collaboration with journalists to raise the profile of ICT reporting in the national media.

However the multi-stakeholder process is not always straightforward. It could fall into the trap of too much talk and no action, with continual meetings and discussions and no recognisable and tangible result being achieved. This is a particular risk if there is no political will to change and no widespread support from key players. Enlisting all key stakeholders, reaching agreement on a shared vision and establishing procedures for accountability and measuring progress (checks and balances) are all important for the multi-stakeholder process to succeed.

6. How do you deal with the challenges of multi-stakeholder partnerships?

Multi-stakeholder processes are not easy to manage. They face a number of challenges which could result in failure to reach their hoped-for outcomes. Below are some of the problems that are likely to be encountered and which will require extraordinary efforts at times to ensure that they do not derail the process:

- **Different groups of stakeholders are likely to compete with each other.** This can be due to self-interest, or they may be competitors in their respective ICT activities, for instance, mobile operators competing for the same customers or for the attention of the regulator; NGOs competing for the same limited pool of funding; national government departments with overlapping mandates who want to look credible and compete for the right to own the process, particularly if it is a successful one; consultants competing for possible research assignments; donors who wish to be associated with the process, a particular problem when several sources of funding have been provided.

- **External funding resources may be limited and not always easy to identify and access.** This has proved to be a difficult problem for many multi-stakeholder processes. Good practice learnt from the Kenya experience is that a) success breeds success – once the process was seen as legitimate and producing visible outcomes, it

became much easier to find funding sources; and b) multiple funding sources, particularly where there is an active private sector, create a more sustainable revenue flow. For example, in the case of Kenya, most of the meetings, workshops, background research, etc. were funded either through in-kind contributions from numerous businesses (one providing the venue, another the catering, internet costs, office space, and so on) or funding for operating costs and background research which was provided by various donors (e.g. the IDRC, DFID). Lack of sustainable funding resources could jeopardise the completion of the process.

- **Finding common ground between various stakeholders requires strong negotiation and facilitation skills.** Due to the fact that the process works with a wide variety of stakeholders, it may be difficult to identify common objectives and outcomes. Different parties may have a history of antagonism due to opposing ideologies and approaches, or in some cases, never having worked together before. This may make it difficult for the partners to "find" each other; for example, the private sector is generally seen as driven only by profit motives, which in turn is seen as negative by those more interested in seeing developments for the public good. Once again, the Kenya case illustrates that there are possibilities for finding common ground; in this case, most of the stakeholders wanted to see a comprehensive ICT policy on the table.

- **Multi-stakeholder processes run the danger of becoming no more than endless talk shops,** with little action or visible outcome despite numerous meetings and workshops. It is important to ensure that the process includes a strong emphasis on the outcomes that need to be reached, and to build in a monitoring mechanism that ensures that the process is kept on track, that its outputs are visible, and that there is continual reflection on the direction in which the process is moving. It must also be accepted that most multi-stakeholder processes have a limited lifetime. Once the goals for the partnerships have been achieved, there may be no reason to continue *unless* new issues are identified which would benefit from a multi-stakeholder approach.

- **The existence of many initiatives will result in a fragmented process**. Recent interest in multi-stakeholder processes by government, the private sector and civil society has resulted in competing initiatives. For example, there are three different initiatives in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to bring together key actors, namely the COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa) Regional ICT Support Programme, the UNECA (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa) national ICT policy project and the APC/CATIA and Alternatives DMTIC. This often leads to confusion and dissipation of energies and resources. Where possible, synergies should be found so that these processes can support each other or eventually merge into a single process.

- **Multi-stakeholder partnerships rely heavily on the presence of a visible and active champion**. When champions leave – and they are often highly in demand due to their visible roles and knowledge of ICT policy – the multi-stakeholder process may flounder. This can be counteracted through ensuring that there is a succession plan in place.

- **Volunteerism is not sustainable**. It is difficult to keep multi-stakeholder partnerships going without a continuous flow of resources. Running a multi-stakeholder process based on the voluntary efforts of a few core animators is unlikely to be sustainable.

7. What are the roles of stakeholders in a multi-stakeholder process?

Multi-stakeholder partnerships engage many players in policy-making and implementation. These include:

- Policy- and decision-makers at various levels of government
- Public representatives (parliamentarians)
- Civil servants (municipal, rural and zonal)
- Civil society organisations (regional, national and international)
- Grassroots organisations
- Consumers and consumer groups
- End-user beneficiaries

- The media – print, radio and TV (regional and national) on various levels e.g. owners, editors, journalists
- Academics and researchers
- Consultants
- Private sector (small and medium enterprises, service providers, national and multinational companies)
- Industry associations
- Public service providers including incumbent telecommunications operators and regulators
- Development aid agencies and other supporters.

Each of these stakeholders will play, to a greater or lesser extent, a different role in the ICT policy process. **It is useful to carry out a stakeholder analysis at the beginning of a multi-stakeholder process to ensure that there is a clear understanding of who should be involved in the process, to what extent, and at what time during the process**.

Generally government leads the policy process but it is likely that during the process champions may emerge from the ranks of any of these stakeholder groups. Leadership may also change during the course of the process. Flexibility and adaptability are key features of such processes.

Policy- and decision-makers: The participation of policy- and decision-makers is critical for successful ICT policy outcomes. Policy-makers could play the following major roles in the multi-stakeholder process:

- Sponsor the ICT policy process as in the case of Kenya where this was done in partnership with donor agencies and the private sector
- Provide resources including funding and documentation
- Create mechanisms for follow up and implementation of the policy
- Carry out reforms that stimulate the development of ICTs.

Policy-makers can benefit from the capacities of the private sector in administering projects and those of civil society organisations in promoting social and economic agendas targeted at the poor.

Experiences in the DRC and Kenya show that key decision-makers can be brought on board in various ways:

- The civil society or sponsoring institutions could meet with the responsible senior minister or permanent secretary to secure their support. Experience suggests that a face-to-face meeting with policy-makers is essential to generate buy-in to the overall process and for follow-up activities. KICTANet members were able to meet the minister of communications and information and secure the full support of the minister and the permanent secretary in the development and implementation of the Kenyan ICT policy.

- Regulators and policy advisors could be approached as an entry point to secure senior policy-makers' commitment. It is difficult to meet with senior ministers in some countries. In such cases, policy advisors or communications regulators could be used as a channel to approach ministers and prime ministers.

Development agencies could be used to bring the policy-makers and local stakeholders together. Development agencies that enjoy good relationships with senior policy-makers could be used as an entry point. In the case of KICTANet and the DMTIC, the IDRC and DFID, through its CATIA programme, played this role.

Parliamentarians: Parliamentarians are essential to provide high-level leadership and pass any legislation arising from an ICT policy process. Their involvement and commitment is essential to provide vision and to lobby their colleagues during the parliamentary debates likely to ensue after a policy has been drafted and tabled in parliament. Parliamentarians have the following key roles in ICT policy development and implementation:

- Providing vision and leadership on what constituencies need and how technologies are applied to resolve local development challenges

- Supporting the evolution of laws and legislation that stimulate ICT sector development and its application

- Monitoring the implementation of policies and regulation including scrutinising policy-makers and making them accountable for follow-up actions.

Civil servants (municipal, rural and zonal): The participation of civil servants at various levels in the ICT policy development and implementation process is critical due to their proximity to service delivery. They are however often left out of national processes, leading to lack of commitment to proposed actions. Civil servants at the district and municipal levels often act as a gateway between government policies and local initiatives. As gatekeepers, they have a unique position in unlocking (or stalling) access to information and communication services. Their participation in ICT policy deliberations is therefore important.

