

**WORKING PAPER
NO. 15**

ENHANCING THE LIVELIHOODS OF THE RURAL POOR THROUGH ICT: A KNOWLEDGE MAP

Donor Review Report

June 2008

WORKING PAPER NO. 15, 2008

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Information and communication technologies (ICTs), appropriately adapted, help improve the livelihoods of poor individuals, families and communities in rural areas and increase their income opportunities, thereby improving their chances of escaping from persistent poverty. This Knowledge Map helps understand what we know, both from research and from experience in the field, and what do donor staff and their country counterparts most urgently need to know about these issues. In addition, it provides recommendations on the use and role of ICT in enhancing the livelihoods of the rural poor.

The logo for infoDev, featuring the word "infoDev" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. Above the letters "i", "n", and "o" are several small white dots of varying sizes, arranged in a slightly curved pattern.

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June 2008

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1. Purpose

The aims of the donor review are: to map out past and current activities of donors in the area of rural livelihoods and ICTs; to elicit a detailed understanding of their perceived gaps and needs in this area; and to raise awareness of the project

2. Methodology

The donor review was carried out in a number of stages.

Potential donors were selected on the basis of their past record of funding programmes, assessed through reviewing websites and strategic documents. The final selection of donors was agreed in discussion with InfoDev and comprised: Asian Development Bank (ADB); International Development Research Centre (CIDA/ IDRC), German Agency for Technical Co-operation (GTZ); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Other donors such as the Department for International Development (DFID) were included to consult with but not extensively interviewed.

Survey topics were developed in a number of key areas relating to the overall aims of the study:

- activities which the donor is / has implemented in support of rural livelihoods and information and communication technologies (ICTs) ;
- issues or findings relating to rural livelihoods and ICTs in which there is sufficient and accessible information available;
- gaps in knowledge in rural livelihoods and ICTs;
- how any such filled gaps or new knowledge would be used;

Additional questions regarding specific projects were compiled regarding the livelihoods and ICT aspects that project supporting; benefits of initiative; partners involved; cost bearing; challenges for the future.

Survey topics and background information were then sent to contacts in each of the donor agencies, with suggested dates for interviews and a request for contacts of other colleagues in HQ and country office / programmes who should also be contacted. The background information described the aim and rationale of the study as well as the initial approach for thinking about ICTs and rural livelihoods. This raised awareness of the project and briefed potential interviewees on the nature of the interview. This was followed up, where necessary, by repeat e-mails and phone calls to arrange interviews.

Most initial contacts suggested other relevant colleagues in initial e-mails or during interviews. Approximately thirty individuals were contacted to request interviews. Of these, some were unavailable, others did not respond and a few suggested contacting other colleagues. A total of nine extensive interviews and two consultations were held (see Annexe 2 for names and schedule). Of the six selected donor agencies, five were interviewed extensively but one (SIDA) was not available to interview regarding its overall programme, but interviewed regarding one project.

The semi-structured interviews were carried out by telephone and were of a duration of 1-1/2 hours. Most interviewees suggested further sources of information on the web and sent relevant documents (see Annexe 3).

The results of the interviews were then collated, following the broad themes and questions of the survey. It should be noted that the findings reflect the knowledge and perspectives of one to three individuals in each donor agency and therefore cannot be said to be a comprehensive review. The information presented in this report represents interviewees' responses, and should be considered alongside the further information which was referred to by respondents (sources in Annexe 3).

3. Results of the Survey

The findings of the survey are presented according to the structure of the survey:

1. Activities by donors in rural livelihoods and ICTs
2. Case studies of rural livelihoods and ICT projects
3. Areas of knowledge which are sufficient and accessible
4. Gaps in knowledge
5. Knowledge from development policy and practice which should influence rural livelihoods and ICT thinking
6. Influential values or mind-sets
7. Criteria of success for ICT and the RL Programme
8. The enabling environment
9. Influential individual or organisational actors
10. Participation or monitoring of active networks
11. Forthcoming events

3.1 Activities Carried out by Donors which Support Rural Livelihoods and ICT

The responses revealed that the activities varied across the donors. For some (e.g. IDRC) it is a key research area of strategic importance. Rural livelihoods and ICT may not be a focal point for some, but rather integrated within other ongoing programmes (e.g. UNDP, USAID). For others (e.g. DFID, ADB) it was an area within which they largely support other development agencies who are working in the area.

The following table describes the overall approach and strategic importance to each donor, and lists the relevant activities which they carry out in these areas. Details about further information on these activities and links to other relevant activities are provided in Annexe 3.

Activity	Location
Asian Development Bank ICT not a key focal area for ADB, but they engage with other development organisation who have capacity in the areas. ICTs are also a component of some sectors e.g. governance. ICT was more active until 2001, started again in 2006 to a certain extent.	
Regional education on ICT, with UNESCAP (UNESCO Asia Pacific) , ABC-ICT Asia, Asia Pacific Technology Community	Asia Pacific , based in Seoul
Study on rural development, ICT will be considered as part of it, ADB Technical Assistance programme	Asia Pacific region
Developing ICT capacity building; ICT best practice notes	Asia Pacific region
Donor East Asia Trust fund set up by Korean government – two parts: ICT projects; knowledge transfer. Projects funded include ICT banking in Cambodia, customs modernisation in Mongolia	East Asia
Improving e-governance of rural poor	Pacific Island
Community centres	South Asia –

	Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh, India (Sri Lanka completed)
Improving poor farmers' livelihoods through access to rice information with IRRI	South East Asia
Broadcast initiative - provide access to health information with Asia Development Community	Asian countries – specifics not known
Focus on ICT in educating in rural areas, training teachers	Central Asia
Rural education programme with ICTs, community centres and e-governance	E.Asia - Mongolia, China
<p>Department for International Development, UK (DFID)</p> <p>ICT4D is not a core area. Do not have any capacity in HQ any more. Support other agencies that do have capacity dedicated to this. All research resources allocated to other agencies working on this area. No policy work on ICT4D. Fund projects.</p>	
Research Into Use programme – programme aiming to maximise the poverty-reducing impact of the outputs of natural resources research in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, some using ICT4D	Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia
Support FAO on work on information management, standards, advocacy. Also FAO AGORA Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture website.	Global
All research money funds are dedicated to IDRC ACACIA	Global
Comprehensive Africa Agricultural development programme, have research pillar with ICTs as part of that. Resource and engage with this.	Africa
Knowledge sharing websites e.g. Livelihoods Connect, Eldis	Global
Project: lesson learning about the processes of bringing national research, advisory agents and private sector together and communication pathways. WREN media.	Kenya
Capacity building of journalists to research and research institutes to engage with the media. PANOS.	Global
Television drama series	Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania
Other radio, broadcast projects on research 4 development portal	
Mobile phone banking project (partly funded by Vodafone)	Namibia, South Africa, Kenya
ATM and debit cards using biometrics (finger prints)	Malawi
<p>German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ)</p> <p>Overview of projects available (in German), see Annexe 3</p>	

Health projects with focus on access to health information e.g. HIV/AIDS	Tanzania
Telecentres	South America
Rural telecentres	Chile
<p>International Development Research Centre (IDRC) , Canada ICT4D is one of four research programmes</p>	
Picture Africa. Poverty and ICT research in East Africa. This is a network of four countries using a common methodological framework of micro-economic impacts. Also using an SL approach.	East Africa
West Africa Research Network that will use similar methodology as PICTURE Africa (above) in Senegal. Consortium, Centre for Research Economics in Senegal is managing the project.	Senegal
Research ICT Africa focuses on pro-poor policy and ICTs. Aims to develop effective indicators and ICTs (first rigorous demand side analysis of ICTs). African e-index.	Africa
Gender and ICT research network	Not known
LinnAsia Research network	Asia
DIRSI – Latin America ICT4D research network	Latin America
<p>United National Development Programme (UNDP) ICT currently mainstreamed within two of focus areas – poverty reduction and democratic governance. Contributes support through a broader development approach in partnership with other agencies and partners. ICT programmes initiated in 1990s, 2003 focus changed to ICT4 poverty reduction. Projects in five key areas (<i>italics denotes start of new theme</i>):</p>	
<i>Enabling environment</i> – ICT in PRSP (work on toolkit with detailed case studies of Sri Lanka and Tanzania)	Global
<i>Shared access to ICT and ICT enabled services</i> – telecentres in partnership with national partners or agencies such as UNESCO	e.g. Mozambique, Vietnam
Telecottages	East and Central Europe
Connectivity project with 14 linked rural community e-mail stations	Solomon islands
Community driven networks	Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda
<i>E Governance programmes</i> – e-governance in Asia	Asia
<i>Local poverty reduction initiatives</i> – contributing to rural development, livelihood creation, livelihood development and pro-poor tourism, SMEs e.g. in Bhutan	Bhutan and elsewhere
<i>Scale-intensive livelihoods initiatives</i> – systemic application of ICT to support rural livelihoods creation, e.g. support to bottom-up approaches	India

involving women in the rural and informal sectors through SEWA	
<p>United States Agency for International Development (USAID)</p> <p>No specific programmes for rural livelihoods and ICTs – most funded by ongoing programmes in other sectors. Choose sectors that are high impact and can work with in the long term.</p>	
Mobile banking adapted to rural farmers so can make transactions using mobiles.	Nigeria
Horticulture project, a private sector initiative funded by agribusiness company, which aims to build up horticulture to serve new middle class. Developing ways to use farmers extension services using ICTs e.g. digital photos to farmers so diagnose problems on farm. Farmers keep records on computer which produces information needed for traceability, to track which plot different products are from and what is used on plot	India
PEARL project (or successor) helping coffee growers to reposition themselves in the international market. With support have differentiated and improved quality of coffee – and developed partnerships with co-operatives. ICT teams have helped to provide e-mail access in co-ops, using some internet access via mobiles. Also set up a cybercafé.	Rwanda
Dozens of other projects that integrate ICTs to enhance rural people's livelihoods	
Last Mile Initiative – a specific ICT programme (not only a component with a broader project) – to extend telecom access to 30 projects worldwide including radios, wireless... In partnership with someone.	Unknown

3.2 Insight into Donor Projects - Case Study Examples

These case studies provide insights into some of the projects that are being carried out in-country in more depth.

Case Study 1: ICT implementation in Teacher Training Colleges in Tanzania (SIDA)

The project covers all 32 of the teacher training colleges in Tanzania. It focuses on particular zone colleges which then co-ordinate with other colleges. The aim is to help teachers in their teaching and learning. The project trains teachers / tutors in both the technical issues (including installation of hardware) and education/ application of ICTs. The proposed benefits are that ICT-literate teachers will be able to teach about ICT in the school or community and also be able to acquire more knowledge and skills through the ICT. The project is working with other stakeholders in ICT issues – ministries, other organisations, NGOs – and hold workshops to learn and share ideas.

