



Project Title: Demand Based Policy Approach to Provide Accessibility to Telecommunications Services and ICT for persons with disabilities and age related disabilities

Project Short Title: Reduce the digital divide for persons with disabilities and the elderly

Estimated Start Date: July 2012

Estimated End Date: March 2014

Government Coop. Agency: Ministry of Communications and Transport Mexico (SCT), The Mexican National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CONADIS), Regional Organizations, NGOs for persons with disabilities

Executing Agency: SCT / A Project Management Firm selected by SCT / CONADIS.

Beneficiary Country: All countries from the Americas Region

Budget	
A) Project Budget	
Description	US\$
Staff costs	1,548,289
Missions	30,000
Fellowship Training	30,418
Total: 1,608,707	
B) Cost Sharing	
USD 1,608,707	

Brief Description: Demand Based Policy Approach to Provide Accessibility to Telecommunications Services and ICT for persons with disabilities and age related disabilities aims to reduce the digital divide by providing an integral comprehensive analysis of the situation of accessibility of telecommunications services and ICTs for persons with disabilities and aged related disabilities.

The demand based policy approach will provide a clear dimension of this human right problem and through its results countries will count with this comprehensive analysis including best practices. Manufacturers and service providers as well as researchers will have also a clear view of the market potential and will be able to include this important portion of the Americas population in their commercial objectives resulting in the inclusion of persons with disabilities and age related disabilities.

Finally, this document will give the Americas region leadership in this arena serving as an example to the rest of the world and enabling to reproduce our solutions in other potential markets.

For the	Signature	Date	Name/Title
ITU:	_____	_/_/____	
Partner(s):	_____	_/_/____	
	_____	_/_/____	

1. Background and Context

Today telecommunications and ICTs are a vital part of our every day life. It has been proven that access to telecommunications and ICTs is positively related to economic and social development hence the importance of reducing the digital divide. In this context, developing countries have the most challenges to achieve these goals and particularly to assure inclusion for vulnerable minorities and people with special needs. Providing access to these tools to persons with disabilities, increases their possibilities not only to interact in today's technological society but also in the labor market having a positive impact in sustainable development.

According to the World Health Organization and The World Bank, 15% of the world population, an estimated of more than a billion people, is living with disabilities. This percentage is continuously growing at a global level due to the increased access to medical care, to a higher life expectancy and to the fact that disabilities occur as a result of accidents, aging, wars and poverty.

A disability is a condition or function judged to be significantly impaired relative to the usual standard of an individual of their group. The term is often used to refer to individuals functioning including physical impairment, sensory impairment, cognitive impairment, intellectual impairment, mental illness and various types of chronic diseases.

These types of disabilities require different solutions to solve accessibility issues to telecommunication services and ICTs. Official statistics consider disability as a general category without specifying the number of persons attained with a specific condition. This pragmatic feature of population censuses inhibits research and development to offer effective solutions for inclusion. Furthermore, product developers and service providers do not see these specific groups as potential markets.

It is important to mention that there are a wide variety of isolated efforts performed by diverse stakeholders including governments, non-for profit organizations, academia, service providers and manufacturers. Nevertheless, there is no homogeneity or standardization in the solutions provided which reduces even more efficiency and increases costs in detriment of the poorest and most vulnerable disabled persons at a worldwide level.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has set an important paradigm as accessibility and services for persons with disabilities is analyzed from an approach based on human rights and not only through a health and welfare perspective. According to this international frame, efforts need to be performed to provide equal access to telecommunications and ICT's and emergency and internet services to people with disabilities. Currently, 30 out of 35 countries in the Americas region have ratified this Convention, which confirms the regional interest on this important issue.

To provide an efficient, pertinent and sustainable solution, this issue needs to be approached from a global perspective, reuniting all the best practices that have been developed, and taking into consideration the applications and services needed to each accessibility feature (basic hearing accessibility features, basic vision accessibility features, basic speech accessibility features, dexterity and cognition).

2. Project description, objectives and methodology

The proposed project is aimed to offer a description, comprehensive analysis and wide range of solutions for reducing the digital divide and enhance accessibility to telecommunications services and ICT's for persons with disabilities and people with age related disabilities in the Americas. This goal will be achieved through a multilevel approach:

2.1 Demand-based approach:

As we mentioned before, there are no specific numbers that measure the actual number of persons by disability, which inhibits the stakeholders' capacity to implement efficient solutions to serve them. A demand-based approach will offer the unique opportunity to size the problem in the Americas and will also describe the actual living potential market.