Civil society organisations (CSOs): Civil society organisations have become pivotal for promoting ICT policies in recent years. CSOs have shown substantial successes in agenda setting, building momentum behind a policy issue and influencing the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies. Civil society has not only been playing a key role in advocacy of pro-poor ICT policies but has also been instrumental in creating an informed network of local organisations including women's groups, the media and others interested in ICT policy issues. Drawing on local knowledge and capacity for innovation, and carrying the trust of the general public, CSOs can contribute enormously to the development of ICTs. They play the following roles during a multi-stakeholder process:

- They are increasingly becoming a major initiator and coordinator of multi-stakeholder platforms particularly in the ICT area.

- They play a key role as watchdogs to ensure that government commitments are adhered to and that processes deliver on agreed-upon outcomes.

- They play a key role in analysing issues and providing suggestions on possible actions. This includes raising awareness and general levels of understanding of the issues and processes.

- They could play a key role in lobbying the government and private sector to come to a consensus on ICT policy issues and solutions.

- Think tanks and research-oriented organisations could analyse issues and provide background knowledge to all stakeholders in the multi-stakeholder process.

Grassroots organisations: Community-based organisations such as women's groups, cooperatives, and faith-based organisations need to be involved in ICT policy deliberations in order to ensure that local challenges and equity issues are factored into ICT policy-making. Their voices are more likely to address immediate needs relating to poverty alleviation.

Consumers: Consumers and consumer groups, where these exist, are often overlooked in ICT policy discussions. Increasingly there is awareness that consumer rights need to be put on the table in a more visible manner, particularly regarding affordable pricing and levels and reach of service provision in underserved areas.

End-user beneficiaries: ICT policies have a wide range of end-users and beneficiaries who are not apparent (or generally included) in the policy formulation process. These range from academic institutions (e.g. schools and teachers), small and medium enterprises, extension workers that may benefit from access to ICTs, farmers, the youth and the disabled. While policies often involve the supply side institutions and businesses such as telecommunications and ICT companies, the demand side institutions and beneficiaries are not involved on equal terms, if at all. Limited involvement of development professionals in the ICT policy and regulatory discussion means the outcomes are often skewed to infrastructure and access rather than the content and applications that underpin pro-poor interventions and the delivery of social services.

Media: The media is increasingly becoming involved in ICT policy issues. The media plays a major role in improving public awareness and disseminating research results to their audiences. It is instrumental in producing easy to understand articles on different policy issues and making technical issues accessible to a wider public. Unfortunately, the use of the media in ICT policy promotion is far from developed in Africa. The participation of the media and media associations in ICT policy formulation will not only improve the ability to inform the population about opportunities and challenges of ICTs but also increase the integration of the media in the delivery of broadcasting, print and other modern media services.

Private sector: The private sector's contribution is critical to the development of policy and implementing long-term solutions. The private sector brings to the table a culture of initiative, innovation, implementation and risk-taking that is critical for implementing successful policy outcomes. The private sector could also help in financing a multi-stakeholder process, but caution is needed to ensure that the process is not hijacked by vested interests and private sector agendas. By partnering with civil society and the public sector, the private sector could learn and promote the social agenda of ICT development as part of their core activities. Industry associations, where they exist, can play a useful role in consolidating private sector points of view. This has been very much the case in KICTANet where TESPOK, the telecommunications and internet service providers association, has played a key role.

Incumbent telecommunications operators: Telecommunications operators are among the most powerful players in the ICT industry in Africa. While recent liberalisation of the sector has improved competition, the

---

Multi-stakeholder partnership around ICT policy development and approval in Kenya

The private sector umbrella body for internet service providers (ISPs), the Telecommunication Service Providers of Kenya (TESPOK), was by far the most mobilised and organised lobbying group in ICT policy issues in Kenya. TESPOK was engaged in advocacy and lobbying government and several of its achievements resulted in significant changes in the ICT sector. However, while the various lobbies had resulted in the end of monopoly, there had not been a collective effort towards encouraging the government to speed up the ICT policy process in an open and inclusive manner. After its establishment, the main focus of KICTANet was on the development and implementation of a national ICT policy for Kenya. Through lobbying by KICTANet and in preparation for the second phase of WSIS, the Ministry of Information and Communication issued a draft ICT policy in February 2005. This was followed by a national consultation workshop animated by KICTANet. The policy was approved by the Kenyan parliament in February 2006.

majority of countries still run monopoly incumbents that often work against all the initiatives intended to open up the ICT sector to competition and affordable pricing. The involvement of incumbent operators in ICT policy is important to improve their contribution to social objectives of ICT policies such as universal access.

Telecommunications regulators: Telecommunications and broadcasting sector regulators, including their regional associations such as the Communications Regulators Association of Southern Africa (CRASA) and the West Africa Telecommunications Regulators Assembly (WATRA), play a key role in ICT policy and regulation. Regulators are essential to:

- Play a referee role in balancing public access objectives with profitability of the private sector

- Provide a platform and technical expertise during the discussions of various policy and regulatory issues

- Develop regulations that translate policies into actions.

Academics, researchers and consultants: This group plays a key role in many African ICT policy processes – as facilitators, advisors and researchers during policy-making and implementation. In many cases, their knowledge and expertise is needed to gather evidence in support of specific key ICT policy issues. In some countries they also form a "core" of second-level players who remain present when politicians and key government decision-makers are replaced due to changing political situations.

Development agencies: Most of the financial re-sources to support multi-stakeholder processes come from donor agencies. These agencies have realised that association with local stakeholders is one of the most effective ways to ensure commitment to the development and implementation of appropriate ICT policies. Creating perpetual dependency is a danger and needs to be avoided. All stakeholders should contribute towards a multi-stakeholder process. In the case of KICTANet, resources were provided by several donor agencies, but in addition the private sector made substantive contributions to workshops, support for a secretariat and sharing the costs of public events.

8. What are the guiding principles for multi-stakeholder partnerships?

The evolution and sustainability of a multi-stake-holder process for ICT policy depends on individual country settings. The two case studies included at the end of this handbook illustrate how important an understanding of local contexts is to the successful implementation of such a process. However, there are a number of principles that apply across all multi-stakeholder processes. These are listed below.

- **The multi-stakeholder process needs to deal with inclusive or cross-cutting issues.** The process can be costly in terms of resources and time. As a result, consistent participation of stakeholders could be a problem. The higher the incentives for all and the more timely the delivery of outcomes, the better the levels of participation. The Kenyan case provides an interesting example – the key incentive for Kenyan stakeholders was the lack of a national ICT policy and the fact that the existing process had been dragging on for a number of years. There was therefore a strong incentive for various stakeholders to get the process acceler-ated. The formation of KICTANet proved to be a timely intervention as it provided a credible multi-stakeholder platform for advocating ICT policy de-velopment. Similarly stakeholders in the DRC were interested in resolving infrastructure challenges – the DRC does not have a backbone infrastructure that supports its social and economic develop-ment. Agreements on a shared vision and objective at the beginning of their multi-stakeholder process took the process forward more speedily.