The key challenges are the price of connectivity which is very high and power in rural areas (in process of procuring solar energy in 2 colleges at present).

Case Study 2: South Asia Community Centres (ADB and UNESCAP)

The South Asia Community Centres provide access to ICTs in communities. Dependent on a community needs assessment and the enabling environment, they may provide internet facilities but also radio, newsletters and/or television. The project provides facilities, computers and aims to build capacity. It links to other stakeholders including central government, policy (provides nationwide information about participatory e-governance and health), local government, community committees (participation important from beginning), and NGOs in the local areas. It aims to use local content, focusing on local problems and issues. The project is funded by ADB and UNESCAP.

The project charges fees in order to sustain services, but provides vouchers for the poor, to ensure equitable access. One of the key challenges now is how the community centres can be sustainable when donors leave.

Case Study 3: Forum for Agriculture in Asia Pacific region with ICT component (Government of China, ADB)

Component 2 of the programme Forum for Agriculture in Asia Pacific region promotes public-private partnerships for sharing agricultural information and supports the implementation of agricultural information network services.

The ICT component will enable both communication across countries and also market information and agricultural information to farmers through extension services. It is funded by the ADB and People Republic of China Fund (which is managed by ADB). The main platform is a web-based internet forum developed by the Chinese, and web information will then be sent as extension messages by various media (e.g. print, teletext / news feed to teletext, phone texting, telecentres, radio). It aims to include local content in local languages.

A website server is managed by each of the countries (even if actually elsewhere e.g. in USA) because there is sensitivity over China managing their information. Countries are given an allowance, and asked to decide what technologies are suitable, what equipment they have and need.

At present those involved in the project are information specialists in agricultural ministries. It is cited as a good example of partnerships between countries. China developed the concept for the region, joint workshops are held and there is cross-country support on specific problem areas.

A key challenge at present is information sharing which will require a change in mentality, e.g. there is currently a reluctance to share information with other ministries.

Promising Technologies

It is worth summarising respondents' views regarding promising technologies. Nearly all respondents mentioned mobile telecommunication as an appropriate technology, as everybody can "talk and listen". Therefore it is easier to introduce, in comparison to computers. Any other technology needs capacity development as a main component. Mobiles are useful for general communication and banking. It was mentioned that mobile applications are not used sufficiently.

Radio was suggested by a few respondents as another promising technology, although it is not considered as particularly exciting and innovative. However, it is a very powerful medium.

E-learning on web sites was also suggested.

3.3 Areas of Knowledge where there is Sufficient and Accessible Knowledge

There were no areas that emerged for which more than one person felt that there was sufficient and accessible information. A common concern was that in some areas there was sufficient information but that it is quite scattered, not easy to access and digest.

Specific areas which were mentioned by individuals for which they felt there was enough information were:

- Use of management information systems for rural development
- Rural telecentres and multimedia centres
- Project-level case studies of ICTD and e-governance projects
- Rural internet access points (but information needs to be more accessible and used)

3.4 Gaps in Knowledge in Rural Livelihoods and ICTs Perceived by Donors

Various gaps were identified by donor agencies. Gaps were much more of a talking point than areas where there was sufficient knowledge. The gaps are discussed below in order of those issues which emerged most frequently.

Enabling Environment

There was a strong feeling that it is important to establish the appropriate legal and policy framework to progress in ICT and rural livelihoods. It was mentioned that there is some but insufficient information around the telecommunications framework. At present the information which exists is at a too high level and not very practical. The need for information about options for financing mechanisms for ICT infrastructure so that it is more affordable to countries was also mentioned. In terms of open access (shared infrastructure, looking at the Last Mile) it was noted that it would be good to collate experiences in this area.

The Private Sector

The role of the private sector was a topic of divergent views. Some suggested that there should be closer alliance and partnerships with the private sector, whilst others felt that there should be more research into the role of the private sector and it should not be assumed that one should always work with them. It was mentioned that in terms of information gathering, the private sector carry out primary research for their own market intelligence which is rarely shared.

Rural Development and Livelihoods

A concern is that evidence is needed to support the systemic role of ICTs in livelihoods. There are a lot of case studies, but little research to underpin them. It was also mentioned that identification of priority ICT areas important for livelihood creation would be useful. There is no systematised information about how ICT can be used to facilitate job creation and pro-poor access to income generating opportunities.

In terms of finances at the micro level and access to ICT, it was highlighted that more research is needed. One interviewee mentioned that microfinance can only go so far, other ways of providing ICTs and finance need to be researched. The importance of taking account of a range of services, and looking at livelihoods in a holistic way was mentioned. E.g. for handicraft marketing, people need not only the finance, but marketing, design, and production, and it is important to see where ICT fits into and can facilitate those.

Service Delivery

In the area of service delivery it was noted that there are different models of service delivery which can be followed, some which are empowering, others which are disempowering. Information exists but it needs to be systematised so that comparative work and different modalities are established. A systematic analysis is needed to look at how to foster integration of ICT to address financing, service delivery, etc.

Impact assessment

There is some evidence of impact on economic growth but not on pro-poor growth, and this is necessary. There is a lack of baseline information. Knowledge about impact assessment would be used in different ways: in HQ for future policy development, and at the country level to see how it relates to the micro level. The need for evaluation tools and methods was also referred to.

