



**The Task Force on New Technologies for Rural Applications**

Note on Activities and Request for Partnerships  
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*ENHANCING RURAL CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESS*

REQUEST FOR PARTNERSHIPS

**1. Background**

Following on from the work of Focus Group 7, Chaired by Mr. Y. Kawasumi of Japan and including over eighty ITU Member States and sector members, the Task Force on New Technologies for Rural Applications has been charged with overseeing the implementations of recommendations designed to enhance low cost rural connectivity and access. The recommendations put forth in the report *New Technologies for Rural Applications*, are as follows:

	<p>Rec. 1: <i>Promote the development of low-cost information appliances for rural use.</i></p> <p>Rec. 2: <i>Publish a renewable energy handbook on small-scale power systems for rural use.</i></p> <p>Rec. 3: <i>Increase collaboration with micro-finance organizations to help develop communication based rural businesses and applications.</i></p> <p>Rec. 4: <i>Conduct pilot projects of packet-based wireless access infrastructure for multimedia applications.</i></p> <p>Rec. 5: <i>Maintain and expand the web site: <a href="http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/fg7/">http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/fg7/</a></i></p> <p>Rec. 6: <i>Hold a symposium on new technologies for rural applications</i></p>
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Thus far all funding for this special initiative related to new technologies for rural development has come from the Government of Japan, Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications. What follows is an overview of implementation including specific requests for partnership and funding in order to achieve these goals.

**2. Implementing Recommendations on Rural ICT Development**

The report asserts the need for the introduction of systems combining low-cost, wireless access technologies with packet-based networks for the possible delivery of multimedia applications in rural and remote areas. In order to introduce these new technologies, prior testing, information exchange, training, appropriate energy systems and micro-financing are essential. Applications of these networks would include distance education, telemedicine, local business development, and so forth.

**3. Programme Overview**

*Recommendation One:*

*Promote the development of low-cost ICT and appliances for rural use*

In order to improve information available on emerging technologies for rural areas, the ITU would like to enhance partnerships with the private sector to facilitate information exchange and market development in the rural areas of lesser developed nations. In order to achieve this aim, the ITU would be interested in working with partners to design information sessions and material in

conjunction with the Telecom 2003, the World Summit on the Information Society and on-line to promote the dissemination of information on new technologies for rural applications.

*Recommendation Two:*

*Publish a renewable energy handbook on small-scale power systems for rural use.*

Clearly, access to a reliable low cost power source is essential for access to ICTs. This report should include technical and financial aspects and should be available to ITU Members by the end of 2002. The Task Force has identified a team of highly qualified researchers from non-profit research organisations and the academic community and **is seeking 50,000 USD** to compensate for the data collection and writing of this report.

*Recommendation Three:*

*Increase collaboration with micro-finance organizations to help develop communication based rural businesses and applications.*

The ITU is requesting partners from non-governmental organisations, national institutions, micro-finance organisations, regional and global development banks and others to enhance the network and dialogue on micro-finance strategies for ICT development. The **ITU is seeking partners** in order to be able to hold a micro-finance roundtable and enhance information exchange between entrepreneurs around the world on successful models for micro-finance in the area of rural ICTs.

*Recommendation Four:*

*Conduct pilot projects of packet-based wireless access infrastructure for multimedia applications*

To date, the ITU has received project requests from Uganda, Cameroon, Egypt, Sri Lanka, the South Pacific Islands, Brazil, Mexico, Bulgaria and Yemen and is awaiting funding and partnerships to proceed. Each of these projects would enable rural connectivity and access as well as applications ranging from telemedicine to distance learning, e-government and e-security. Ideally the ITU would like to **run five pilot projects in each geographic area** and produce recommendations and guidelines on the use of this technology by the close of 2003. The ITU welcomes project proposals from additional partners in rural areas who could foresee a benefit in testing packet-based wireless IP, VOIP and other e-applications.

Focus Group 7 has delineated budget forecasts at **\$115, 000 USD per project**, which would cover all project management, ICT equipment, installation and maintenance costs per ten router site. A voluntary fund is being established, wherein the private sector and experts are encouraged to donate time, technology, capital or know-how to one or all of the projects contained in the data-base or others as suggested. Procedures for the roll-out of pilot projects and Request for Proposals (RFP) are available on the web site or from the Secretariat.

*Recommendation Five:*

*Maintain and expand the web site: <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/fg7/>*

A case library of rural connectivity and access success stories has been compiled and is available on-line.

*Recommendation Six:*

*Hold a symposium on new technologies for rural applications*

Regional symposia have been held and information is disseminated through the ITU worldwide network of Centres for Excellence.

## **Funding Issues**

The ITU is seeking partnerships and funding for all of the above activities. For additional information, please contact the ITU Secretariat.