- **The multi-stakeholder process has to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are included.** Partici-pants should feel that they are treated equally in discussing the issues under consideration. This is particularly important when various parties may come into the process with unequal power bases. For example, in many developing countries telecommunications operators wield considerable influence in determining policy directions. This may make it very difficult for CSOs to bring their voices to the table. Whoever facilitates the proc-ess has to recognise such inequities and ensure that mechanisms are in place to provide a space for all stakeholders to make their contributions. In practical terms this means that consideration

has to be given to the following issues, to name but a few: 1) when, where and at what time meetings will be held; 2) the creation of a space for all stakeholders to contribute to the setting of the agendas; 3) the style and level of formality of the meetings (e.g. presentations, participative approaches for increased dialogue between various stakeholders, facilitated group sessions, etc.); 4) who chairs the meetings; 5) the type and level of communication (technical or not, use of local languages, translation facilities); 6) the manner in which presentations are made and interaction is encouraged; 7) the use of online discussion lists versus face-to-face interactions, since many CSOs may not have access to the internet due to high costs or unavailability in rural areas and this would mean that an online process could exclude their voices from being heard. The process should continually be monitored and adjustments made to ensure the appropriate level of inclusiveness is maintained.

- **The multi-stakeholder process has to be seen as legitimate and credible in the eyes of key stakeholders.** Much of this legitimacy will depend on the manner in which the facilitator(s)/champion(s) of the process are viewed: they have to be regarded as neutral and objective, and therefore able to involve many groups of stakeholders in an equitable manner, without being seen to favour one over the other. This can be particularly challenging, as has already been pointed out in Section 5. In the case of KICTANet, for example, the national animator was well regarded by a broad spectrum of stakeholders and, as ongoing evaluations revealed, each group viewed her as being "one of us". This, together with support from APC, made it possible to negotiate and find common ground more easily.

- **Building trust with all partners is an important component of a multi-stakeholder process.** Multi-stakeholder partnerships work well when there is trust and cordiality among the stakeholders. This is not without its challenges as the nature of a multi-stakeholder partnership is about people from different environments, motives and interests coming together to resolve an ICT policy challenge. Feelings of commonality of purpose increase as participants continue to engage in the interactive multi-stakeholder process. Trust comes when all parties are heard and recognised for what they bring to the table.

- **Multi-stakeholder partnerships thrive on ongoing interaction.** Creating spaces for informal interaction, coffees, after-meeting drinks, spontaneous exchanges, "off-topic" online discussions, etc. play a vital role in stimulating partnerships. A formal and rigid meeting procedure can stifle the formation of strong relationships. Over time, the less formal interactions can build camaraderie, common understanding, friendships and a community of purpose across different organisations and individuals.

- **Multi-stakeholder processes require champions or sponsoring institutions.** Champions and sponsoring institutions are important to pull everyone together. In the case of KICTANet, a small group of enthusiastic individuals championed the process – the CATIA-appointed national animator (who had been predominantly involved in civil society activism), and two private sector representatives who were supported by a small body of ICT experts drawn from the local ICT community. The IDRC played a significant role in promoting trust among key players, particularly between government and the private sector. Likewise, Alternatives was instrumental in ensuring that the DMTIC carried out its objectives and built relationships with key partners in the DRC.

- **Strong political support is essential for a successful outcome.** Multi-stakeholder partnerships in both the DRC and Kenya were driven by the need to bring about changes – in infrastructure roll-out in the former and in ICT policy for the latter. In both cases strong political support was necessary. Without solid, supportive policy frameworks and basic good governance, the effectiveness of multi-stakeholder processes will inevitably be limited.

- **Multi-stakeholder processes require monitoring and evaluation.** Measurable goals and objectives are difficult to enforce but are essential for a successful multi-stakeholder process. The flexibility of the multi-stakeholder approach often makes it difficult to establish how progress should be measured and who should carry responsibility for failures to deliver on objectives. Nevertheless, a

<div style="border:1px solid #000;padding:1em;">

Global Knowledge Partnership - Principles of multi-stakeholder partnership

PRINCIPLE 1 Know when to apply a multi-sector ICT partnership.

PRINCIPLE 2 Before agreeing to enter into partnership weigh its merits against the alternatives and risks.

PRINCIPLE 3 Multi-stakeholder ICT partnerships work best when they mutually reinforce the interests of all partners.

PRINCIPLE 4 Successful partnerships are built on complementary competencies and resources that in combination meet the parameters of some strategic design.

PRINCIPLE 5 The resources and competencies contributed to the partnership should be drawn from as close as possible to the core "business" of the partner organisations.

PRINCIPLE 6 Consensus should be sought for a written document identifying at a minimum: the shared vision of the partnership, the objectives of each partner for the partnership, and the division of roles and responsibilities.

PRINCIPLE 7 When evaluating the outcomes of multi-stakeholder ICT partnerships care should be taken to identify the incremental contribution of the partnership activities over and above external factors and the next most likely alternative.

<div style="text-align:right;">Source: Global Knowledge Partnership, Multi-stakeholder Partnerships: Issue Paper.</div>

</div>

multi-stakeholder process needs some level of transparency and accountability to succeed. Participant institutions should establish and agree on key performance targets and encourage or challenge one another to deliver on stated goals and objectives.

- **Key people should be involved.** The most successful partnerships are those that have included one or more players from each of the key stakeholder groups. A multi-stakeholder process should not be seen as a representation but as a tool for ensuring the effectiveness of the partnership by bringing to the table those who have the vision, expertise and experience to make the goals of the partnership happen. Engagement of senior champions that advocate for the common goals set up as part of the multi-stakeholder process is far more essential than the partnership itself.

- **Funding is needed.** Partnerships need to establish special trust funds to function, particularly to implement medium-term programmes such as research and continued lobbying and awareness raising. Without adequate funding and support for the implementation of its programmes, and for coordinating activities, it is unlikely that the necessary driving force can be maintained.

9. How do you drive a multi-stakeholder process?

A multi-stakeholder process for ICT policy begins with a champion organisation identifying a policy issue. A process or partnership may already exist and this should be used as a basis for future activities. Building on existing processes or extending the number of players is an important step in the development of a multi-stakeholder process. In the case of Kenya, TESPOK had been working with key champions on ICT

<div style="border:1px solid #000;padding:1em;">

Raising funds to foster a multi-stakeholder process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Kenya

As soon as it was established, the DMTIC focused on only a few issues of which the major one was the development of a national backbone. In Kenya, KICTANet also focused its activities on a very specific initial activity – speeding up the ICT policy formulation process. This prevented the institutions from spreading themselves too thinly. Alternatives, which sponsored the DMTIC, then approached donors for funding a national backbone study that would form the basis for advocacy regarding infrastructure roll-out, including broadband. IDRC provided the funding for this study, which has involved all stakeholders.

</div>

policy issues for a decade, but did not appear to be making sufficient progress. Once more stakeholders were brought into the process, and KICTANet was established, a more credible partnership was created.

In order to be effective, **ICT policy partnerships need to have clear objectives, shared by all participating stakeholders**. These objectives and issues vary from one country to the other. Examples of the issues that are often addressed include:

- Development and implementation of a broad-based national ICT policy and strategy

- Participation in international regimes and policy processes for infrastructure (e.g. regional broadband policies, internet addressing, radio frequency spectrum management, standardisation, etc.) and content and applications issues (e.g. privacy, security, taxation, authentication, pornography and spam)

- Infrastructure development issues
  = Rural and remote access
  = National backbone and broadband infrastructure
  = Open access and cross-border connectivity

- Specific regulatory issues
  = Interconnection of services
  = Voice over internet protocol (VoIP)
  = Licensing fees or procedures
  = Radio frequency spectrum allocation
  = Tariff issues
  = Quality of services and attending to consumer complaints
  = Customs clearance and tax exemption issues
  = Universal access strategies

- Application of ICT for social and economic development
  = Applications for health, education, agriculture, management and monitoring of the environment, etc.
  = ICT sector development
  = Use of ICTs by business and services
  = Use of ICTs by civil society
  = Access to computers and other gadgets by those who need them most including people who are physically challenged (disabled)

  = ICT and different groups such as women, youth and the disabled
  = Competitiveness issues including ICT-enabled services such as business process outsourcing and call centres

- Research and development
  = National capacity in ICT innovation
  = Research and development in universities
  = Teaching, training, certification of engineers
  = National and regional research network

- Training and capacity-building
  = Awareness raising
  = Building capacities for development professionals and policy-makers
  = Building capacities in the wider population for basic ICT skills

- Culture and tools
  = ICTs and local culture, indigenous knowledge
  = Free and open source software
  = Open content.