Scaleability and Replicability of Projects

Perceptions varied about the extent to which projects can be scaled up. One perception was that there is a need to find a good business model and systems for the sustainability, and also the scaling up of technologies. Another mentioned that a compilation of lessons learnt regarding the sustainability of projects should be developed. It was noted that there is some information available about projects which are scaleable and replicable but it is scattered and not systematised.

Others highlighted the need to adapt projects to local conditions and cited the need for a greater understanding of what works well in specific local conditions. Guidance on how projects could be modified to different contexts was pinpointed as an area of research.

Broadband in Asia Pacific Region

A specific knowledge gap highlighted was the use of Broadband in the Asia Pacific region. It was noted that there is an InfoDev study on the private sector and innovation to address information and communication needs for the poor in Africa, and that something similar is needed in the Pacific / South East Asia.

Reflections about Research Mechanisms and Ways of Working

It was highlighted that there is a gap in research capacity in developing countries which requires attention and funding (e.g. through networks).

A general point which emerged is that in some areas there is much ad hoc information, but it is not being built on in research. Analysing what works and what doesn't, and drawing real lessons is difficult.

Another point was that research may be commissioned but it is important to ensure that it is really used. Cross-fertilisation only happens when there is a huge amount of effort to do so, or when the same people are involved in different initiatives. Development Gateway and Digital Divides are helping but do not necessarily distil tools and best practice. It was suggested that a useful role would be pulling people together to share knowledge and use virtual methods to bring people together and experiment with themes (e.g. live web based information, innovative seminars).

3.5 Knowledge from Development Policy and Practice which should Influence Rural Livelihoods and ICT thinking

There were few common themes which emerged in response to this question.

The role of education and literacy was highlighted as a key area in terms of increasing the use and accessibility and productivity of ICTs. It was commented that it is important that ICT is user-oriented and user-friendly – rural people often have low literacy and education levels so it is important that ICTs are tailored to them.

Health was another sector which was mentioned. This was in relation to content – accessing health and information through ICTs. Using ICTs within disaster warning systems was highlighted as an area where two disciplines could learn from each other.

It was felt that gender would be a useful lens for ICT (and there is gender and ICT research) in terms of changing the balance of economic and social gender relations. The ability to localise global information was also mentioned.

In addition, it was felt that clarification of the roles of development actors is important and experience could be learnt from elsewhere, e.g. in some areas it is necessary to ask: where does responsibility lie, with the community or government? Much could be learnt from the community based approach, citizenship and the role of the private sector.

It was felt that a systematic approach to development could influence rural livelihoods and ICT thinking in a positive direction. When people's needs are identified, an integrated package (using public and private interventions) can be a successful approach.

It was also highlighted that those countries which have an overall strategy for ICT and development progress more quickly.

In other areas, it was pointed out that it is important to make connections with and have a dialogue with sectors such as social protection, education and gender to discuss how ICTs and rural livelihoods fit within them.

3.6 Values or Mindsets Influential in ICT and Rural Livelihoods Thinking

A diverse range of values and mindsets were highlighted in the context of rural livelihoods and ICT thinking.

It was noted that it is the fastest moving area of research given that technology moves so quickly. So any research needs to be dynamic and flexible to cope with changes and a fast moving sector.

A holistic understanding of ICTs which combine quantitative and qualitative processes to produce the most complete picture was considered to be important. Rigorous research methodology is required to interrogate poverty and ICTs regarding the role of ICTs with new policies, initiatives and businesses.

Other issues which arose were how to change the mentality so that countries can become information societies?

On a more specific note, it was pointed out that there can be psychological barriers to using new technologies, particularly mobile phones, and it is useful to understand and address this.

3.7 Criteria of Success for ICT and Rural Livelihoods Programmes

A few general points about the types and breadth of criteria of success emerged as well as suggestions for specific criteria.

It was suggested that the development community should have standard indicators in line with MDG measures, using social and economic indicators.

Broader indicators were advocated by one respondent, for example assessments of sustainability should include social sustainability, ownership, impact. In the case of ICT access to price information, it was mentioned that using direct sales / purchasing (i.e. cutting out the middle man) as an indicator could be misleading, given that a project can be successful by providing access to information and greater bargaining power.

Specific criteria of success mentioned were: proper capacity developed to use ICTs; working with local / non-local actors; infrastructure in place; brain drain is not undermining wider benefits.

3.8 The 'Enabling Environment' - an enabling or constraining role in Supporting Rural Livelihoods and ICTs?

Some general points emerged regarding what is needed for an enabling environment, as well as some examples of different enabling environments which have facilitated or constrained ICTs in rural areas.

Ingredients for enabling environments that were mentioned included:

- rural areas need accessible infrastructure that is not too costly, therefore projects need to ensure that there is more than one provider so that they will be cost competitive
- electricity needs to be in place in order to be able to install ICTs (in some parts of Asia they are not able to carry out ICT as there is no energy)
- the private sector should be included (though see Section 3.4 for a brief discussion on this)
- services should be combined so that if there is internet connection, it should open them up to wider access and therefore wider input (e.g. health services, education)
- the regulatory environment needs to be innovative and encourage entrepreneurship
- access to microfinance is required in order to pay for ICT services (though see Section 3.4 for a brief discussion on this) and for energy / electricity

Instances of very positive and very negative policies related to ICTs and RL in Africa were discussed. It was pointed out that it is more important that policies are incumbent on the emerging interests of telecommunications companies which have a larger impact on the success or failure of ICTs in rural areas.

Uganda has the most pro-active and positive legislation on the continent but poor penetration of ICTs because of the threshold effect on ICTs (below certain level of poverty, the poor cannot access ICTs).

