



ACTION REFLECTION NOTE FOR GLOBAL E-GOVERNANCE WORKSHOP

1-3 SEPTEMBER '05, SENEGAL

Programme Officer (if different from author of ARN):	
Author of ARN:	Emelyne Bahanda
Title of Project:	Development of E-government through Coordination of Public Information for Citizens in the Republic of Congo
Total budget for project:	USD 100 000
UNDP contribution:	USD 100 000
Timeframe of initiative	
Start date:	03/2004
End date:	12/2004
Introduction	The use of ICT by the Congolese population in general and the government in particular is very low. Thanks to a TTF funding, UNDP had drafted a project in order to increase the public awareness of access to public information through ICT, especially, information needed on a daily basis, related to the government and public services. This project executed by the Ministry of Planning aimed at advocating the use of ICT to broader access to public information as a means for reducing poverty.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better access to information and knowledge on Government Policy and programmes - Facilitate access to information and the information between the government and citizens by developing efficient coordination mechanisms of sharing and broadcasting information. - Support a progressive creation of a government intranet.

<p>Analysis</p>	<p>Four outputs were expected at the end of the project:</p> <p>1. Creation of the Project Information Unit 100% implemented</p> <p>2. Creation of E-Government database and Web site 100% implemented. Government staff are managing it but need further training.</p> <p>3. The E-Government Strategy and Action Plan The Government has committed to elaborate an E-government strategy in 2005.</p> <p>4. Setting up of the Ministry Intranet 70% implemented. Necessary cable works have been carried out Equipment is now available. A Mini VSAT will be provided soon.</p> <p>Given, the culture of information retention within the public sector, the following constitutes some of the challenges encountered during implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settling up an information system on Gouvernement programmes and projects; • Collecting information on Government decisions, projects and programmes. <p>To overcome these difficulties two consultants (a web master and data collection specialist) were recruited to ensure data and information integrity. The following methodologies were used to achieve the results:</p> <p>I) With the active participation of the Government, the Media and NGO's, a sensitization seminar was organized on how to promote access to public information through the use of ICT. During that seminar useful contacts were established with government focal points to share information;</p> <p>II) Collected all useful information on existing Government programme/projects (contacts, documentary sources, Internet sites);</p> <p>III) Discussed the contents of the web site and data collection tools with government using participatory approach method;</p> <p>IV) Maintained regular consultations with all stakeholders, including the government, civil society organizations, the medias, international organizations etc.</p> <p>This method allowed the creation of the web site integrated with a database that contains information on 54 government projects. Given the confidentiality of the information available to the public, creating this web site was a genuine attempt to promote good governance that will facilitate dialogue between citizens and the Government on human development issues, and to lay ground for transparency and accountability.</p> <p>On one hand, we experienced during the course of the project the following positive changes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Clear commitment of Government to promote E-Governance and access to Information; (2) The Government has elaborated an ICT strategy that have been discussed and adopted during a workshop organized in December 2004; (3) A significant number of articles on the need of access to public information through the use of ICT were published by local newspapers; (4) The need to promote ICT and develop a networked government is increasingly being brought up in public debates. <p>On the other hand, we also faced the following negative unchanges or challenges:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) The culture of ICT in Congo is still weak; (2) The budget allocation to ICT development is still insufficient; (3) The public sector is still characterized by the lack of electronic means of communication; (4) The culture of information retention is still strong within the public sector; (5) Information on specific sectors (oil, timber, extractives industries, etc.) is often lacking and strictly confidential; (6) A comprehensive e-government strategy is still not in place.
-----------------	---

<p>Analysis</p>	<p>The following activities were catalytic and innovative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Raising awareness on E-Governance and access to information with participation of top level government officials, the medias, civil society and private sector representatives. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Given the low culture of ICTs in Congo and the low capacity in e-governance, it took extra effort to be able to bring all stakeholders, particularly the Government to actively participate in such event. ➤ The DGTTF funds helped to achieve this by creating the necessary conditions to enhance debate on e-governance and access to information, by forging national commitment to develop ICT, drawing lessons on analytical reports, best practices and experience from other developing countries. ➤ For the large majority of stakeholders, it constituted an important step towards the promotion of the use of ICT to facilitate access to public information. ➤ Important recommendations made during this seminar, have been integrated in the national ICT strategy paper elaborated by the government with support of UNDP. ❖ Implementing an Intranet-based pilot project in the Ministry of Planning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In Congo, of 35 ministries only 3 have an Internet connection from which 2 have a networked infrastructure. ➤ Implementing an Intranet-based pilot project in the Ministry of Planning constitutes then a major step towards promoting e- government in the Congo, and a good example to replicate in other ministries. ➤ Through this initiative, ICTs will progressively become an integral part of the Government environment. ➤ The Ministry of Planning, in partnership with the Ministry in charge of New Technologies is already committed to promoting E-Governance and access to Information and will advocate for an E-Government ICT strategy for development and the implementation of a networked Government infrastructure. <p>Future plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initiate a pilot basis interconnection to facilitate a few key ministries, - Support the government to elaborate an e-governance strategy, - In the view of the forthcoming legislatives and locales elections in 2007, support the Ministry of Decentralization and Local Administration to set up an electronic civil and vote registration.
-----------------	---

Republic of Congo Action Reflection Note
UNDP Global Sub-practice Workshop on e-Governance
1-3 September, 2005
Senegal

<p>Lessons Learned</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Without strong government ownership, e-governance initiatives may never be successful. Given the insufficient capacity in e-governance in developing countries in general, and in Congo in particular awareness raising and commitment to e-governance at a high level is essential. The implementation of E-governance projects made slow progress because of the attitude of some of the stakeholders—particularly the senior public officials. Emphasis should therefore be placed on leadership and commitment, raising awareness and confidence building. Public officials must be convinced that e-governance is in their own interest. On the other hand, there is a pressing need to develop the next generation of leaders, who can champion e-governance from its current positions. Given its comparative advantage in good governance, UNDP has pivotal role to play in this respect.2. It is equally important to strengthen the institutional capacities of the national Government, particularly those that relates to e-governance. This means strengthening infrastructural inadequacies and capacity building. The priority for a national e-government strategy is therefore to build e-readiness in various areas (i.e. institutions, Human capacities, Technology, Data systems etc.).3. Step by step process in the implementation of e-government are more likely to succeed than a revolutionary one. Indeed, e-governance projects should build carefully on basic ICT usage and with the commitment of the major stakeholders. Associated services such as Internet browsing and networking of the Ministries should be developed in addition to e-governance.4. Awareness raising and sensitisation campaign on the advantages of the use of ICT by the Government staffs should be embarked upon. Training programmes, seminar and workshops should be regularly organised for different levels of staffs in the Government Ministries. There is also the need to address the culture whereby ICT is seen as the priority/preserve of just a privileged.
------------------------	--