To achieve this goal, the project will include the services of a regional consulting firm to capture hard data on the number of persons by disability feature in every country of the region. Besides the hard data mentioned we will expect a database on NGOs and organizations dealing with disability issues. This information will enhance and strengthen regional communities in favor on the rights of persons with disabilities.

With this first hand information, a member of the academia will provide, based on a sound methodology, an estimated market size by disability including age related disabilities and by country.

2.2 Best practices approach:

Facing the fact that we will be analyzing a minority with special needs, any effort to standardize and homogenate products, services and solutions and to enlist the more accurate policies implemented at a global level would be beneficial. This project pretends to map the existing isolated efforts mentioned before and socialize them to maximize its potential use.

The project coordinators will provide the needed experts to search, analyze and compile best practices around the world.

2.3 Multi stakeholders approach:

Once best practices have been identified and the dimension of this minority has been estimated in the region, a set of multi stakeholders meetings within the Americas will be organized to identify new and ad hoc ways to give accessibility to telecommunications and ICTs for people with disabilities and age related disabilities.

The project coordinators will perform in-depth interviews with multi stakeholders in the region to discuss the above findings and to look for ad hoc ways to give accessibility to telecommunications and ICTs for people with disabilities and age related disabilities.

These meetings will allow identifying and advocating for the implementation of regional pilot projects specifically targeting the accessibility to telecommunications and ICTs for disabled persons. They will also create capacity building and information sharing among the region. Hence one main result of this project would be for the Americas region to take the leadership on the defense of the rights of persons with disabilities providing a model to be replicated around the world.

3. Deliverables

- Market size estimations by country and by higher prevalence type of disabilities.
- Data-base on main NGOs, organizations and government agencies dealing with disabilities by country
- Best practices solutions, products, and policies by disabilities and by telecommunication services including television, Internet, mobile and fixed communications.
- A final comprehensive approach of accessibility to telecommunications and ICTs for persons with disabilities including policy guidelines, recommendations, costs, and products.

4. Inputs

SCT / CONADIS: The SCT and the CONADIS will supervise the realization of the project and will ensure the quality and development of the activities coordinated by the chosen project manager. At the end of the project the SCT / CONADIS will organize a symposium in order to present the results of this project and assure capacity building to main stakeholders of the region.

The selected project management firm: will be the executing agency. This firm will undertake to manage the staff resources that will be funded and hired through this project for project coordination, as well as the consultancy firm that will collect the data and the member of the academia who will estimate the mentioned demand. The selected project manager will sign upon approval of the project a binding MoU with both SCT and CONADIS.

Beneficiaries: The information that will be provided in this project will benefit the following stakeholders:

- Governments: by having first hand strategic information to implement efficient policies and programs that will directly improve the problem of digital divide as well as comply their UN commitments.
- Persons with Disabilities Organizations: will count with first hand strategic information and best practices to advance in their quest for human rights and equality of opportunities
- The manufacturers and service providers: that will have first hand strategic information on the size of a potential market.
- The region: by taking the leadership of such an important issue at the global level

5. Risks

This is a regional project involving 35 countries with very heterogeneous development in the area under analysis. In countries with few or none civil organizations dealing with persons with disabilities the data gathering may be problematic and this kinds of problems will have to be solved in case to case manner resulting in possible delays of the work.

6. Monitoring

The project team will prepare progress reports regularly. These reports will include an activity description and a financial part. It will also include the challenges and the necessary amendments that may be required for successful project implementation.

8. Estimated Budget

	Month	Project (22 months)
STAFF COSTS		
Permanent Staff – Base salaries (2 senior consultants and 4 consultants)	\$ 35,285.17	\$ 776,273.76
External services – Consulting (525 interviews in 35 countries) (9 month)	\$ 76,045.63	\$ 684,410.65
External services- Consulting Caribbean region (12 month)	\$ 4,258.56	\$ 51,102.66
External services consulting - Academia (3 month)	\$ 12,167.30	\$ 36,501.90
Sub-total:		\$ 1,548,288.97
MISSIONS EXPENSES		
Mission expenses multistakeholders approach		
In-depth interviews to regional stakeholders		\$ 30,000.00
Sub-total:		\$ 30,000.00
SYMPOSIUM		
Fellowship training		\$30,418.25
TOTAL BUDGET		\$1,608,707