Ethiopia – has a non-enabling government. Until recently impossible to get a mobile phone (could make money renting out sim cards!). There was legislative control which did not allow competition so telecoms not allowed in.

Somalia – has limited government control, lots of competition of private sector providers and cheapest calls on the continent.

3.9 Influential Individual or Organisational Actors at International Level and In-Country

The following influential individuals or (mostly) organisations in rural livelihoods and ICTs were mentioned:

Asia

- Bangladesh: a large presence of very influential NGOs, in particular Grameen (Prof Yunus) and DNet
- Nepal: NGOs the Forum for IT (FIT) and the Alliance for ICT. The Nepalese Ministry of Telecommunications is developing a blueprint for ICT until 2010
- India: IT for Change
- Asia region: the Asia Pacific Telecommunity

Africa

- South Africa: the Ubuntu, OS and networks were mentioned.

International

- Multilaterals: FAO, UNESCO, InfoDev (particularly in open access work), UNESCO (telecentres)
- Bilateral agency: IDRC

3.10 Participation or Monitoring of Actor Networks

A range of networks were discussed, however none emerged as networks that more than one agency links in to. Those mentioned were :

- DGF
- Global Alliance on ICT and development
- Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP)
- ICT4D communities
- InfoDev
- Philippines Community Centre Network (regional)
- Spider
- Ubuntu

It was also noted that agencies have internal e-groups/networks that they monitor to see opportunities where ICT fits with wider or sectoral work and discussions.

3.11 Forthcoming Events and Processes in Rural Livelihoods and ICT

In terms of forthcoming events and processes in the ICT4D and rural livelihoods calendar, some respondents mentioned international events, others expressed a preference for regional and national programme events in which they are involved, and others saw opportunities of linking in to other area functions e.g. IT regulators, in which they could move the agenda forward.

International events which were highlighted were:

- E-learning in Africa, Kenya
- 2007 Global Knowledge 3
- GUIDE regional meeting Kuala Lumpur

- UNAPD 3C – Communication and Pollination

Programme events included:

- Regional workshops later this year
- National workshops for community centres (Bhutan, Nepal)

Annex 1 Interview background note and survey questions

Enhancing the Livelihoods of the Rural Poor: The Role of Information and Communication Technologies

A Knowledge Needs Assessment, Knowledge Map and Framework Paper

Dear X,

Thank you for expressing an interest in contributing to the infoDev strategic assessment of rural livelihoods and ICTs. This document sets out the background to the assessment, the topics the team would like to discuss as part of our survey, and contact details so you can be in touch with us about this survey.

1. Introduction

The survey is part of a strategic assessment, sponsored by InfoDev, into extent of and unmet demand for knowledge about Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and rural livelihood enhancement. We aim to build upon and update existing research, add evidence and experience from the field, map the current state of our knowledge of these issues, and recommend a way forward both in the international community's framing of these issues and in urgent priorities for further research and experimentation. Thank you for participating in this endeavour.

A member of the survey team will shortly contact you to arrange a telephone interview to discuss the topics set out in Section 2 below and to seek your suggestions on topics, people and processes that can help inform the overall strategic assessment. If you need to **contact the survey team** at any time please contact Susanne Turrall by email: s.turrall@ids.ac.uk. Susanne Turrall is contracted by the Institute of Development Studies.

InfoDev (The Information for Development Program) is a partnership of international development agencies, coordinated and served by an expert Secretariat housed at the World Bank. InfoDev helps donors and their developing country partners identify ways ICT can contribute to objectives such as improving education and health services, making public institutions more efficient and transparent, supporting rural livelihoods, and contributing to economic growth by supporting small and medium-sized enterprises that use ICT for their business. Working with InfoDev on this strategic assessment are:

- Overseas Development Institute (www.odi.org.uk) - a British think tank
- Institute of Development Studies (www.ids.ac.uk) - a British research organization
- Centro de Implementación de Políticas Públicas para la Equidad y el Crecimiento (www.cippecc.org) - an Argentinean research and policy analysis organisation (Centre for the Implementation of Public Policies Promoting Equity and Growth)
- Economic and Social Research Institute (www.esrftz.org) - a Tanzanian research and policy analysis organization
- Unnayan Onneshan (www.unnayan.org) - a Bangladeshi think tank

Our starting point for this strategic assessment is the growing recognition that poverty has multiple, interrelated causes and manifestations beyond the core phenomenon of "income poverty". This recognition of the complexity both of poverty and of poor people's response to their conditions has led to a focus on the *livelihoods* of the poor, the strategies and practices they develop to navigate both their poverty and the broader social, economic and environmental conditions that reinforce that poverty. There is some degree of understandable scepticism about whether information and communication technologies are appropriate tools for addressing the needs and challenges of the poor, particularly the rural poor. A number of donors and other international organizations have done good work on these issues. There are also several Northern and Southern independent organizations that have studied innovation by and for the poor, including innovation in using a range of technologies to improve the livelihoods of the poor. Yet knowledge about this set of issues is widely dispersed and not

easy for donors and other key actors to access in a manageable fashion and, more importantly, to apply in specific contexts. There is a pressing need to provide a clearer map of what we know (and what we do not know) about these issues, along with a general framework for thinking about these issues, and concrete evidence from successes and failures in the field.

