



INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION

**TELECOMMUNICATION  
DEVELOPMENT BUREAU  
ITU-D STUDY GROUPS**

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FIRST MEETING OF STUDY GROUP 2: GENEVA, 7 - 9 SEPTEMBER 1998

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- Question 7/1: Universal access/service  
Question 13/1: Promotion of infrastructure and use of the Internet in developing countries  
Question 10/2: Communications for rural and remote areas

### **STUDY GROUPS 1 AND 2**

**SOURCE:** TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT BUREAU (BDT)

**TITLE:** BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF BUENOS AIRES ACTION PLAN PROGRAMMES  
9 AND 12 ( VALLETTA ACTION PLAN PROGRAMME 3):  
INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND UNIVERSAL ACCESS  
(Situation as at 31 August 1998)

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Most of the populations of developing countries live in rural and often isolated areas. This is also where most of the resources are located. Access to information and telecommunications is essential for development of such areas but is still inadequate or non-existing.

The overall objective of the BAAP Programme No. 9 (VAP Programme 3) is to promote and accelerate the development of rural telecommunications by implementing a number of pilot projects in countries in different regions, at different stages of development and with different geographical, social, economic and cultural conditions. The programme is expected to provide 'best practice' models of ways to provide access to modern telecommunication facilities and information services to rural and remote areas. It will also provide opportunities to evaluate the social, economic and cultural impact of providing access to such facilities and services and thereby sensitise policy makers to the needs and cost-effectiveness of providing such tools for development.

Provision of telecommunications and IT facilities is not a goal in itself. To have a real impact, the introduction of such facilities and services must be done as an integral part of a cross-sectoral, multi-disciplinary effort of community development, where many specialised UN agencies and NGOs have an important role in the development and adaptation to the local context of applications and "content" relevant to their field of activity and in training of support staff and end users.

The set up and applications supported by such centres varies considerably. In its simplest form the telecentre may be limited to providing public telephone and fax services and be run, for example, by a local shopkeeper. However, such "telecentres", sometimes called "telekiosks" are usually established in more densely populated or urban areas and would not qualify as "multipurpose" centres.

At the other end of the scale there are telecentres with (shared) offices for local small business and "teleworkers" and equipped with computers, printer, photocopier, etc. Such centres would provide access to data networks (e.g. Internet) for e-mail, file transfer, access to electronic libraries and databases, government and community information, systems, market and price information, environment watch, etc. In addition they may well contain facilities and equipment for teletraining and telemedicine. Some may also provide facilities, equipment and training for local production (and reception) of radio and TV broadcasting programmes so as to offer information relevant to the local population and to promote local culture. Such facilities are currently planned for two Telecentres in a pilot project; currently being implemented in Suriname.

The "Multipurpose" and "Community" aspects of the telecentres are thus essential components of each pilot project. As well as providing a shared communication facility for people living in rural and isolated areas, each MCT offers user support and training so that the community can gain the maximum benefit from these facilities and services.

Pilot projects are currently being implemented in Benin, Bhutan, Honduras, Mali, Suriname, Tanzania, Mozambique Uganda and Vietnam. Other proposals have been received from a number of developing countries and may be implemented at a later stage. The pilot projects in Benin, Tanzania and Mozambique, are set up within the framework of the UN-System-wide Special Initiative for Africa.

Pilot projects are implemented in partnership with concerned national and international organisations.

A seminar on Multiple Community Telecentres for Central and Eastern Europe will be organised in December 1998 in Budapest Hungary in partnership with the Hungarian Telecom operator, the Hungarian Telecottage Association and the Community TeleService Centre (CTSC) International. Other UN agencies and NGOs will be invited to participate in this event.

