



Document SPU DOP 01/06-E
18 September 2006

International Telecommunication Union

REPORT ON THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY PLATFORM, SEPTEMBER 2006

A. CORE ELEMENTS OF THE DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY PLATFORM (DOP)

A1 Vision

The Platform seeks to help bridge the digital divide by measurement of the extent of the divide, analysis of trends in the divide and improved understanding of its root causes. The Platform aims to achieve the indicative targets set out in the WSIS Geneva Plan of Action that are the basis for improving connectivity and promoting universal, ubiquitous, equitable, non-discriminatory and affordable access to and use of ICTs.

A2 Core values and activities

The core focus of the Platform is high-quality research and analysis measuring trends in the evolving Information Society to help bridge the digital divide and provide an input into the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

To achieve this purpose, the Platform partners engage in varied activities including research, data collection, information exchange, capacity-building, the organization of workshops and seminars, promotional activities and other substantive support for policy-making processes.

A3 Partners in the DOP

Digital Opportunity Platform is a multi-stakeholder partnership. The founding partners are the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the Ministry of Information and Communication of the Republic of Korea (MIC) and the Korea Agency for Digital Opportunity and Promotion (KADO). The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) joined the Platform in 2006.

This Platform is open to all stakeholders in the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), as well as to all relevant interested international or other organizations.

A4 The legal framework of the DOP

The legal framework of the Platform is set out in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by the ITU and MIC in February 2006. MIC and ITU had previously signed a MoU entitled "Building Digital Bridges" in June 2004, which established a work program that has been executed to the satisfaction of the both Parties.

For more information, please visit www.itu.int/digitalopportunity.

B. OBJECTIVES AND CORRESPONDING ACHIEVEMENTS

In their joint MoU, the founding partners of the DOP established six main objectives (B2 to B7). Important achievements have been made in each area since the launch of the Platform. Achievements for individual targets are summarized below.

B1 Publication and distribution of the Building Digital Bridges Report 2005

The *Building Digital Bridges Report* was prepared for the Tunis Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, November 2005. This Report provides the methodological basis and framework for the development of a worldwide, authoritative digital opportunity index to support discussions on technological solutions and best practices for bridging the digital divide. The report presents an initial evaluation of a subset of the core set of ICT indicators agreed by the international community for 40 leading economies. The proposed methodology was presented at the WSIS Thematic Meeting on Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships for Bridging the Digital Divide, held in Seoul, 23-24 June 2005, and has been subsequently revised to incorporate comments from KADO and other parties.

The background papers and case studies included in the Building Digital Bridges Report shed light on different strategies to bridge the digital divide. Whether through the collection and analysis of ICT data, the use of partnership mechanisms or the deployment of emerging technologies, governments in developed and developing countries have made inroads in closing the gap between the have and have-nots. However, much still remains to be done.

Hard copies from the *Building Digital Bridges Report* have been distributed during 2006.

The Executive Summary of the Report as well as the background papers are available online at www.itu.int/digitalbridges/.

B2 Extension of the Digital Opportunity Index (DOI)

The Digital Opportunity Index (DOI) was endorsed in the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, adopted during the Tunis Phase of WSIS. Accordingly to para 117 of the Agenda, which encourages the further development of indicators in a “collaborative, cost-effective and non-duplicative fashion”, the DOP mobilized and coordinated efforts for further developing the DOI as a tool for better measurement of the digital divide, as part of the ongoing work on the WSIS implementation. The Index was developed in close collaboration with KADO and the UNCTAD.

During 2006, work on the DOI has resulted in the following real outcomes:

- The DOI was expanded to include 180 countries worldwide for 2005.
- A DOI time series has been compiled for 40 leading economies for the period 2000 to 2005.
- Extensive other data series have been collected to ensure the further development of the DOI, the target being to compile the DOI for 2006 for at least 180 countries, as well as to expand the 2000-2005 time series for a greater number of countries.
- An ongoing data analysis process is underway, to support the wider promotion and dissemination of the DOI, as well as future methodological developments in the DOI.

B3 Publication of the DOI as part of a “World Information Society Report” on WSIS implementation

As part of the WSIS implementation process, the Geneva Plan of Action (para 28a) proposes for an ICT Development (Digital Opportunity) Index to be published annually or every two years, as part of an ICT Development Report. On the basis of these recommendations, the DOI was featured in depth in the report on WSIS implementation, entitled *World Information Society Report*.