- For a more detailed presentation of these issues please see Section 3
- To talk in more detail about the overall strategic assessment please contact Ingie Hovland by email: i.hovland@odi.org.uk
- We will keep you informed about the progress of our work and share outputs over the next few months to March 2007
- In particular we would like to seek your comments on the findings of the country assessments which will be available in January 2007

2. Survey Topics

A member of the survey team will be contacting you at a mutually convenient time to discuss the following topics relating to rural livelihoods and ICTs. The five topics we hope will be of interest to all respondents and the supplementary questions may provide further points of discussions of particular interest to country programme implementation staff.

1. What activities (past or current) are X implementing or supporting in the area of rural livelihoods and ICTs
 - a. who else should we be talking to about these activities X staff or your partners). What is the best way to contact them.
 - b. can you share any documents that would help us to understand the purpose and implementation of these activities in more detail
 - c. see box below for supplementary questions for country programme implementation staff
2. What issues or findings relating to rural livelihoods and ICTs do you feel there is already good and accessible knowledge on
 - a. can you share any documents or references
 - b. why are these areas important to X staff or your partners
3. What gaps in knowledge do you perceive in the area of rural livelihoods and ICTs that are important to X or for others (such as your partners)
 - a. do these relate to particular policy areas/sectors, countries/regions, processes/instruments
 - b. are the gaps absolute (nothing is known), relative (knowledge is hard to access), or qualitative (what's available is unconvincing or unhelpful)
4. If gaps were filled, what would this new knowledge primarily be used for (planning, strategy, evaluation, learning)
 - a. What is known in other areas of development policy and practice that you feel should be influencing rural livelihoods and ICT thinking
 - b. what related documents or people should we be consulting
5. Who do you consider to be the influential individual or organisational actors at international level and in country (our case studies are focusing on Argentina, Chile, Bangladesh, Nepal, Tanzania, [South Africa])
 - a. which actor networks do you monitor or participate in
 - b. what do you consider to be the important upcoming events or processes in this area

Supplementary Questions for Country Programme Implementation Staff

- A. What aspects of livelihoods are being supported by the programme?
- B. What information and communication opportunity / desire is being addressed?
- C. Which types of actors are involved and how (benefiting, delivering, intermediaries, partnering)?
- D. Is there equitable access?
- E. What kind of partnerships are being built, if any?
- F. Are costs shared, and if so, how?
- G. Is local capacity being developed?
- H. What type of technology is being employed?

- I. How was the technology decided upon?
- J. Does it build on existing systems?
- K. Does it utilise local or appropriately localised content?
- L. Which livelihoods principles have been applied?
- M. Have they enhanced the effectiveness of the intervention and how?
- N. What are the key challenges and gaps that still exist?

3. Additional Background Information:

The key issue for this study is how can the full range of information and communication technologies, appropriately adapted, help to improve the livelihoods of poor individuals, families and communities in rural areas and increase their income opportunities, thereby improving their chances of escaping from persistent poverty?

There has been a growing recognition in recent years that poverty has multiple, interrelated causes and manifestations beyond the core phenomenon of "income poverty". The poor are especially vulnerable to macroeconomic and environmental shocks and to disease and illness. Their lack of physical and educational assets makes it more difficult for them to create new economic and social opportunities for themselves. Yet they possess rich stores of knowledge, experience and innovative energy which help them survive. This recognition of the complexity both of poverty and of poor people's response to their conditions has led to a growing attention to the *livelihoods* of the poor, the complex set of strategies and practices they develop to navigate both their poverty and the broader social, economic and environmental conditions that reinforce that poverty. This permits an approach to tackling poverty that focuses not just on increasing the *incomes* of the poor but on reducing their vulnerabilities, tapping their experience and innovation, and creating the enabling conditions for sustained economic and social empowerment of poor communities.

What are Livelihoods?

Livelihoods are the ways people realise goals - for themselves, their family, and friends (e.g. a place to live, food to eat, education for children, care in time of illness, savings for the future, a celebration). Pulled together, these ways can be thought of as a person's livelihood strategy, which may include access to income generation opportunities, but does not stop with employment issues. Just as important at individual, household and community level are access to social networks, natural resources, public infrastructure and peoples own human resources (skills, good health, confidence). In practical and policy terms the idea of looking at poverty and development issues from this perspective is often called a Livelihoods Approach. There are many sources of and variations on livelihoods approaches, but a popular way of looking at their key characteristics (principles) suggests that they typically:

- build upon people's strengths rather than their needs
- bring together all relevant aspects of people's lives and livelihoods into development planning, implementation and evaluation
- unite different sectors behind a common livelihoods framework
- take into account how development decisions affect distinct groups of people, such as women compared to men, differently
- emphasise the importance of understanding the links between policy decisions and household level activities
- draw in relevant partners whether state, civil or private, local, national, regional or international
- respond quickly to changing circumstances.

There is some degree of understandable scepticism about whether information and communication technologies are appropriate tools for addressing the needs and challenges of the poor, particularly the rural poor. Yet even the poorest people and families in rural areas have information and communication needs. More generally, technologies that reduce their expenditure of their few valuable resources (their time, labour, energy, and physical resources) and increase the yield from those expenditures could have a profound positive effect on their livelihoods and incomes. Innovations and tools that leverage their own creativity, and their own knowledge of their context, could benefit both their own situation and

those of their neighbours and of other poor people elsewhere. Given their poverty and the difficulty of the environments in which they live, it is extremely important to be judicious and practical about the types of technology appropriate to their circumstances and needs. Yet it is equally important to exploit every possible, and practical, use of these technologies for the benefit of the rural poor, both through their direct application to their livelihoods needs and challenges and through their role as an enabler of institutional change, capacity building, governmental effectiveness and accountability, and economic growth more broadly.

