

GOVERNMENT OF GHANA

MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) POLICY STATEMENT

1. The Preamble

The Government of Ghana aims at achieving equitable economic growth and accelerated poverty reduction within a sustained economy focussing on the private sector as the engine of growth.

For the effective governance of Ghana therefore, the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) has been developed to support the attainment of both national and sectoral goals.

A major thrust of the GPRS is that, the Government of Ghana (GoG) acknowledges that if Ghana is to move her industrially weak and subsistence agriculture based economy towards an information and knowledge economy, then Ghana needs to develop and implement a comprehensive and integrated ICT for Accelerated Development policies, strategies and plans.

The Government in effect has identified ICT as the driver and enabler of a sustained and co-ordinated socio-economic development in Ghana.

To attain the vision to promote multi sectoral accelerated national development as outlined in the Ghana ICT4AD document, the Ministry of Communications (MoC) is committed to facilitating the management of the convergence of Information, Communication and Technologies as tools to promote viable integrated and accelerated national development within a global setting.

The commitment of Government to ensure the multi-sectoral application of ICT informs the formulation of the ICT Policy Statement of the Ministry of Communications, which has the mandate to promote, co-ordinate and monitor the effective deployment of ICT in the public and the private sector.

2. Vision and Mission Statements of the Ministry of Communications

Vision

To manage the convergence of communications and technologies to promote a viable integrated national development process within a global setting.

Mission

To facilitate the development of a reliable and cost effective world-class communications infrastructure and services, driven by appropriate technological innovations and thereby enhance the promotion of economic competitiveness in a knowledge-based environment.

3. Strategies for the Attainment of Stated Mission:

The following strategies would be implemented to promote the attainment of the mission as dictated by the vision of the Ministry.

- i. Encourage and facilitate the development of national telecommunications and technology infrastructure to bridge the digital divide, create affordable access particularly to the rural community and build a demystified Internet based economy.
- ii. Facilitate the development of a transparent, pro-competitive and conducive regulatory regime to ensure fair, equitable and accelerated development of Ghana's ICT's industry with the active participation of the private sector.
- iii. Implementing the ICT's reform in such a manner that it will be viewed as a component of reform programmes of other sectors as to eliminate complexities, which may lead to policy failures.
- iv. Promote Ghana to become the leading international ICT's center in the sub-Saharan region by facilitating the establishment of major network application centers and operational data centers for international companies in the sub-region to source information.
- v. Facilitate the acceleration of Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) in the ICT's and their related ventures leading to the creation of high value added services sector capable of generating employment and producing goods and delivering services for both domestic and

export markets and in the process turn out ICT literates engaged in a vibrant economy.

- vi. Promote business support systems in the public and private sectors, based on ICT's in areas such as Health Management, Agricultural Management, Human Resource Development, Budget Management, facilities management, performance and reward management.
- vii. Promote Research and Development (R&D) into general technology and also into growth of Internet traffic and its implication on bandwidth while efforts are made using available data to develop new technologies.
- viii. Propose procedures for the introduction of requisite legislation to promote sector wide development, application and deployment of ICT.
- ix. Promote the quest to harvest the potential of e-government systems as effective tools to improve operational efficiency and better connections between the machinery of government and the citizens of Ghana.
- x. Facilitate sector as well as level wide ICT human resource and skills capacity development in both the public and private sector of the economy to meet the socio-economic changing needs of the country.
- xi. To encourage the deployment of ICT in the community in response to the march towards an information society.

4. The ICT Deployment and Exploitation Policy Goals

The Ministry is tasked with the pursuance of the following policies within the national ICT strategic framework.

- i. To promote Information Communications Technologies (ICT's) as tools that facilitate the production, transmission and processing of information for competitiveness in the global market place.
- ii. To provide an open, affordable, secure, globally available, seamless interface and access to information for the country at all times.

- iii. To enhance reliability and efficiency in the provision of communication services.
- iv. To adopt new technologies and organisational forms into existing forms of economic activity and in the process increase supply of appropriate technology at reduced cost in the micro, small and medium scale enterprises.
- v. To use the medium of ICT's access, including access to the internet to promote 'e'-commerce to enable local business have access to the improved trends on global market in their import-export transactions and thereby reduce transaction cost of business and in the process improve internal efficiency.
- vi. To promote the mechanism through which ICT's can lead to e-governance and better government services at all levels from the local to the national levels in health, education and environmental sectors
- vii. To promote aggressive private sector participation in telecom service delivery in a liberalised, regulatory and tax environment conducive for the attraction of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and venture capital needed to revamp businesses.
- viii. To streamline and update the regulatory laws and regulations in conformity with changing industry trends to maximise benefits.
- ix. To use communications and meteorological forecasting through global positioning satellites to determine where, when and how to plant crops to promote increased agricultural productivity and food security.
- x. To support the compilation of basic agric database obtained through research to boost extension services and appropriate technological innovations to facilitate crop processing and preservation.
- xi. To promote the requisite capacity building framework to support human resource development and specialised technical skills.
- xii. To build trust among the public, private and civil society to acknowledge the Internet as a potentially helpful tool rather than a cure-all tool.