These issues are important for many countries. However, **it is essential for a multi-stakeholder process to focus on only a few challenges at a time**. Experience in the DRC and Kenya shows that preferably two to three issues should be addressed at a time.

Champions: Once the process is underway, it is important to identify a champion or allow volunteers to put themselves forward for this task. A champion in this case would be an individual or organisation that is trusted and respected by all stakeholders and plays a catalytic role throughout the engagement process. The champion identifies potential participants, and sets the multi-stakeholder process in motion.

Membership size is dependent on the issue under discussion. To enable full transparency it is important that the membership be inclusive but focused on the issue under consideration. Too large or too small a membership base should be avoided.

Facilitators/animators: A multi-stakeholder process needs to be facilitated by a capable facilitator. Their duties include the convening of meetings with partners. Early meetings need to focus on reaching agreement

on the goals and objectives of the multi-stakeholder partnerships, designing the process and building a joint analysis of the problems that the process is trying to tackle. At this point participants may need to make public commitments to meeting the shared objectives.

Once shared objectives have been agreed upon, the process moves on to identifying a research agenda and joint action to tackle the ICT policy problem under consideration. These may be developed into an action plan with targets and timetables. Participants could also discuss the division of labour and mechanisms for communication including the use of mailing lists and regular face-to-face meetings, training workshops, think tanks, etc.

Electronic communications are important for multi-stakeholder processes. Mailing lists and email enable stakeholders to work together in developing ideas and keeping less-engaged stakeholders up-to-date with progress. This was particularly effective in KICTANet, where a large proportion of the inputs into the draft ICT policy were dealt with electronically. Websites enable processes to be transparent, and enable outreach to potential participants and the general public. Video-conferencing has also been used very successfully in some cases, particularly when the members operate from different geographic locations. However, given the importance of building strong trust-based relationships, multi-stakeholder partnerships do benefit strongly from having some opportunities for face-to-face interaction, both formal and informal. This is also particularly important where CSOs may not always have access to the internet.

Securing high-level commitment: High-level commitment is essential for the multi-stakeholder process to deliver real policy change and needs to include decision-makers in government and other communities.

Governance structures need to be established and may include the following:

Questions for establishing a multi-stakeholder process

Setting the direction

- What will be the goals and objectives?
- What are the proposed outcomes of the partnership?
- On which activities should the partnership focus?

Leadership and coordination

- Who will lead the process? (the champion)
- Who will take the partnership process forward? (the facilitator/s)
- Who is going to participate in the multi-stakeholder process? (stakeholder analysis/the partners)
- What governance structures need to be put in place to ensure a transparent and accountable process?

The process

- How is the partnership process going to be taken forward? (the action plan)
- How long will it take to develop and agree on a detailed action plan for implementation?
- What division of labour is possible for delivering on the outputs of the action plans?

- What research and baseline studies should the partnership undertake to substantiate its case?
- What capacity-building activities need to be undertaken to ensure that all partners/key players can participate actively in the process?

Communications and information dissemination

- Who will take responsibility for developing a communications plan?
- What activities will you undertake to support awareness raising and advocacy activities?

Funding

- How will the partnership process be funded?
- Are there opportunities for multi-funding between the partners?
- Who will take responsibility for fundraising?

Monitoring and evaluation

- What monitoring and evaluation process should be put in place to gauge the success of the multi-stakeholder process?

- **Steering committee:** These generally include representatives of all the stakeholder groups involved in the multi-stakeholder process. The steering committee/group is useful to oversee the general progress of the multi-stakeholder partnership in delivering on its action plans. It is beneficial to identify high-level stakeholders (e.g. ministers, regulators, directors and heads of other major group organisations in the partnership) to be members of the steering group to ensure their continuing commitment and engagement.

- **Working groups:** Once a multi-stakeholder partnership has agreed on its general objectives, it becomes necessary to create smaller groups of stakeholders to do detailed work on specific ICT issues. Working groups are effective in developing action plans, carrying out studies and in implementation and evaluation of the process.

- **A facilitating institution or a secretariat:** This is important to kick-start a multi-stakeholder process. The process needs to be managed and facilitated by a secretariat based in an organisation that is trusted by all parties, and that is perceived to be relatively neutral in its position on the ICT policy issues. The organisation should have some prior experience and reputation in the area to be addressed. The facilitator also takes responsibility for operational aspects such as organising meetings and workshops, liaison with partners, preparation of documentation, writing of proposals, etc. For example, the champion institution in the DRC, Alternatives, already had some experience in ICT policy and infrastructure in the country prior to the formation of a local multi-stakeholder network (DMTIC). Alternatives has been promoting ICTs through the public media and contributing to the APC ICT policy monitor website for the DRC. Similarly, KICTANet brings key champions that have had experience in ICT policy processes together. The secretariat, and particularly the champions who drive the process, are central figures in providing the energy to facilitate the minefield of diverse interests among partners.

Action plans: The development of action plans is an important step in the consultation and iteration process. However it is generally easier to develop action plans than it is to implement them. The action plans that are developed by members of the network need to:

- Respond to challenges on the ground

- Be pragmatic and take the capabilities of stakeholders into account. Partners should sign up to action plans on which they can deliver

- Limit the number and focus to reduce dissipation of resources on too many unproductive issues.

Funding: Funding is important to take the action plans forward and to nurture the multi-stakeholder process. Funding is needed for initiating a multi-stakeholder process, for running a secretariat, developing a communications campaign, setting up mailing lists, organising meetings and at later stages for the implementation of action plans. Once the key partners have agreed on the options for joint action, participants need to make a further public commitment to implementation including announcing funding commitments. If external funding is needed to implement the action plans, participants will need to work to identify sources of funding.

Implementation of action plans: Implementation starts with the development of a matrix of commitments from all the stakeholders. It may be useful to re-establish a network for implementation of action plans or appoint a new champion to deliver the action plans. Demonstration of results is essential for stakeholders to see that commitments have become reality. Demonstration of actual results is a key step in the multi-stakeholder process.

10. What communications and advocacy activities are needed?

As discussed above, a multi-stakeholder process in ICT policy involves agenda setting, carrying out research on specific policy issues, development of action plans, implementation and monitoring the outcomes. Communication and advocacy are central to a multi-stakeholder process. Three types of communication activity should be considered:

- Communicating research results and studies on specific ICT policy issues

- Disseminating materials that will raise awareness of the issues with a broader audience and result in a better knowledge and understanding of ICT issues

- Advocacy for specific policy changes or the implementation of an ICT programme.