The inaugural *World Information Society Report 2006 (WISR)* was authored by a team led by the ITU Strategy and Policy Unit, with active support and contributions from the Platform partners KADO and UNCTAD, and published by ITU.

The WISR introduces the Digital Opportunity Index as a statistical tool for policy-makers and describes how it measures digital opportunity around the world in terms of access to telecommunications, price of services and affordability, network penetration and the take-up of new technologies, including broadband and mobile Internet. The Report analyzes the latest trends and drivers of progress in building the Information Society and tracks the transition of the telecom industry through wireless and mobile forms of access. The Report also reviews recent developments in policy and regulatory reform and shows how the DOI can be used to support the policy-making process by identifying trends and gaps in ICT policy, especially in universal service policies and policies to address urban/rural and gender divides. The Report gives practical examples of how the DOI can be adapted to the national and regional levels, and can also be used in conjunction with other, more general indices, such as the UNDP’s Human Development Index.

The Report contains a 52-page Statistical Annex presenting the latest available data for 180 economies worldwide, including their DOI scores and rankings. A rich collection of additional indicators is also available. World and regional maps (Africa, Americas, Asia-Pacific and Europe) depict the extent of digital opportunity worldwide.

The World Information Society Report Series was launched on 17th May at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, with presentations by the ITU Deputy Secretary-General Mr. Roberto Blois and Mr. Charles Geiger, Executive Director of WSIS. The inaugural report of the Series, the World Information Society Report 2006, was launched on 5th July 2006 at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland. Key speakers at the event were Mr. Mongi Hamdi, Chief of the Science & Technology for Development Section at UNCTAD, Mr. Charles Geiger, Executive Director of the WSIS Executive Secretariat and Dr. Tim Kelly, Head of the Strategy and Policy Unit of ITU. The launch was very well attended and there was extensive coverage of the Report and the DOI in the international media.

The WISR was made available to the ECOSOC at their annual meeting in Geneva, July 2006.

More information on the WISR as well as the online downloadable version of the Report can be found at www.itu.int/wisr.

B4 Organizing a seminar on composite indices

The [ITU Strategy and Policy Unit \(SPU\)](#), in collaboration with [London Business School \(LBS\)](#), held a two-day seminar on “Digital Transformations in the Information Society” in Geneva, Switzerland, on 1-2 June 2006. This joint conference was attended by economists, statisticians, academics, policy-makers, industry analysts and the private sector, as well as representatives of regulatory agencies and international organizations. The event focused on the measurement of ICTs and their macro-, micro- and meso-impact of ICTs on the economy, industry, firms, growth and productivity. The participants discussed recent ground-breaking work in these areas and sought answers to some of the more pressing issues raised by Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), including the digital divide. One of the parallel sessions of the seminar was

devoted to measuring digital opportunity: in particular, the use of composite indices and the most appropriate indicators for measuring access to and usage of ICTs for development goals.

More information about the event, as well as all related materials, presentations and background papers can be found at www.itu.int/dtis/.

B5 Development of guidelines for applying the DOI in ICT policy development (policy toolkit)

Based on their multi-stakeholder approach, ITU and KADO are working to develop guidelines to improve policy-making in ICTs using the DOI.

Chapter Four of the *World Information Society Report 2006* introduced discussion of the different policy instruments available to a country for improving digital opportunity. This Chapter illustrates different applications of the DOI at the regional, national and in-country levels, as well as its application to gender-disaggregated statistics. It shows how the DOI can be used to inform the policy-making process in the critical areas of the digital divide, universal access, gender, and the development of broadband networks.

In 2006, a comprehensive resource, *The DOI: a Users' Guide*, was developed by ITU to improve understanding of the DOI and to provide guidelines for its consistent use by governments, policy-makers, statisticians, analysts and other researchers from government, academia and the IT sector. The Users' Guide:

- Sets out the standard definitions and methodology that should be used to calculate the DOI to ensure that the data and Index are compiled in a standard and comparable way, guaranteeing the consistency and comparability of results across different economies;
- Gives insights into how to collect all eleven individual DOI indicators, with step-by-step guidance and suggestions as to how to collect and use national data.
- Gives concrete examples of how the individual indicators are calculated, as well as the overall DOI, for different countries.

This Users' guide will enable stakeholders to apply the DOI at the national and regional levels, as well as for communities and groups. The guide is available online at www.itu.int/osg/spu/statistics/DOI/doi-guide.pdf.