Electronic fora for exchange of information and resources among the pilot projects is being set up on the ITU web site where a significant amount of information related to Universal Access, telecentres and rural telecom development is already available  
(see <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D-UniversalAccess/>)

A common framework for evaluation of these pilots, including research questions to be answered, indicators and tools is now being collaboratively developed among the partners. This will enable cross-cultural comparisons and facilitate the identification of "best practice" and sustainable and replicable models. The evaluation process has already started in Suriname and will provide data on a continuous basis. Information from evaluations will be submitted as BDT contributions to Study Group Questions 7/1, 13/1 and 10/2 and should provide valuable material.

A summary of the situation regarding MCT pilot projects as at 31 August 1998 is submitted below.

## **AFRICA**

BDT has pledged a total contribution of some US\$ 500'000 for 5 MCT pilot projects in Benin, Mali, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda. This programme is to be implemented within the BAAP P9 and the framework of the UN Special Initiative for Africa, in partnership with national partners, UNESCO and IDRC, who have pledged matching contributions to this programme. Other agencies are now joining.

### **UGANDA**

**Project site:** Nakaseke, **Duration:** 3 years. **Starting date:** 1 Oct. 97 (delayed to January 98).

**International partners:** ITU, UNESCO/DANIDA, IDRC

**National partners:** UPTC, Uganda Public Library Board and Uganda National Commission for UNESCO

**Status:** Project document signed (by all the above partners) in December98/January 99.

**National executing agency:** National UNESCO Commission, in collaboration with other national partners. However, the telecom infrastructure required to link the Nakaseke telecentre with Kampala will be executed by Uganda Telecom Ltd. (UTL former UPTC) and a separate agreement with ITU is being developed which will stipulate how they will use the ITU contribution allocated for this purpose.

### ***Achievements***

National and local steering committees have been established. A national co-ordinator has been appointed. The Nakaseke sub-county council will initially own the telecentre. After three years, transfer of ownership to a private entrepreneur is envisaged.

The Uganda Telecom Ltd. (UTL) is providing the telecommunication link to Nakaseke, waiving the justification in terms of economic potential and financial viability normally required. The cost of this link will be partly covered by the ITU contribution allocated for this purpose. The link is expected to be in operation by October 1998.

The local council will provide the building for the MCT which is currently being refurbished and secured. The council will also be responsible for providing local assistants and ensuring maintenance.

A small branch library based in the telecentre is already stocked with donated books and the

IDRC, within the framework of its Acacia programme, will fund the implementation of 4 additional MCTs in Uganda that will be linked to Nakaseke pilot project.

The Nakaseke Multipurpose Community Telecentre is expected to start operating by the end of 1998.

### ***Evaluation***

Following an initiative by the BDT, a common framework for evaluation of the MCT pilot projects is now being developed collaboratively by the three main partners in the African pilot projects. A first attempt to use this was made by sending a consultant (funded by BAAP P9) to Suriname in May/June 98.

It is envisaged to contract a consultant firm to assist in the refinement of this framework, develop tools, train local counterparts and undertake a baseline study in Uganda and Mali before the end of 1998.

Similar allocations have been made for the Mali project and it is envisaged to pool these resources in order to use the same consultant firm for both projects. A proposal for execution has been received by a US based NGO by the name of PACT. The framework and tools developed for Mali and Uganda could then be used also in other MCT pilot projects.

## **MALI**

**Project site:** Timbuktu, **Duration:** 3 years. **Starting date:** 1 December. 97 (delayed to January 98).

**International partners:** ITU, UNESCO/DANIDA, IDRC, FAO, WHO

**National partners:** SOTELMA, National Commission for UNESCO, Ministère de la Culture et du Tourisme

**Status:** Project document signed (by all the above partners, except WHO and local authorities) in December 98/January 99. Since then FAO has joined the project. FAO has a community radio project which may be complementary to the MCT pilot project. WHO has expressed the intention to join.

**National executing agency:** SOTELMA. SOTELMA will initially be responsible for the operation of the MCT but it is intended that, by the end of the pilot project, it will be handed over to local authority/association and/or operated by a franchisee.