TABLE 2. ADVOCACY FRAMEWORK FOR TARGETING KEY ACTORS				
Players	Name of institution	Influential individuals	Present stance on issue	What is needed to influence/engage?
National government				
Provincial government				
Local government				
Private sector				
Civil society				
Donor agencies				
Media				
Community groups/ associations				

Communicating research findings

Multi-stakeholder partnerships are not generally well suited to producing detailed academic research work. However the partners need to provide policy-makers and the public with evidence in support of (or against) a particular position. This allows the partnership to build their case from a position of strength. This involves identifying the issues to be analysed, desk research to identify local and international experience on the issue, designing survey instruments, collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, and writing up the findings. Dissemination of the results and communicating the outcome is an essential part of ICT policy advocacy. The results of the study should be written in a way that is appropriate for a specific target audience. Some options may include:

- A detailed version of the study which will be of interest to technical advisors, technical experts and the broader research community. This should include the rationale for the exercise, introduction to the methodology, demographic profiles, key findings and policy recommendations.

- A shorter popular version highlighting the rationale for the exercise and key findings with policy pointers.

- A media briefing note that can be used by journalists to report on the findings in an easily understood style, with little use of jargon.

- A short summary of policy recommendations, prepared in a glossy format that can be used to lobby with senior decision-makers and parliamentarians.

Dissemination of the results could take place in various settings including a pre-launch presentation to the members of the multi-stakeholder partnership, media conferences and press notes for journalists, a post-launch conference for a wider audience and creative opportunities that enable the multi-stakeholder partnership to reach out to senior policy-makers as well as to a broader group of interested parties.

Advocating for policy change or implementation of a specific ICT programme for social and economic impact

A focused advocacy campaign targeting particular decision-making bodies is essential in order to get changes in official policies or legislation. Advocacy for changes in legislation is an important part of the ICT policy partnership. The goal of advocacy campaigns is not just to change legislation and policies, but also attitudes and behaviour, and make sustainable changes in decision-making processes. The strength of the campaign therefore is dependent on the interaction and the diversity of institutions forming a strong partnership and cohesive front to push the policy issues forward.

Advocacy for ICT policy changes involves a number of steps:

a. Who are your target audiences/stakeholders?

Multi-stakeholder policy processes need to map out the key actors and their level of influence/power, both positive and negative, and their stake in the policy-making process. Classifying the various actors in each institution or organisation as allies, opponents or undecided, and according to their levels of interest and influence, is essential to carry out targeted advocacy. Influential individuals in key institutions should be identified and targeted. Table 2 provides a framework for identifying individuals and institutions that influence ICT policy.

Once the individuals and institutions are mapped out, advocacy should target those individuals that are most likely to respond to the demand and look for solutions. This includes people who have power to effect the policy change, most likely senior policy-makers such as heads of states, ministers of communications, chief executive officers of regulatory agencies and incumbent operators. People who can influence senior policy-makers could include, for example, prominent journalists, businesspeople, key advisors and academics, including university vice chancellors. Their involvement will be important to move the policy agenda forward when the influencing of the primary targets becomes difficult.

b. Capacity-building

Capacity-building and institutional development is an important aspect of ICT policy partnerships. Capacity-building improves better understanding of the issues and creates a sustainable and broader lobbying force. Partner institutions do not only need a deeper understanding of the policy issues under consideration but should also have advocacy, negotiation and resource mobilisation skills to move the policy agenda forward. Practical training on policy advocacy, research methodology, strategy development, policy analysis and communication should be an integral component of the multi-stakeholder process.

c. Deciding on the channels and activities to reach out to different audiences

In developing a communications plan for the ICT policy process, different channels for increasing the awareness of the ICT policy issue should be considered. Some possible communications tools include:

- Production of specific policy briefs for senior policy-makers

- Thematic papers for a wider audience that is interested in ICT policy issues

- Production of promotional products and information packages such as brochures, audiovisual tools, media briefs, case studies and PowerPoint presentations

- Training workshops for specific groups to improve their knowledge of ICTs (e.g. journalists, community-based organisations, etc.)

- Workshops to bring key stakeholders interested in ICT policy together or to brief institutions and individuals that have a stake and are likely to influence the policy process.

11. How do you monitor and evaluate your ICT policy process?

Multi-stakeholder processes do not lend themselves to evaluation and monitoring due to the fluidity of ICT policy issues and the diversity of contributions from different institutions and individuals that are not binding. It is also difficult to attribute policy changes to a single partnership, network or event. Nonetheless, multi-stakeholder partnerships should set benchmarks and indicators to measure their progress and goals. Monitoring progress is essential especially if the issue under scrutiny is focused and time bound. The ability to show successful outcomes is more likely to result in support for ongoing and future multi-stakeholder approaches. ∎

Selected useful reading materials

Africa Media Development Initiative (2006). *Democratic Republic of the Congo Case Study*. London: BBC World Service Trust. Available from:
downloads.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/pdf/AMDI/drc/amdi_drc19_case.pdf

Association for Progressive Communications (2005). *Resources on multi-stakeholder participation in UN processes* [online]. Compiled by Karen Banks. Available from:
www.apc.org/english/news/index.shtml?x=31498

Batliwala, S. (2002). "Grassroots Movements as Transnational Actors: Implications for Global Civil Society*". Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Non-Profit Organizations*, 13(4), December 2002. Available from:
www.justassociates.org/associates_files/Sri_Rise_of_Global_Civil_Society.pdf

Creech, H. and Willard, T. (2001). *Strategic Intentions: Managing knowledge networks for sustainable development*. Winnipeg: International Institute for Sustainable Development. Available from:
www.iisd.org/pdf/2001/networks_strategic_intentions.pdf

Esterhuysen, A. (2005a). *Multi-stakeholder participation and ICT policy processes* [online]. Available from:
www.apc.org/english/news/index.shtml?x=31497

Esterhuysen, A. (2005b). "Participation in development processes: can ICT make a difference?"
In: R. Abdul Rahim, D. Waldburger and G. Siegenthaler Muinde (Eds.), *Access, Empowerment and Governance. Creating a World of Equal Opportunities with ICT*. Kuala Lumpur: Global Knowledge Partnership (pp. 65-82). Available from:
www.globalknowledge.org/gkps_portal/view_file.cfm?fileid=3502

Finlay, A. (2006). *Breaking new ground towards each other: Working in multi-stakeholder environments in ICT policy development in Africa – the CATIA experience*. Available from:
www.cipaco.org/sources/Engaging_Multi_Stakeholders_Final.doc

Global Knowledge Partnership (2003). *Multi-stakeholder Partnerships: Issue Paper*. Knowledge for Development Series. ISBN 983 2588 04 9. Available from:
www.fdc.org.au/Files/Information/4.2%20MSP.pdf

Mureithi, M. (2007). *ICT development in Kenya: Strategic positioning to catalyse growth*. Kenya ICT Action Network Study Report.

Nelson, J. and Vadek, S. (n.d.). *Partnership Alchemy: New social partnerships in Europe*. ISBN 87-987643-1-4. Copenhagen: The Copenhagen Centre. Available from:
www.copenhagencentre.org/graphics/CopenhagenCentre/Publications/Partnership_Alchemy.pdf

United Nations (2004). *Strategic Partnership: Challenges and Best Practices in the Management and Governance of Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships Involving UN and Civil Society Actors*. Background paper prepared by Carmen Malena for the Multi-Stakeholder Workshop on Partnerships and UN-Civil Society Relations. Pocantico, New York, February 2004. Available from:
www.un-ngls.org/partnership-carmen-malena.doc

United Nations General Assembly (2005). *Towards Global Partnerships. Enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector: Report of the Secretary General*. 60th session, UN Doc A/60/214, Paragraph 8. Available from:
www.globalpublicpolicy.net/fileadmin/gppi/GAReport05.pdf

United Nations Development Programme (2006). *UNDP and Civil Society Organizations: A Toolkit for Strengthening Partnerships*. New York: UNDP. Available from:
www.undp.org/partners/cso/publications/CSO_Toolkit_linked.pdf

CASE STUDY

The multi-stakeholder process for ICT policy
in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

I. The multi-stakeholder process in the DRC and its governance framework

The multi-stakeholder process for ICT policy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) began with assistance from APC through funding from the Catalysing Access to ICT in Africa (CATIA) programme of the Department for International Development (DFID) that ran between 2003 and 2006. The process began with identification of a local ICT policy animator.