Further efforts are underway by DOP partners to develop:

- Training materials on how to use the DOI and how to overcome methodological problems in collecting DOI indicators;
- An interactive spreadsheet-based questionnaire allowing countries to enter or update their own data;
- Guidelines for applying the DOI to measure different aspects of the digital divide;
- Tailored recommendations addressing the specific challenges in digital opportunity faced by developing regions or least developed countries; and
- Case studies using the DOI to compare a particular country with its peers and to make policy-oriented recommendations.

B6 Organizing a workshop on the Digital Opportunity Index

ITU and KADO organized a workshop, a Digital Opportunity Forum, hosted by the Ministry of Information and Communication of Korea in Seoul from 31st August-1st September 2006 as an official event of the official Korea IT Learning Program (KOIL) alumni network. The inaugural conference brought together practitioners, researchers and experts from governments, regulatory agencies and academic organizations from many nations, as well as international and regional organizations.

The Forum discussed two main themes: international cooperation in ICT development and the development of the Digital Opportunity Index (DOI) as an analytical policy tool. The Forum furthered cooperation among stakeholders in implementing the commitments of the WSIS, particularly those relating to the evaluation methodology for WSIS follow-up and the use of the DOI for measuring the Information Society.

The Forum comprised seven sessions, each of which showcased ICT success stories and policies designed to enhance international cooperation and bridging the global digital divide. Following an introduction of the DOI methodology and its advantages, a number of different case studies were presented, applying the DOI for ICT policy purposes specific to different countries and adapting it to each country's special needs. These case studies were prepared on the basis of specific guidelines (see below in this section) available online at: www.itu.int/dof. A special session focused on discussion of moves towards the creation of a policy toolkit based on the DOI to assist policy-makers and regulators in policy-evaluation and performance benchmarking.

During the organization of the Forum, ITU helped in compiling and improving the Forum program, targeting high-level speakers, providing a recorded speech of Welcoming remarks from the ITU Secretary-General, preparing other Forum documents (invitation letter, etc.) and reviewing and commenting on intermediate and final background papers from Forum speakers.

To ensure widespread and consistent understanding of the DOI, the ITU developed guidelines to assist presenters from different countries with the necessary know-how to adapt and expand the DOI to suit their national needs. These guidelines provide suggestions as to how the indicators can be best adapted to help improve the collection, input and use of national data. The guidelines are available online at <http://www.itu.int/osg/spu/statistics/DOI/doi-guide.pdf>.

More information about the Digital Opportunity Forum, as well as all the related background materials and Forum presentations, can be found at www.itu.int/dof and on www.dof.or.kr.

B7 Development of websites for the Platform and for the Digital Opportunity Index

The Digital Opportunity Platform website (www.itu.int/digitalopportunity) has been designed as a user-friendly interface giving a full overview of the Platform's mission and activities and providing links to all the major events taking place within its framework. The Platform's outcomes are highlighted and visitors are invited to discover more about individual themes. The main publications are also featured, with access to free thematic resources and sales links. This web page is intended as a gateway or entry page, providing fast access to all relevant resources and activities under the Platform.

The Digital Opportunity Index website (www.itu.int/doi) includes detailed information on the latest development of the DOI and the eleven separate individual indicators, and gives world ranks in Digital Opportunity, as well as a number of charts illustrating latest trends in the Information Society tracked by the Index. The website also gives access to an extensive collection of methodological and other thematic resources on the DOI and indicators for measuring the digital divide and digital opportunities. It also highlights the future applications and uses of the DOI as a measurement and policy tool. The website is linked to those of KADO, MIC and other partners.

Report on the Achievements of the Digital Opportunity Platform - 2006

The DOI website is being revamped, with new version to be made available online as a follow-up to the DOF 2006 conference.

B8 Promotion of the Platform and its activities

The team working on these activities carries overall responsibility for ensuring that the outcomes of the Platform are of high-quality and respond to the priorities set out in the MoU. The team aims to promote the use of the DOI by a wider audience, to extend its application for policy analysis and to run the platform activities efficiently and responsibly. The activities of the DOP will ensure timely and accurate measurement of the digital divide and the design of suitable policy strategies for building a people-centered and development-oriented Information Society. To that end, promotion of the DOI is actively underway.

In order to achieve its mandate and following the successful outcomes of its activities to date, the Platform partners are actively seeking new partners and building new relationships to promote the use of the DOI with LIRNEAsia, LINK Africa and other stakeholders.