A number of donors and other international organizations (DFID, USAID, FAO, IDRC, CTA among others) have done good work on these issues. There is a vast and long experience with using a range of information and communication technologies (including most notably radio) in rural development and agricultural extension projects, with a goal of increasing the incomes and enhancing the livelihoods of the rural poor (e.g. radio for price information and agricultural training, rural internet kiosks and information services). There are many "rural development" projects funded by donors that have information and communication dimensions, but where the use of ICT for these purposes has been of uneven quality and impact.

There are also several Northern and Southern independent organizations that have done good work on innovation by and for the poor, including innovation in using a range of technologies to improve the livelihoods of the poor. Yet information and knowledge about this set of issues is widely dispersed and not easy for donors and other key actors to access in a manageable fashion and, more importantly, to apply in specific contexts. If policy, investments and donor initiatives in this area are to be driven by rigorous knowledge of "what works under what conditions", there is a pressing need to provide donors and policy makers with a clearer "map" of what we know (and what we do not know) about these issues, along with a general framework for thinking about these issues, and concrete evidence from successes and failures in the field.

More importantly, it is vital that this knowledge-provision be directly relevant to the priority needs and working constraints of developing country policy makers, donors and other key stakeholders. There is an abundance of studies, toolkits, web sites, and other information and knowledge resources on these issues. The impact of these materials on policies, programs and donor investments in developing countries will depend heavily on whether or not the materials are directly relevant to the specific challenges faced by donors and their country counterparts in their operational work. It is crucial, therefore, that any effort to "map", and then add to, our knowledge on these issues in a way that is directly relevant to policy and practice should have as its point of departure a needs assessment exercise designed to identify the priority knowledge needs of policy makers, donor staff and other key stakeholders in developing countries.

Livelihoods Approach to ICT

Taking a livelihoods approach to ICT would suggest that rural information and communication systems should:

- share costs appropriately between government (for public good information services and social protection) and users (for private goods), and work in partnership with the private sector to ensure effective coverage in remote rural areas
- ensure equitable access to all, especially women, the poor, the disabled, people living in remote areas and otherwise disadvantaged communities
- contain a high proportion of local or appropriately localized content, both to maximize local usefulness and uptake, and to enrich local, national and international knowledge
- build on existing systems, including information technology (TV, radio, telephone, internet etc), processes (existing surveys, research and extension etc), and policy environment.
- build capacity at the local level to generate content and use new technologies, among intermediaries and knowledge brokers, practitioners and policy makers,
- use realistic technologies, which can be used easily, managed and maintained, integrate existing and new technologies and are affordable,
- build knowledge partnerships between knowledge users, producers and intermediaries at and across all levels to convert information into useful knowledge.

To help address these needs, the Information for Development Program (*infoDev*) is commissioning a multi-part study that will build upon and update existing research, add evidence and experience from the field, map the current state of our knowledge of these issues, and recommend a way forward both in the international community's framing of these issues and in urgent priorities for further research and experimentation, all in a context of addressing the priority knowledge needs of policy makers, donors and other key stakeholders.

Annexe 2 List of Interviewees and Schedule

Date and (UK) time	Organisation	Name	Tel.	E-mail	Include in e-mail list for framework paper and consultation?
Dec 06 (by CJ)	GTZ	Peter Rave	+496196791286	peter.rave@gtz.de	yes
24/1/07 3 p.m.	USAID	Judith Payne	+12027120168	jpayne@usaid.gov	yes
26/1/07 4 p.m.	IDRC	Steve Song	+16132366163	ssong@idrc.ca	yes
30/1/07 8 a.m.	ADB	Daan Boom	+6326325408	dboom@adb.org	yes
01/02/07 3 p.m.	GTZ Prog management	Paul Mathias Braun	+496196791443	Paul-Mathias.Braun@gtz.de	Yes also offered to publicise report on their e-bulletin
06/02/07 8 a.m.	ADB	Hyunjung Lee	+6326326188	hjlee@adb.org	yes
07/02/07 3:30 p.m.	UNDP	Rhadika Lal	+12129065046	Rhadika.lal@undp.org	yes
09/02/07 8 a.m.	SIDA Tanzania	Joyce Msolla	+255754698	joycemsolla@yahoo.co.uk	yes
13/02/07 8 a.m.	ADB Projects	Ian Makin	+6326325803	imakin@adb.org	yes
Conversations regarding activities (not extensive interviews)					
13/2/7	DFID (Finance)	Xavier Lecacheur	+442070230000	X-Lecacheur@dfid.gov.uk	yes
13/2/7	DFID (Central Research , was RL and ICTs)	Dylan Winder	+442070230000	D-Winder@dfid.gov.uk	yes