APC selected Alternatives, a Canadian non-governmental organisation with a branch in the DRC. The selection of Alternatives as a national animator was not accidental. Alternatives showed a significant interest in the ICT field and played a key role in increasing awareness of ICT policy and infrastructure in the DRC. It contributed to the APC ICT policy monitor website that provides up to date information on ICT policy and infrastructure in the DRC (africa.rights.apc.org). It has established a website for civil society (www.societecivile.cd) to increase awareness of their activities in the country.

However it was clear that Alternatives alone would not be able to address the challenges of ICTs in the DRC. Through assistance from APC, Alternatives brought key players from civil society, the private sector and government together in January 2005 to discuss the issues and possible solutions. This led to the formation in 2005 of *La Dynamique Multisectorielle pour les Technologies de l' Information et de la Communication* (DMTIC), a local network for ICT policy in the country.

The major stakeholders of the DMTIC are:

- Local civil society organisations: Regional Centre for Cultural Exchange

- International NGOs: Alternatives Canada

- Academia, particularly the University of Kinshasa

- The media

- The private sector, such as Afrinet

- The public sector, such as the telecommunications regulatory agency

- The diaspora.

The formation of the DMTIC was followed by a regional workshop on ICT policy advocacy organised by the DMTIC and Alternatives. This provided an opportunity for exposure to new ideas and building the skills of civil society organisations in DRC in ICT policy-making and advocacy.

While Alternatives provided a platform for bringing stakeholders together at the beginning, the DMTIC became an independent entity, run by a steering committee drawn from local stakeholders. The selection of the steering committee was held during the assembly of a roundtable that brought key ICT players together.

The DMTIC has a governance structure comprised of a general assembly, a steering committee and an executive secretary. Members of the steering committee were well regarded and had contacts with the public and private sectors. The steering committee is composed of five members who are volunteers. The operation of the DMTIC is funded by Alternatives. The DMTIC chose Alfonse Ntita, who had experience in government and the private sector, to act as the facilitator and executive secretary. Alternatives played a coordinating and fundraising role for the network.

II. ICT policy and development challenges of the DMTIC

At its inception the DMTIC debated key ICT policy challenges facing the DRC and identified four major areas of focus. These were:

- Development of basic ICT infrastructure

- Development and implementation of a national ICT policy

- Fostering the regulatory and legislative framework

- Improving the exploitation of ICTs by different sectors and members of the society.

Firstly, it was established that the absence of basic communication infrastructure was the major preoccupation of all the stakeholders in the DRC and the major obstacle to the development of the ICT sector. Fixed lines are virtually absent except for a few lines in the capital city of Kinshasa. The country does not have a national backbone that connects its vast territory. The key infrastructure issues identified by the DMTIC were:

- Extending basic infrastructure to the urban and rural areas, particularly expanding links using both wireless and fixed networks to remote areas

- Development of a national backbone

- Extending connectivity to neighbouring countries

- Connecting to the SAT-3 fibre optics cable.

In order to define a strategy for infrastructure the DMTIC conducted an ICT situational analysis that was published in August 2006. This was funded as part of the CATIA programme's activities in the country. It was clear from the study that the absence of a national backbone infrastructure was hindering ICT sector growth and the overall development of the country. The DMTIC and Alternatives were then able to secure funds from the IDRC to launch a national backbone feasibility study that will be used as evidence to advocate for the development of a national broadband network. The development of a national backbone became the major task of the DMTIC in 2006.

Secondly, it was recognised that the DRC does not have a national ICT policy. This is paramount for the country if it is to emerge with a vision on ICTs and implement various ICT programmes that will promote progress in health, education, mining, agriculture and post-conflict reconstruction and bring together the support of international development agencies, civil society, the private sector and public institutions.

However, the development of a national vision and implementation plan along with an institutional framework to implement various ICT programmes was not possible due to the preoccupation of the government with elections in 2006. The DMTIC therefore planned to push the ICT policy process forward by raising awareness on ICT policy issues. In collaboration with Alternatives it has launched a media campaign with radio talk shows and TV programmes on specific ICT policy issues.

Thirdly, the DMTIC established that the DRC had developed a telecommunications policy framework in 2002. While the policy encouraged the expansion of the mobile sector, it did not help the country to achieve connectivity to the vast majority of the population living in rural areas. An enabling regulatory framework on the ICT sector is therefore absent.

Key issues for consideration were:

- Revision of the telecommunications policy of 2002

- Improving the capacity of the regulator

- Putting new laws and regulations in the ICT sector in place

- Improving the participation of the private sector in ICT investment.

Finally, it was clear that access to ICTs lags far behind the rest of the world. Improving access to computers was another challenge addressed by the DMTIC in its business plan. This includes distributing computers to rural areas and providing training to users.

However, the DMTIC decided to focus on a few issues of national importance such as a national backbone and pursued these aggressively rather than spreading itself too thinly on many issues. The increased focus had the following impact on the multi-stakeholder process:

- Improved credibility. The DMTIC works with policy-makers, telecommunications operators, international experts, civil society and the private sector in researching and advocating for the national backbone. This has increased its credibility and fostered trust among key players, including the government. For example, the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications and the regulator contributed to the feasibility study.

- The focus on a small number of action plans allowed donor agencies to support the proposed programmes that are considered feasible.

- The focus on a national backbone was also useful in aligning itself with the private sector which faces a significant bandwidth challenge.

- It allowed the DMTIC to work with government on an issue of national importance.

III. Capacity-building

Building the capacities of its stakeholders and others was part of the multi-stakeholder process of the DRC. Capacity-building took place on many fronts – through the organisation of workshops and by involving external experts who played mentoring roles. In addition to a meeting that led to the formation of the DMTIC, Alternatives organised two meetings that brought both national and international advocacy networks and experts together. The meetings were intended to support the DMTIC to articulate policy issues, learn from the experiences of others and provide exposure to different advocacy strategies. The DMTIC has also continued to seek advice from international experts that have considerable experience in the ICT infrastructure and policy fields.

IV. Monitoring and evaluation of the multi-stakeholder process in the DRC

The DMTIC did not introduce a formal monitoring and evaluation process except for the feasibility study that required extensive reporting to the donor. The CATIA programme undertook its own evaluation of the progress of the multi-stakeholder process in the DRC in 2006.

The CATIA survey showed that despite the difficult situation the network has made substantial progress, particularly in articulating priorities, securing funding from the IDRC and working closely with the government and other development agencies. The evaluation highlighted that the DMTIC was able to use the broadcast media extensively and launched evidence-based advocacy. The evaluation observed that the participation of women was very limited and encouraged the DMTIC to recruit more women to promote its objectives and strengthen the gender perspectives of ICT policy.

V. Conclusion

The DMTIC and Alternatives played a significant role in raising ICT policy issues in the DRC under the somewhat difficult political and economic circumstances facing the country. The multi-stakeholder network has to deal with a number of challenges such as improving the participation of women and the media in the network and raising financial resources to continue its operation. Nevertheless, through the support of Alternatives Canada and the determination of some of its key steering committee members the DMTIC was able to complete a feasibility study on a national backbone that will lay the foundation for its advocacy for infrastructure development in the country.

