BHUTAN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY POLICY AND STRATEGIES

# Executive Summary

The BIPS process involved stakeholders from Government, semi-government and the private sector. Five committees were formed along the lines of the Digital Opportunity Initiative covering Policy, Infrastructure, Human Capacity, Content and Applications, and Enterprise. With inputs from open consultative workshops and previous ICT studies, the committees formulated strategies and activities designed to progress Bhutan’s ICT development.

Three overall policy objectives underpin the initiatives:

1. To use ICT for good Governance
2. To create a Bhutanese info-culture; and
3. To create a “High-Tech Habitat”

Policy: To make governance transparent, efficient and inclusive, introducing a modern legal and regulatory framework, strengthening the relevant policy and regulatory bodies and investigating ways to fund ICT and reduce the costs ICT services.

Infrastructure: Focus on implementing the liberalized and competitive infrastructure market, and increasing coordination between infrastructure providers, and ensuring that there is affordable, fast, secure, sustainable and appropriate ICT infrastructure throughout Bhutan.

Human Capacity: Aimed at ensuring appropriate ICT awareness and skills from basic computer literacy to the High level technical skills to boost ICT industry. Activities aims to improve trainaing institutions, including through developing centre of excellence to boost the quality and accredit ICT training institutes.

Content and Applications: Establishing framework for e-bussinss.

Enterprise

The newly-established ICT units across all Ministry and autonomous agencies will be requested to monitor progress through a system of bi-annual progress reporting to the cabinet.

***POLICY* Strategy P1. By 2010, use ICTs to make governance more inclusive, efficient, accountable and transparent Strategic Activities**

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|  | | **Lead Agency** | | **Timeframe** | **Status** |
| P1.1 | Establish policies on information-sharing between agencies | MoIC | 2005 | | Policy endorsed by Government in 2006 | |
| P1.1a | Implement the Policy Guideline on Information Sharing | DoIM, DIT | 2008 | | Ongoing | |
| P1.2 | Establish policies on ICT security | MoIC/DIT | 2007 | | Information Management Security Policy submitted and approved by Cabinet. Other details are being worked out | |
| P1.3 | Encourage use of free and open source software | DIT | 2008 | | Ongoing- Dzongkha localization open source development and backend server in place | |
| P1.4 | E-mail recognised as official government correspondence | RCSC, MoIC/DIT | 2008 | | Ongoing -researching different technical possibilities | |
| P1.5 | Introduce ‘e-Gazette’ as official government publication of record | DIT, DoIM,  National Library | 2008 | | Ongoing | |
| P1.6 | Establish InfoComm & Media Division in each Ministry and major autonomous agency | RCSC, DIT, DoIM | 2008 | | Ongoing (Upgrade ICT Units, if existing) | |
| P1.7 | Establish InfoComm & Media Section in all 20 Dzongkhags | RCSC, DIT, DoIM,DoLG, Dzongkhags | 2009 | | Ongoing (Upgrade ICT Units, if existing) | |
| P1.8 | Each Ministry, autonomous body and agency to provide 75% of all possible public services using ICT | Cabinet, DIT, DoIM | 2010 | | Ongoing -  Labour-Net by MoLHR -Specific site created by ACC for reporting the corruption online and also forum for discussion created, working on a common platform for delivering e-services | |
| P1.9 | Streamline and automate business licensing processes including ICT businesses | MoEA, BICMA | 2008 | | Ongoing  The rules and regulations and the prescribed forms on | |

**Strategy P2. By 2008, implement a flexible, ‘light-touch’1 and modern regulatory environment**

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| P2.1 | Finalise the Bhutan Information, Communications and Media Bill and introduce to the National Assembly | MoIC | 2005 | Completed (Enacted by the 85th Session of National Assembly 2006) |
| P2.2 | Legislate for access to and dissemination of information | Judiciary, MoIC, OAG | 2006 | Completed- ICM Act takes care of it |
| P2.3 | Enforcement of intellectual property legislation | MTI, Judiciary, Revenue & Customs, RBP | 2007 | Ongoing |
| P2.4 | Establish a liberalised and competitive ICT market | MoIC | 2007 | Ongoing- Regime introduced,second mobile operator commenced operation since 2008 |
| P2.5 | Promote FDI in ICT industry development | MoIC | 2007 | Ongoing- licensed and implemented on a case by case basis. IT Park and BPOs. Revised FDI Policy takes care of it |

**Strategy P3. By 2008, strengthen ICT regulatory and enforcement capacity**

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| P3.1 | Recruit appropriate regulatory personnel and, train and re-train them regularly | RCSC, BICMA | 2007 |  |

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| P3.2 | Provide competitive remuneration package for ICT regulatory professionals/specialists | RCSC, BICMA | 2007 |  |

**Strategy P4. By 2005, investigate ways to fund and reduce the cost of ICT services**

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| P4.1 | Develop a plan for a National ICT Infrastructure Fund (NICTIF), taking into account the Universal Service Fund | MoIC | 2005 | Completed-  Rules detailing the modus operandi of the fund is being formulated by BICMA as per the provisions of the ICM Act |
| P4.2 | Explore ways of reducing cost of ICT hardware, software and services:   * ‘walled garden’ of Bhutanese web content; * Demand aggregation initiatives. | DIT | 2005 | Internet and telecom tariff revised periodically |

**Strategy P5. By 2015, make ICT services accessible and affordable throughout Bhutan**

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| P5.1 | Enable access to public information deploying shared infrastructures | MoIC, BICMA, DoIM, DIT,  Bhutan Post | 2010 |  |
| P5.2 | Promote universal service and individual citizen access to public information and services | MoIC, BICMA, DoIM, DIT | 2015 | Directives issued to BICMA to utilize USF to provide last mile connectivity, within 10th plan |