Annexe 3 List of references mentioned within interviews for further information

Name	Description of Information	Link / source
Steve Song, IDRC	Project 'Poverty and ICT research in East Africa' PICTURE Africa, proposal	Word doc
	Research ICT Africa – extensive research outputs on the website	http://www.researchictafrica.net
	Gender Research in Africa into ICTs for Empowerment	http://grace.gn.apc.org/
	Recommended good study on rural livelihoods and ICTs: CTO Study on The Economic Impact of Telecommunications on Rural Livelihoods and Poverty Reduction	http://www.ictportal.org.za/documents/d00004
	Important upcoming event – global knowledge conference	http://www.globalknowledge.org
Peter Rave, GTZ	ICT project list (in German)	PDF
	Paper: ICTs – enabler for rural development	PDF
	Paper: The role of the private sector in mainstreaming ICT4D	PDF
	Newsletter with article re ICTs	PDF
Paul Matthias Braun, Manages 2 GTZ Programmes – sustainet, and knowledge systems for rural areas	Sustainet project website	http://www.sustainet.org
	Knowledge systems for rural areas project website	http://www.grz.de/agriservice
	FAO and GTZ book on what works well and what	Final version on FAO and GTZ websites soon

	doesn't in rural communication 'Framework on effective rural communication in development'	Draft as word doc
	Summary of conference on media in rural development from 2003	http://www.grz.de/de/dokumente/en-newsletter10-2003.pdf
	Paper on the successful use of radio in Peru (in German)	http://www.gipfelthermen.de/text/globalegemeinschaft/uno_infogesellsch/ap_radio.shtml
	reader on media use	Word doc
	article on the development of a web-forum with NGOs	Word doc
	network based on the internet (from AGRISERVICE Bulletin # 13, 05/2005)	http://www.grz.de/agriservice
	Harmonisation of donor approaches on agricultural extension (ICT mentioned but not a core component)	http://www.neuchatelinitiative.net/images/cf_en.pdf
Hyunjung Lee, ADB	ADB ICT Strategy	http://www.adb.org/Documents/Policies/ICT/
	ADB experiences in ICT for rural development – list and outline	Word doc
	another paper on ADB ICT assistance – in related topics of the right hand of contents sector	http://www.adb.org/e-asiafund/
	Networks, funded by IDRC, which support AND South Asia community centres	http://www.telecentre.org
Judith Payne, USAID	Microenterprise and ICT project	http://www.microlinks.org/
	Example of information not being used well – re internet access points	Word doc
	USAID projects	Google E-Choupal, e-biz, TIPCEE
	In her mind, one of the most influential organisations in this area	http://www.digitaldividend.org
	Her colleague has written a book called 'radio'	Did not send details – Google for book – can go back to her if needs be
	Other recommended but	http://www.ruralfinance.org/

	non USAID link	
Joyce Msolla, SIDA Tanzania	Project will be on the web in the future	http://www.teacherstr.tz
Rhadika Lal, UNDP	Towards more effective & transparent pro-poor public infrastructure & employment creation: a role for information & communication technologies	Word doc
	Shared access to ICT & ICT-enabled services and rural networks – info re India	http://www.apdip.net/news/empoweringthepoor
	Early network development programme activities, some of which involved rural areas (and 5 references below)	http://www.sdnf.undp.org/
	Tele-centers undertaken in partnership with national partners or agencies such as UNESCO (e.g. Mozambique; Vietnam)	http://www.undp.org.vn/undpLive/System/Outreach/Newsroom/News-Details?contentId=2072
	Telecottages in East and Central Europe	http://europeandcis.undp.org/?wspc=practice-14_h_3
	For Solomon Islands' interesting and highly successful connectivity project with PFnet that linked 14 rural community email stations	http://www.peoplefirst.net.sb/general/pfnet.htm
	For research on community-driven networks (e.g. 4 countries in East Africa – Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda)	http://www.propoor-ict.net/
	For broad approach and for recent country presentations	http://www.propoor-ict.net/content/view/25/31/
	UNDP supported research on e-governance in Asia	http://www.apdip.net/projects/e-government/capblg/casestudies
	Example of SMR that support	http://www.undp.org.bt/prprogramme.htm
	Support to scale-intensive bottom-up approaches involving civil society organizations	http://data.undp.org.in/factsheets/dg/oct06/NREGA.pdf

	Support to bottom-up approaches involving women in the rural and informal sectors through SEWA. See "India: Building Capacity of Women Micro Entrepreneurs in the Informal Sector through ICT." SEWA's approach for deploying IT is well thought-out	http://www.sewa.org/
Financial Deepening Challenge Fund	Discusses programme and projects	http://www.financialdeepening.org/ Projects: http://www.financialdeepening.org/default.asp?id=27ver=1
Dylan Winder, DFID	List and description of 27 DFID-funded research projects in ICT4D	http://www.research4development.info/projectsAndProgrammesResults.asp?search=simple%20List&Topic=ICT%20Research&SubTopicID=27&TopicID=6
	List and description of DFID-funded internet services	http://www.research4development.info/projectsAndProgrammesResults.asp?search=simple%20List&Topic=Internet%20Services&SubTopicID=29&TopicID=6
	Lit and description of DFID-funded media and broadcasting projects	http://www.research4development.info/projectsAndProgrammesResults.asp?search=simple%20List&Topic=Media%20and%20Broadcasting&SubTopicID=30&TopicID=6 E.g. Kenya soap opera mentioned: http://www.research4development.info/projectsAndProgrammes.asp?ProjectID=60313
	International agricultural systems	http://www.research4development.info/projectsAndProgrammesResults.asp?search=simple%20List&Topic=International%20Information%20Systems&SubTopicID=28&TopicID=6
	Acacia programme – put most of research ICT4D money in to ICRD who fund Acacia	http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-5895-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html
	Sustainable Agricultural Systems, Knowledge, and Institutions (SASKI) of WB, worth looking at the work they are doing	http://www.worldbank.org/akis
	Agora Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture, FAO link to and fund	http://www.aginternetwork.org/en/
	Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme – discussing ICT work there	http://www.nepad.org/2005/files/caadp.php

Daan Boom, ADB	Draft rural development e- initiative paper	Word doc