In January 2007, the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications initiated a consultation process with stakeholders aimed at creating a real ICT policy. The DMTIC and Alternatives were invited to facilitate the civil society commission. This process is not yet completed but the Ministry has already created a national multi-stakeholder ICT committee that will be responsible for finalising the first draft. Both Alternatives and the DMTIC sit on the committee.

The final report of the study was launched in August 2007 in Kinshasa with a multi-stakeholder audience of more than a hundred people. ∎

CASE STUDY

KICTANet: A multi-stakeholder process for ICT policy in Kenya

Alice Munyua Wanjira

I. Background

The Kenya ICT Action Network was created in October 2004 by a multi-stakeholder group of organisations and networks from the private sector, civil society, and the media. Founding members of the network were: the Telecommunications Service Providers of Kenya (TESPOK), the Kenya WSIS Civil Society Caucus, the Media Council, Summit Strategies (a consulting firm), the Kenya ICT Federation (KIF) and the APC CATIA project in Kenya.

The decision to form a multi-stakeholder network was arrived at during a consultation meeting held in October 2004, organised jointly by the Media Council, APC/CATIA, Summit Strategies, TESPOK and the Kenya WSIS Civil Society Caucus. Participants unanimously agreed that the vacuum created by the lack of an ICT policy was compelling enough to warrant the formation of a multi-stakeholder network. This network would work towards encouraging the government to speed up the development of an ICT policy and regulatory framework for Kenya in an open, inclusive and participatory process.

The proposal for a multi-stakeholder network was also based on the perceived strength and effectiveness in joint collaborative policy advocacy activities, which would be based on pooling skills and resources. A small working group, consisting of the founding members, was established to develop an action plan and proposals for a multi-stakeholder response to the current ICT policy process.

II. Governance structure

a. Leadership

The secretariat, managed by the network convenor, has been responsible for coordinating network activities with leadership support from the steering committee. This committee consists of high-level chief executive officers (CEOs), representatives of civil society, the private sector, the media, and academia, government and development partners. The secretariat is hosted by one of the members, the Africa e-Resource Centre (AeRC). The convenor and steering committee are responsible for resource mobilisation as well as carrying out scoping on behalf of stakeholders before any debate commences, using a consultative leadership style.

b. Legal structures

KICTANet conducted a three-week mailing list discussion and one-day face-to-face validation workshop to arrive at a consensus on the most preferred legal structure for KICTANet. Members agreed that a trust fund was the most suitable legal structure. However, members agreed that this would be a temporary option, while waiting for the results of the institutional exercise, which is expected to propose the most suitable legal structure. Therefore the legal status of KICTANet may change.

c. Financial arrangements

Initially the network was fully supported by the DFID APC/CATIA project and supplemented by resources from private sector entities, specifically TESPOK. KICTANet members share costs of the various advocacy activities.

Some members make in-kind contributions including monitoring and evaluation of network activities (Measure Africa), hosting the secretariat (AeRC), research services (Summit Strategies), website, mailing lists and internet connectivity (members of TESPOK), and hosting/maintenance of the website (Kenya Education Network, or KENET). The Kenya Network Information Centre (KENIC) and Kenya Data Networks (KDN) continue to provide live audio streams of KICTANet monthly forums.

Development partners currently funding network activities include: the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Embassy of Finland, and the Open Society Initiative for East Africa.

d. Working groups

All KICTANet activities are conducted in a participatory manner. Once members feel that an issue deserves a multi-stakeholder approach, KICTANet convenes a meeting of the most affected stakeholders who then form a working group to strategise on the most suitable activities. For example, to build capacity of the media sector and create awareness on the ICT Bill, KICTANet formed a working group consisting of the Kenya Editors Guild, Media Owners Association representatives, the private sector, the media, and representatives of civil society and academia.

III. The stakeholders

KICTANet conducted a stakeholder analysis during the APC/CATIA workshop that took place in Nairobi in June 2004. This exercise used the IDRC outcome mapping tool and involved identifying stakeholders that may influence or be influenced by the network, determining which stakeholders should be involved and their capacity.

The decision to form KICTANet was also guided by the APC/CRIS communications rights and governance research conducted in 2004.[3] This research identified various stakeholders that had been active in ICT policy advocacy and revealed that the lobbying of these groups to deepen liberalisation had not been achieved due to their divergent perspectives. The CATIA and WSIS frameworks also informed the decisions.

_____
3. www.crisinfo.org

A study conducted by Summit Strategies (Mureithi, 2007) notes that KICTANet's current membership comprises the agenda setters, sectoral interests, members at large and users. Agenda setters are the founders and comprise a few dedicated team members who set the agenda. They carry the spirit of the network and have a strong attachment to the mission of the network. Agenda setters are the steering committee members, trustees, augmented by members who demonstrate interest in the long-term sustainability of KICTANet. Sectoral interests are individuals from organisations who cannot be members of the organisation due to the legal nature of their institutions. Outside this core team are the members at large and ICT users. From the short experience of KICTANet these members enter the network and leave just as easily. Such members are not _mission driven_ but _function or task driven_ and once such need is realised the members become inactive and tend to watch from the sidelines.

As the network evolves and new issues emerge one of the greatest challenges has been getting the right actors around the table. So a general lesson that has emerged is the importance of involving diverse stakeholder viewpoints linked to a specific purpose and goals of an action plan/activity of the network. Therefore, one of the expected outcomes of the institutional assessment and strategic planning exercise presently underway will be to develop a strategy to promote inclusion and maintain interest and engagement.

a. Government

It was not KICTANet's initial intention to involve government as a stakeholder of the network. However a trust relationship developed over time. KICTANet chose to engage government and policy-makers rather than using confrontational advocacy methods. It had also become clear from various consultations with policy-makers that government would only change policy if the change could be politically defended. Further, our newly elected National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government was open to engaging stakeholders and an opportunity was created for more participatory policy-making processes through KICTANet. The network's engagement with government has therefore been firstly to appreciate the long-term government agenda, and from that perspective to either nudge

the government along when it was slow, or work to provide an alternative that enables it to realise its objectives more efficiently (Mureithi, 2007).

b. Private sector

Prior to KICTANet, TESPOK was by far the most mobilised and organised lobbying group. TESPOK had been engaged in advocacy and lobbying government and had several achievements, which resulted in significant changes in the ICT sector. However, while the various lobbies had resulted in the end of monopoly, for example, there has not been a collective effort towards encouraging the government to speed up the ICT policy process in an open and inclusive manner. After various frustrating attempts to compel the government to speed up the policy process and their rather unsuccessful attempt at teaming up with the media, TESPOK became one of the founding members of the network based on the perceived strength in collaborative policy advocacy activities.

c. Civil society

Civil society was the driving force behind the creation of KICTANet through the APC/CATIA project. The lobbying of civil society groups can be traced back to the Kenya Communications Act of 1998 process. One of the most valuable contributions from civil society has and continues to be its ability to link ICT policy issues to development and livelihood issues, which appeals to policy-makers. This approach, coupled with targeted and aggressive awareness and capacity-building activities with other stakeholders, has resulted in strategic partnerships which have seen the ICT policy process gain political mileage as well as more analytical media coverage.

Civil society groups that are active members of the network include the Kenya WSIS Civil Society Caucus, the WSIS Youth Caucus, FEMNET, a number of community-based organisations such as Kimathi Information Centre, and others.

