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# Strengthening local ICT regulatory capacities

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**Capacity-building is one of the most effective ways in which partners in the BDO (Building Digital Opportunities) programme can work with developing country partners to enhance the delivery of ICTs and the development benefits derived from them. David Souter introduces CTO work in this area.**

## The CTO Approach

The first aim in capacity building is to enhance the capability of local institutions to fulfil their objective: effectively - whether those objectives are primarily developmental, managerial or commercial.

Capacity building initiatives therefore have a number of different components, including partnership in

- the development and support of local or regional training institutions and their staff;
- the design and delivery of in-country training programmes;
- the organisation of specialist workshops, seminars and conferences focused on generic skills or on specific issues of importance in individual countries or regions;
- the upgrading of specialist skills in (for example) regulatory or technical aspects of ICT development and delivery;
- the sharing of experience and expertise between different regions and different countries, particularly on issues such as effective ways of enabling access to ICTs by the poor and disadvantaged and the exploitation of ICTs to achieve development goals in areas such as health and education;
- the provision of specialist consultancy expertise;
- and access, where necessary, to specialist training out of country.

The CTO (Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation) leads BDO work on building capacity in policymaking and regulation for ICTs. Its BDO work over the next three years is focused in six main areas:

- capacity building for new regulatory institutions and regional regulatory partnerships;
- organisation of workshops for key policy-makers;
- support for the development of effective strategies for e-commerce and e-governance;
- support for the development of national and regional ICT strategies;
- capacity building for institutions, such as consumer bodies, which support access to ICTs;
- and sharing of experience between developing countries.

The priority aim of the programme as a whole is to promote access to ICTs for the poor and disadvantaged within LDCs and other low-income countries.

One example of the work being done is the design and delivery of a series of workshops for regulators and others focused on key aspects of the ICT environment - including an 'Introduction to Regulation' workshop and modules on 'Access Development', 'Licensing', 'Interconnection' and 'Internet Policy'. Several of these workshops are being developed jointly with the Development Bureau of the ITU (International Telecommunication Bureau) and will be delivered for the first time in Southern Africa in late 2001.

Another example is the work being developed with TRASA, the SADC region regulators' association. This programme includes stakeholder workshops on ICT strategy, capacity building fora for regulatory commissioners and other key policy-makers, upgrading of existing training institutions, training in core generic skills required by regulators, the provision of HR and other specialist expertise, and support for the development of long-term plans for access promotion and ICT delivery.

The CTO's capacity building work for BDO builds on fifteen years of experience in capacity building work in ICTs. The CTO's Programme for Development and Training (PDT) delivers between 150 and 200 bilateral capacity building projects each year, in some 30 developing countries, covering the whole range of telecommunications and ICT issues from technology to regulation, access development to consumer relations.

A good example of an annual national PDT programme might be that for Tanzania in 2001/2. It includes projects for the regulatory body, local telecommunications businesses and the wider sector. It includes projects dealing with the development of a telecommunications training institute, with contract and interconnection negotiations in telecommunications, with telecommunications and Internet tariffs, and with human resource planning. It also provides access to specialist training courses in the UK and elsewhere.

As well as bilateral capacity building work of this kind, the PDT programme designs, delivers and supports participation in conferences, workshops and seminars. The current programme of CTO even includes issues such as rural access, public Internet access, spectrum management, new Internet and data services, human resource management and interconnection and network costing.

### **More**

For more information on CTO capacity building activities, contact David Souter, Karen Williams or Isabel Stewart - <http://www.cto.int/>