### ***Achievements***

National and local steering committees have been established. A national project co-ordinator will be appointed in the beginning of September. As part of the start up activities, a workshop was organised in Timbuktu in May 1998 to develop training plans for the various user groups. Some 40 representatives, consisting of local Malian partners and user groups, participated in the workshop.

The MCT is now operating in temporary premises in an underused wing of the local hospital, while awaiting the construction of a building provided by the local community, to be located in an attractive setting in the centre of Timbuktu. The existing Domsat link from Timbuktu - Bamako will be upgraded to handle a leased 64 kbs line to the MCT.

Short-term international volunteers have been active in helping to install PCs and establish the network. They are also providing the local community with training on how to use personal computers and Internet applications such as e-mail and the WWW. A Web site has been established for the Timbuktu project (hosted on a server in Bamako).

**Evaluation** (see Uganda above).

## MOZAMBIQUE

**Project site:** Mahnica and Namaacha, **Duration:** 4 years. **Starting date:** end 1998

**International partners:** ITU, UNESCO/DANIDA, IDRC

**National partners:** Eduardo Mondlane University Informatics Centre (CIUEM)

**Status:** Feasibility study and development of project proposal with tentative business plan done by national team with members from CIUEM, TDM (Mozambique Telecommunication Company) and social sciences, funded by IDRC and with support of the Mozambique Acacia Advisory Committee Secretariat (MAACS). Project document not yet signed.

## BENIN

**Project site:** Malanville. **Duration:** 3 years. **Starting date:** End 98 (to be confirmed)

**International partners:** ITU, UNESCO/DANIDA, IDRC, UNDP/SDNP have developed a complementary proposal for a project in Benin and expressed the intention to participate in the pilot project (not yet defined).

**National partners:** OPT plus concerned ministries and local authorities

**Status:** Project Document not yet finalised. Draft proposal, including preliminary business plan, received in 1997, following ITU missions (preparatory assistance). A joint ITU/UNESCO/IDRC/UNDP (SDNP) mission together with representatives of potential local partners visited Malanville in April 98 and reported that local authorities and user groups are very enthusiastic, a local project committee has been established and local authorities has offered to contribute with land and building.

A joint IDRC/UNESCO mission was also undertaken to Cotonou and Malanville in August 98 to assist in finalising the project document. An ITU consultant will be recruited to carry out a mission to Benin in September 1998 with the task to assist in the planning and specification of the VSAT system for the MCT in Malanville (preparatory assistance funded by BAAP P9).

## TANZANIA

**Project site:** Sengerema, **Duration:** 3 years. **Starting date:** 1999.

**International partners:** ITU, UNESCO/DANIDA, IDRC.

**National partners (proposed)** Tanzania Telecom Company Ltd, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Science, Technology & Environment (COSTECH), Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Peoples Communities, local Government, Open University in Tanzania, Hospital and Health organisations in provinces/area, Local industries and/or sales offices in Tanzania, DATEL

**Status:** Project Document still to be finalised. Initial proposal received 1996. Revised draft proposal received in 1997 following joint ITU/UNESCO mission (preparatory assistance). A joint ITU/UNESCO/IDRC mission together with representatives of potential local partners will visit Tanzania to assist in finalising project document in September 98.

## AMERICAS

### SURINAME

***Project site:*** Brownsweg and Gujaba ***Duration:*** 1 year. ***Starting date:*** January 1996

***International partners:*** ITU, Dutch Government, Berocan International, Canada Northern Telecom (in kind), UNESCO (complementary project), WHO (to be defined)

***National partners:*** Telesur

***Status:*** First phase, including the base line evaluation May 98 (report pending).

### HONDURAS

***Project site:*** Valle de Angeles ***Duration:*** 3 years (approx.) ***Starting date:*** End 1998

***International Partners:*** ITU, UNESCO, and UNDP/SDNP

***National partners:*** Hondutel and local authorities

***National Executing Agency:*** Hondutel

***Status:*** Draft project document prepared and reviewed by Hondutel (now being revised)

ITU has funded a study of the network for MCTs in Honduras and the preparation of a prototype web page for the MCT. Round table meeting with potential partners held in June 98. (preparatory assistance)

### HAITI

Site, duration and starting dates not yet defined

Feasibility study for an MCT pilot project, funded by ITU being carried out in August 1998 (report will be available in September).

