

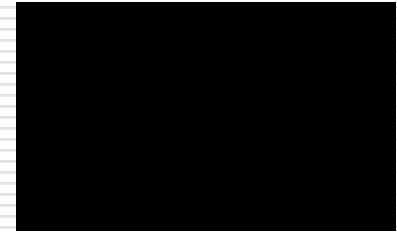
iCentres

First steps in the transition from industrial towards information society in Bulgaria

Mariana Todorova, Saga Technology
mariana@sagabg.net

WSIS Thematic Meeting
Seoul, 23-24 June 2005

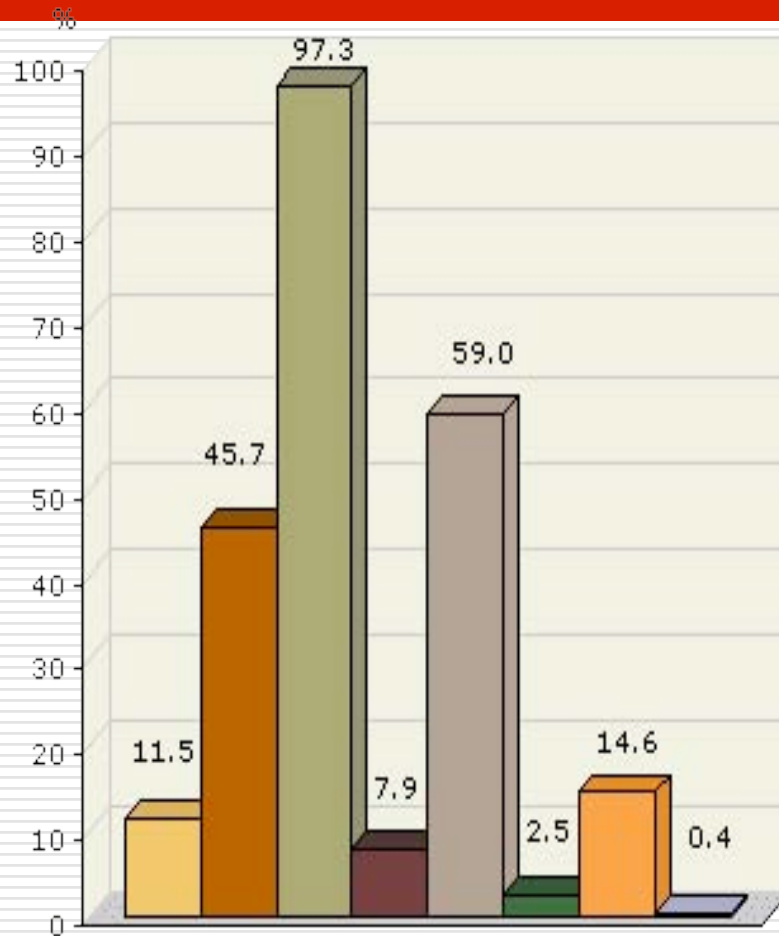
Republic of Bulgaria



Country info

- ❑ **Area:** 42,822 square miles
- ❑ **Economy (GVA):** 59% services, 29% industry and 12% agriculture
- ❑ **University degrees:** 15% of population
- ❑ **Government:** Parliamentary democracy
- ❑ **Currency:** BGN pegged to EUR at 1.95583:1
- ❑ **Affiliations:** NATO, WTO

ICT use in households



GSM with Inet access - 11.5%

GSM without Inet access - 45.7%

TV - 97.3%

Satellite TV - 7.9%

Cable TV - 59%

Game consoles - 2.5%

PCs and laptops - 14.6%

Handheld - 0.4%

Internet penetration

- ❑ Only 15.9% from population use Internet
- ❑ 4.8% use modem dial-up connection
- ❑ 3.7% use broadband Internet – cable, DSL, ISDN, etc.
- ❑ 2.6% use wireless Internet
- ❑ 81.9% from people never use Internet or have not use for more than 1 year

iCentres project - general info

Statute:

- Initiated and funded by: **Ministry of Transport and Communications**
- Under implementation by: **United Nations Development Program (UNDP)**

Term: by the end of 2006

Budget: 3,5 million EUR

Vision Statement

iCentres aim to narrow the gap between today's Bulgarian **civil society** and the **Information Society**, by improving the technological and informational skills of citizens and business in rural areas and facilitating the flow of information

Mission Statement

iCentres allow the affordable distribution of **educational, informational, and value-add services** providing forms of content, such as voice, video and data to citizens and businesses throughout the country.

Goals and objectives

- Infrastructure and Internet connectivity
- Basic Internet Services
- High quality continuous education
- Up to date customized content
- E-government services
- Value Added Services
- Community Clubs

- Personal level - access*
- Group level -training*
- Society - content*

Competitive Advantages

- Physical coverage
 - Space in post offices and municipalities around the country
- Existing relationship
 - For instance: Trust factor that has already been established between post office personnel and their existing “customers”
- Ability to represent the visitor and receive payment

Fact Sheet

- Number of telecentres
 - July 2004 – 5
 - November 2004 – 22 more
 - April 2005 – 45 more
- Visitors since July 2004 – 17 000
- Trainees – 312
- Number of services – 29

Partners

- ❑ Bulgarian Posts
- ❑ Agency for ICT Development
- ❑ Others:
 - Other projects – MTC e-Health project,
 - Sofia University
 - IT companies – Microsoft, Cisco Systems
 - Mayors/City Halls
 - Media – Saga Technology
 - Local schools
 - International Organizations – KADO

International cooperation



In December 2004 in Sofia was opened Bulgarian Korean Internet Access Center by KADO and Republic of Bulgaria representatives.

Computers and communication equipment for 300 000 USD was delivered by KADO Agency.

Since than more than 170 000 people have visited the Center.



Saga Technology



- ❑ Saga Technology was established in 1993.
- ❑ The company is leading publisher of periodicals in the field of the information and communication technologies.
- ❑ The specialized publications of the company include reviews and analysis of Bulgarian ICT Market on important matters as e-government, ERP, CRM, Telecommunications, Business critical solutions, GIS, CAD/CAM, Web, etc.

Service delivery

□ **Service-Assistance**

- *People who visit iCentres have a choice as to how they receive the various services that are being offered. On one hand, some services can be offered to the visitor by the local iCentres employee. This is typically the case when the visitor does not know how to use a computer and it is referred to as Service Assistance.*

□ **Self-Services**

- *On the other hand, the visitor can choose to receive the service on his or her own. This type of service is referred to as Self Service and requires the iCentres user to be able to use a computer in order to do certain things.*

□ **Call-Center Support**

- *In all cases, iCentres visitors will have the option to use a phone in a particular iCentres and speak to a support agent who can assist them in finding information or to guide them about what exactly they need to do in order to receive a certain service that is being offered by the iCentres*

Call-Center Support

- e-Government services
 - Local
 - Central
- Life long learning – Continuous Education
 - Pupil
 - Students
 - Adults
- Health
- Payment services
- Business services
 - Commerce
 - Tourism

Output targets – step by step

□ **2004**

1. A project office established
2. Project business plan development
3. Analysis of telecentres situation map. Approval of the map by all stakeholders

□ **2004-2006**

1. Establishment of the telecenters countrywide;
2. Regional promotion activities
3. Organizing IT training courses

Future expanding of the project

- ❑ July 2005 – Establishment of mobile unit
- ❑ Fall 2005 – Establishment of students dormitories centres
- ❑ E-Health module
- ❑ Increased number of IT access points and expanding by geographic regions

Thank you!

Mariana Todorova

Saga Technology

Managing Director

mariana@sagabg.net

www.sagabg.net

Dr. Krassimir Simonski

General Manager

iCentres Project

www.iCentres.net