IV. The issues

The two major stakeholders, the private sector and civil society, held disparate views on critical ICT issues. Civil society's key issue was an enabling policy and regulatory environment while the private sector felt that the critical component for ICT policy was to address infrastructure issues. Each stakeholder was therefore investing resources in areas it considered important at the expense of synergy (Mureithi, 2007). It was therefore clear that the key stakeholders were pulling in different directions. KICTANet entered the space with these dynamics, coupled with the challenges of driving various interest groups towards an overarching solution. The network sought to bring together these divergent groups of stakeholders with a specific purpose: to address the lack of an ICT policy in Kenya that would encompass all the issues from the various stakeholders. Thus the initial purpose was to speed up the ICT policy and regulatory process thereby creating an enabling environment where all stakeholders could take advantage of the opportunities provided. The network's campaign was successful and resulted in a participatory and inclusive ICT policy process. The policy was approved by the cabinet in March 2006. Most of the submissions from KICTANet stakeholders were included.

KICTANet later worked with the media groups and government to develop the Media Bill and code of conduct for broadcasters and issues of convergence, which resulted in the participatory drafting of the Kenya ICT Bill 2006. Further, the KICTANet lobbying activities resulted in the liberalisation of VoIP.

V. The multi-stakeholder process – how it worked

The ICT policy development process in Kenya began with a multi-stakeholder regional workshop, which was organised in Nairobi in July 2004 by APC. During the workshop participants nominated national coordinators who were tasked with animating and coordinating the ICT policy advocacy process.

The national coordinator conducted a series of network-building activities to develop a collective vision and specific goals for the group. These activities included face-to-face meetings with the aim of creating consensus on the identified priority issues. This took place during a consultation meeting held in Nairobi in October 2004.

A series of strategic planning meetings, which took a step-by-step approach to designing a national advocacy plan, resulted in the founding of a steering committee made up of representatives from various stakeholder groups. This group engaged in the further design of the process and direction, identifying activities as well as adding new members along the way in order to ensure diversity and inclusiveness.

The first phase of outreach and network building included:

- Framing of the priority issues
- Developing criteria for identifying and involving members involved in ICT activities and with ICT initiatives on the ground
- Defining the goals and objectives of the network
- Articulating and agreeing on guiding principles and network norms
- Sharing of background information to enable the network to base its activities on concrete and realistic issues
- Establishing effective communication linkages and methods (mailing lists, discussion groups)
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities
- Capacity-building activities (e.g. conflict resolution, how to analyse policy, etc.)
- Research to inform criteria for selecting network members and advocacy activities.

The network has made extensive use of mailing lists, face-to-face meetings, round tables and working group techniques. These have allowed a large number of people to be involved as well as enhanced transparency.

Monthly ICT forums have worked well for planning activities as well as for building trust and collective intelligence. This has, by far, proved to be the most useful mechanism for developing new insights and, most importantly, to develop activities that benefit all stakeholders within the network and the constituencies they represent.

VI. The challenges

- Setting up a network devoid of a hierarchal system while keeping the coalition together has been a challenge. The network has had to adopt a number of principles to support a culture of openness and inclusion. These include allowing every member to have their input and providing a space where everyone feels able to "give to" and "take from" network activities and experiences. This constructive atmosphere has allowed for genuine discussion without fear or judgement.

- Jostling between competing interests is another challenge if not managed appropriately. This could include the involvement of mediators to facilitate disagreements, clearly defining roles and responsibilities from the start, and implementing monitoring and evaluation frameworks, with well-defined performance indicators to assess the contribution of stakeholders. KICTANet is therefore intending to undertake a strategic planning exercise in which stakeholders will be able to build consensus on issues that require advocacy intervention. Further, through the IDRC-funded institutional assessment exercise KICTANet intends to constitute appropriate governance systems that will facilitate an open transparent manner of implementing activities.

- Striking a balance between pushing forward with a policy process, acting as a watchdog to monitor breaches in the governing rules of the existing policy environment, and managing parallel policy drives brought about by competing interests is also a challenge.

- The role of a multi-stakeholder network convenor is new and involves different ways of thinking, being and engaging. The need to develop new leadership/negotiation/diplomatic and balancing skills is critical but challenging.

- Ensuring that excluded stakeholders who are affected by programmes and policies participate in the network has been another challenge. Although some members of the network, such as the Arid Lands Information Network (ALIN) provide the links with organisations and networks working at the community level as well as to those working in the broader political space, this does not entirely address the challenges of getting genuine grass-roots representation and participation.

VII. The achievements

- For KICTANet, collaboration has been the key to the success of a number of advocacy activities. This approach has paid dividends. In a relatively short space of time, KICTANet has had an impressive impact on ICT policy in Kenya.

- KICTANet has also gained recognition as the independent commentator on ICT policy in Kenya and in many instances has been the government's first port of call on telecommunications strategy and more recently media regulation as well as freedom of information.

- KICTANet is well on its way to becoming a focal point for journalists writing on ICT related issues. Further, the network has managed to nurture three additional networks: the ICT journalists' network, a vibrant youth and ICTs network and an emerging ICT consumer association.

- Increased engagement with the government as well as support and recognition by policy-makers has resulted in KICTANET being seen as a credible network that enhances collaborative policy processes. It is worth noting that Permanent Secretary Bitange Ndemo uses the KICTANet mailing list to announce legal and regulatory policies under consideration by the government and to request stakeholder participation. In the case of the ICT policy development process, the government was able to achieve much more in less than one year than it did in the previous five years.

- Based on the KICTANet experience, the network has sought and formed alliances with similar networks in Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda and is in the process of forming the East African ICT for Development Network based on the same principles.

VIII. Assessment of KICTANet

With increasing funding support and legitimacy within the ICT sector, KICTANet has now arrived at a stage where stakeholders wish to develop practical approaches to enhance good governance and management of partnerships of ICT stakeholders. To understand its present capacity to fruitfully pursue its mission, KICTANet is conducting an institutional assessment exercise, supported by the IDRC. This exercise aims to establish KICTANet's organisational strengths and weaknesses, and to develop specific recommendations of areas that will require institutional strengthening. The processes will also identify gaps in its governance, management and delivery of service, and ways of addressing them. The exercise will, in part, involve reviewing and/or reaffirming the network's core mandate and values. It will introduce policies, guidelines and mechanisms to ensure that it continues to provide effective mechanisms for co-operation and collaboration between stakeholders and the government in support of ICT-led growth and development in Kenya.

IX. The future

Acknowledging that KICTANet occupies a unique and important space with organisational implications for various stakeholders has been an important first step towards developing strategies to position the network for the future. A study conducted by Muruiki Mureithi in August 2007 provides a number of recommendations for the network to position itself to deliver its mandate and to remain relevant in the future.

The study states that KICTANet should continue to provide a platform for debate on policy discussion involving civil society, academia, media and the private sector. It should act as a first point of contact when new issues in the sector are discussed. The study further recommends that KICTANet develop a solid sustainability strategy that will see it less dependent on donor funding.

The way forward (Mureithi, 2007) is to maintain a small secretariat that would collate and articulate concerns on behalf of its membership and provide direction in the long term. KICTANet should remain focused at a strategic level where it does scoping for its members. To maintain trust and confidence with its members, it should always remain non-partisan and non-political. In addition, it should not involve itself in the day-to-day activities of the stakeholders. ∎

Frequently Asked Questions about Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships

in ICTs for Development

A guide for national ICT policy animators

September 2007

APC

ASSOCIATION FOR PROGRESSIVE COMMUNICATIONS

www.apc.org