## ASIA & PACIFIC

### VIETNAM

**Project site:** Two MCTs in villages in the Dac Lac province, two MCTs in villages in the Ha Bac province. **Duration:** 3 years. **Starting date:** March 1998.

**International partners:** ITU, Sida, Sweden, Ericsson, Siemens, Sagem. UNESCO, FAO, WHO, UNIDO and International Red Cross/Red Crescent have expressed their intention to participate.

**National partners:** DGPT/VNPT and local partners. Other proposed partners include Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and hospitals in the concerned regions and Ministry of Science and Technology.

**National executing agency:** VNPT

**Status:** Agreements with Sida signed in 1995 (for preparatory assistance) and 1997. Project Document signed by ITU and DGPT, Vietnam in February 98. National project coordinator appointed.

**Achievements:** Networks for the two regions are being planned in collaboration with suppliers (private sector partners). Preliminary plans for development of services and applications have been prepared. Mission of 3 ITU experts (review of work plan, project planning and telemedicine applications) will take place in October 1998. Vietnam plans to convert post offices throughout the country to become MCTs.

### BHUTAN

**Project site:** Jakar **Duration:** 3 years. **Starting date:** October 1997.

**International partners:** ITU, UNESCO, FAO, WHO and bilateral agencies (Danida and Dutch) have expressed their intention to participate. Telemedicine equipment (X-ray scanner and software) offered by Japanese supplier. IDRC is implementing a complementary project aiming at the establishment of an Intranet in Bhutan and will collaborate in capacity building.

**National partners:** Division of Telecom, Bhutan. Other proposed partners include the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and the hospitals in Jakar.

**National executing agency:** Telecom Division, Royal Government of Bhutan. National Coordinator appointed.

**Status:** Project document signed by RGoB in May 98. The project started in 1997 on the basis of exchange of correspondence between the BDT and the Division of Telecom, implying mutual acceptance of the project.

**Achievements:** Equipment has been purchased and will be installed in October/November 98. The MCT building is being refurbished. Training will start at this time.

## **INDIA**

**Project site:** 12 MCTs in rural villages in the Rajkot, State of Gujarat. **Duration:** 3 approximately years **Starting date:** End 1998 (approx.).

**International partners:** ITU, UNESCO. Other international partners who have indicated intention to participate include FAO, WHO and CIDA

**National partners (to be confirmed):** Department of Telecommunications (DOT), India: and State Government of Gujarat: other proposed partners include National Dairy Development Board, Worldtel, the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Health and the hospitals in Rajkot.

**National executing agency:** DOT or State Government of Gujarat (to be defined)

**Status:** Feasibility studies and business plan, including project proposal was prepared with minimum ITU support and submitted in 1997. Following a roundtable meeting with potential partners in May 1998, the project document now being revised. A draft MOU has also been prepared and now awaiting comments national partners.

## **MALDIVES**

Feasibility study with preliminary project proposal carried out in January 98 under BAAP P9. Four islands tentatively short listed.

## **EUROPE**

### **ROMANIA**

**Project site:** Balotesti. **Duration:** 3 years? **Starting date:** 99?

**International partners(proposed):** ITU, UNDP

**National partners (proposed):** ROM Telecom, Prisma supermarket

**National executing agency:** ROM Telecom (to be confirmed)

**Status:** Feasibility study and business plan, including project proposal was prepared by ITU consultant under BAAP P9 in November 1996.

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