- xiii. To use the medium of ICT to educate and protect the country's human resource against the pandemic of HIV/AIDS.

5. **The Focus of the ICT Programmes and Initiatives of the Ministry of Communications**

- i. As a way of ensuring sector-wide application of ICT the Ministry will monitor the formulation of ICT policy statements flowing out of the ICT4AD document in the process complete the development of a national ICT Plan whose implementation and monitoring shall fall within the purview of the Ministry.
- ii. To improve upon penetration and accessibility to broadband telephone, the Ministry will facilitate a Telecom Sector Policy and Regulatory framework reviewed through a participatory process with the view to attracting the private sector to invest in the sector.
- iii. With regard to improving access and support the extension of telecom service to rural/urban underserved areas, the Ministry will create and monitor the implementation of the Ghana Investment Fund for Telecommunications (GIFTEL).
- iv. On laws and regulations, the expansion of the ICT terrain and the convergence of telecommunication and communication offer unprecedented legislative challenges associated with e-applications to support productivity and growth i.e. e-commerce and e-government, etc. the Ministry will develop the requisite ICT bill that will promote model legislations to address associated cyber law issues.
- v. Internet Governance framework for the introduction and utilisation of the Internet as a mass tool for learning and for promoting public and private business shall engage the attention of the Ministry. An independent body will be set up to manage Ghana's Country Code Top Level Domain (ccTLD).
- vi. The Ministry is committed to the establishment of a National Communication Technology Directorate to act as the implementing body of national ICT initiatives arising out of the Ministry's policy guidelines.
- vii. For effective implementation of ICT4AD initiatives at Ministries, Departments and Agency levels, the Ministry is committed to

liaising with the Office of the Head of the Civil Service to facilitate the creation of Divisions in MDA's for Information Technology Services.

- viii. The application of information technologies to government administration necessitates that the Ministry focuses on the development of the requisite infrastructure backbone particularly the extension of the nations fiber optic backbone to connect the entire country.
- ix. To mainstream ICT education into the country's educational programmes at all levels the Ministry is committed to liaising closely with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to facilitate the provision of the necessary infrastructural support to promote content application.
- x. To manage the new ICT mandate of all sectors the development of the required Human Resource capacity and skills development to link academia to industry is of prime concern for the Ministry.
- xi. Facilitating private sector participation in ICT deployment to bring out the potential of ICT to create wealth is a necessity. Accordingly the Ministry is committed to creating competitive business environment, infrastructure and incentives through the development of Technology Parks, which will serve as the premises for BPO operators.
- xii. The extension of ICT services to rural community information centers as well as upgrading post offices to become ICT centers of learning to bring ICT to the doorstep of the rural populace in response to universal access calls is a commitment of the Ministry.
- xiii. The linkage of Meteorological ICT data to the agricultural, water and aviation industries should help see sustained growth in these sectors.

6. The Outcomes of the Focus of MoC ICT Programmes:

- The extent to which Ghana can accelerate her socio-economic development process and gain global competitive advantage and thereby improve upon the well being of Ghanaians depend very much on the extent to which Ghanaians can collectively develop, use, exploit and sell information, knowledge and technology in one form or the other. The

attainment of these vast opportunities underscores the commitments of the Ministry.

- It is envisaged therefore that the Ministry will play the leading facilitative role to bring out the potential of ICT to create wealth in line with the goals of the GPRS, Millennium Development goals and NEPAD ICT initiatives all aimed at reducing poverty through ICT deployment.
- All the e-applications will be facilitated to give a boost to government's programme of using ICT as an enabler and driver of multisectoral development.
- The journey to the information age very much depends on the availability of adequate telecommunications infrastructure and services. In line with its mission the Ministry is committed to facilitating the provision of these vital resources.
- The way forward for an ICT supported growth in Ghana is for the Ministry to encourage Life Long Learning in ICT.