

Information and Communication Technology Policy in Rwanda

A country ripe for ICT development

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Outline

- Country background
- Climate for ICT development
- Government policies
- Problems encountered
- Outlook

Rwanda

- Small, landlocked country
- Gained independence in 1962
- 90% of people engaged in agriculture
- 64% people in poverty
- Characterized by civil war and genocide
- Devastating effects on the economy

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Climate for Change

- Highest population density in Africa (320 people per km²)
- Small land area
- 4th highest growth rate in the world
- Arable land all in use, productivity↓
- No modernization
- No natural resources

Highly inefficient and unsustainable!

The New Rwanda

- Only resource is the people
- Switch to ICT driven knowledge-based economy
- Take leadership in Africa as ICT leader
- Use this as foundation for development
- Vision 2020
 - Plan for social and economic development
 - Seeks to attack underlying problems
 - Goal of middle-income country by 2020
 - Poverty 30%
 - GNI per cap from \$220 → \$900

Government Policy

- Attract foreign aid and investment in ICTs with tax breaks
- NICI Plans
 - 1st Plan (2001-2005): development of economy
 - 2nd Plan (2006-2010): strengthening of economy
 - 3rd Plan (2011-2015): sustain and compete
 - 4th Plan (2016-2020): consolidate and achieve

1st NICI Plan

- Policy: context and reasoning
- Plan: “8 Pillars” and their implementations
- Structure: NITC (thinkers), RITA (implementers)

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Education

- Kigali Institute of Science and Technology
 - Heavily supported by government
 - Opened in 1998 with 259 students
 - Now almost 4,000 students enrolled
 - Offers degrees in Elect., Mech., Civil, Comp., Business Admin. and more
 - Focus on developing ICT skills, development and entrepreneurship
 - Job creators NOT job seekers

Private Sector

- Rwanda Terracom
 - Founded 2004 to wire Rwanda with PON fiber network
 - Connected schools, hospitals, and government facilities in Kigali
 - Aims to connect 5 largest cities by end of 2005
 - In October purchased Rwandatel
 - Phone call to U.S. 92 cents/min → 28 cents/min↓
 - Dialup \$50-\$300 → Fiber or wireless (2MB/s)
\$125 with television, Internet and phone

Barriers to Success

- No existing ICT infrastructure
- Low literacy rate (48%)
- Shortage of qualified human resources
- 90% of people in rural areas

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Outlook

- EASSy submarine cable completed by 2007
- Committed government
- Enthusiastic people
- Gaining int'l recognition
- True benefits are long term

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QUESTIONS?