



TEMPLATE FOR ACTION REFLECTION NOTE (ARN)

GLOBAL E-GOVERNANCE SUB-PRACTICE EVENT

1-3 SEPTEMBER, 2005

DAKAR, SENEGAL

ARN Template

Programme Officer (if different from author of ARN):	
Author of ARN:	Anush Avramenko, ICT Programme Officer, UNDP Samoa CO
Title of Project:	Subregional e-Governance and Access to Information for Remote Islands
Total budget for project:	USD\$100,000
UNDP contribution:	DGTTF USD\$100,000
Timeframe of initiative	
Start date:	01.03.2005
End date:	31.12.2005
Introduction (One paragraph)	<p>Innovative and dynamic e-governance initiatives are supported by the UNDP Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund (DGTTF), for the Niue and Tokelau governments to help dissipate extreme difficulties in providing public information to citizens living in remote and widely dispersed island settings. Development of institutional capacities that provide the platforms for bringing islanders closer to vital information, and empowerment under an e-island framework will be the main objectives. The project consists of two pilots and will develop sustainable and replicable models of ways to provide access to modern telecommunication facilities and information services in the 2 countries for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of indigenous content for Niue; and - Removal of barriers to utilizing technologies in Tokelau.
Objectives (One paragraph)	<p>UNDP DGTTF Project focuses on closing the distances of sea and land between citizens living on remote islands, and communities and their elected governments. In essence therefore, this multi-country project aims mainly to improve access to information especially to communities living in remote islands and communities, and facilitate their dynamic participation in policy level decision-making. This will be addressed through the development of national websites (<i>Taoga Niue</i> and <i>Legislation of Tokelau</i>), training, removal of barriers that presently block decisions to adopt cost-effective technologies for improved communications and generally, build up a more politic and IT savvy citizenry through increased accessibility to information via the Internet thereby enabling their participation in national decision-making.</p>

<p>Analysis (One paragraph)</p>	<p>The project still is in the middle of implementation phase, therefore the analysis below reflects only the results and observations valid for this intermediate stage.</p> <p>Given limited budget the project could not cover complex development, however it overarches the stage of developing of ICT vision and strategy in the countries to real implementation of e-governance programme. The ongoing project initiatives in both countries provide substantial background for implementation of ICT4D programmes through helping potential beneficiaries to discover how ICT can be useful for their needs through 'hands-on' demonstration, showing that ICT is a technology that could be developed and employed locally, and presenting visible and measurable results. It helps significantly to overcome slight sceptical attitude in the government about capacity of local resources to implement ICT4D programme in the countries.</p> <p>It is positive that main owners have been involved from the initial stage of the project, as that naturally created awareness that ICT is no longer 'IT specialists' issue and helped non-ICT project personnel to understand of how ICT fits their respective areas. The project also has significant capacity building component, mainly strengthening capacity within the government to ensure that development of electronic content development and its online maintenance can be sustained after the end of the project.</p> <p>The project also capitalizes on opportunities to involve talented young islanders during the implementation phases of the projects in order to garner their unique perspectives and foster a spirit of ownership within them for homemade product such as websites. It is one of the positive objectives that was not outlined in the project action plan and it is hoped that this approach will lead to greater youth participation in development projects generally and the expansion of an ICT-driven road map for nationhood.</p> <p>This project represents practical UNDP ICT initiatives to support the national implementation of ICT for Development in Niue and Tokelau. Capacity created during this project as well as built partnership with project champions will be used within the TRAC funded 'ICT For Development' programmes in the countries.</p>
<p>Lessons Learned (One paragraph)</p>	<p>As the project is still ongoing it is early to indicate the full list of lessons learned. However, there are few issues faced during the project's initiation phase:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Political awareness and champions</i> <p>Beginning of the project was quite slow as despite of declared strong government's interest in the project implementation at highest national level, not all government officials understood importance and potential benefits of the proposed developments. Some efforts have been made on the initial phase of the project to build up the political awareness at all levels. The project successfully progressed to a great extend also because of involvement of enthusiastic and competent <i>champions</i> - parties, who are well-integrated into the government, and who not only creatively solve outstanding implementation issues, but cultivate widespread interest and involvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Orientation to the local sensitivity</i> <p>Another issue is how to ensure that use of the online information will be effective, how to facilitate citizens interest and participation. We tried to achieve it through developing content relevant to the needs of local users, through addressing issues of <i>cultural identity</i>, in particular giving the community the new role of being author and producer of information and knowledge.</p>