

**South-South Triangular
Technical Co-operation
on
e-Government**

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South-South Triangular Technical Co-operation on e-Government

“The impact of e-government at the broadest level is simply better government- e-government is more about government than the “e”. It enables better policy outcomes, higher equality services and greater engagement of citizens” (OECD- The e-government imperative).¹

I. Introduction

1. The Millennium Declaration commits governments to the rule of law, while respecting internationally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms. It also contains a commitment to ensuring the freedom of the media to perform their essential role and the right of the public to have access to information. Information and communications technologies (ICTs) can play a significant role in the creation of good governance models, through improving access to government processes and connecting citizens. It is through ICTs that hitherto marginalized voices will be heard. ICT development encourages government activities to greater “Open Government” (open government is the governing doctrine which holds that citizens have the right to access the documents and proceedings of the government to allow for effective public oversight)², that is increasing accountability and transparency.³

2. It is important that we distinguish and highlight the differences between e-government and e-governance. Especially as both terms are treated equally, however, there is some difference between the two. *“E-government is the use of the ICTs in public administrations (combined with organisational change and new skills) to improve public services and democratic processes and to strengthen support to public”*. The problem in this definition to be congruent with the definition of e-governance is that there is no provision for governance of ICTs. As a matter of fact, the governance of ICTs requires most probably a substantial increase in regulation and policy- making capabilities, with all the expertise and opinion-shaping processes among the various social stakeholders of these concerns. So, the perspective of the e-governance is "the use of the technologies that both help governing and have to be governed".⁴

3. Similar to the distinction applied to e-commerce we can distinguish the different services and recipient of services in terms of e-government and the overall aim to make it more friendly, convenient, transparent, and inexpensive, namely:

¹ <http://www.pnc.gov.za/index.php/e-government/why-is-e-government-important>

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_government#cite_note-ruma-1

³ <http://www.itu.int/osg/spu/wsis-themes/UNMDG/Goal2.html>

⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E-Governance>

- a. **G2C:** government interaction and services with citizens
 - b. **G2B:** government services to enable and assist business enterprises
 - c. **G2G:** government services and interactions with itself at levels, from inter-agency and/or between central and local authorities⁵
4. E-Government has become a global phenomenon, both developed and developing countries have been initiating e-government strategies and projects, the latter typically with support from a number of sources from the donor community and organizations; and in some cases a good mix of public-private sector partnerships. In fact for the majority of development practitioner and institutions, e-government is a necessary prerequisite for sustainable and equitable economic and social development as well as a means of addressing poverty. Especially as *poor people bear the largest costs of administrative inefficiency and corruptions, delivering services through rural kiosks leads to their economic and social empowerment.*⁶
5. With the numerous advances and the widespread of ICTs, especially mobile ICTs, and the fast growth of social media (facebook and twitter), these tools have enabled all sectors from civil society, academia to the private sectors to demand for more open, transparent, accountable models of governance as well as changes in government frameworks and structures. Clearly exemplified in the Arab Spring and with a number of other countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, East Timor, Myanmar, Vietnam and/or Laos that all have changed and successful transitioned towards more democratic structures and in some cases onto successful elections. Further through institutions like Transparency International, UNDP Human Development Index and/or the UNDESA's e-governance survey, government find themselves under constant review and monitoring. Hence the increasing demand from member state governments for technical assistance in developing and implementing e-government.

II. Institutional Support and Services

6. To support this demand for technical assistance on e-government strategies, policies and implementation, institutions from all sectors (public, private, academia, NGOs and/or the donor community) have developed programmes and projects to support supply. Listed in the annex and in a short list below, are of some of the key institutions involved in raising

⁵ The World Bank e-Government Initiatives, <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTINFORMATIONANDCOMMUNICATIONANDTECHNOLOGIES/EXTEGOVERNMENT/0,,contentMDK:20485135~menuPK:1767179~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:702586~isCURL:Y~isCURL:Y,00.html>

⁶ Building Blocks of e-government: Lessons from developing countries, *The World Bank Prem Notes, Public Sector, August 2004, Number 91*

awareness, developing and implementing e-governance. It should be noted and highlighted that the thematic area of e-government is vast and as many facets to it, hence as the list shows that only a few number of institutions provide a general overview to e-government, whilst others have taken a specific area of focus.

7. For easy of reference we have broken down the institutions in terms of their core mandates and geographical focuses where applicable. It should highlighted and noted that research to date as only identified a limited number of non-UN regional bodies that have any e-government programmes and/or projects of technical assistance on e-government:

a. Global Level:

- i. **UNDESA's Department of Public Administration and Department of Management** (DPADM), with a core focus on promoting and improving public administration, it has a division that is particular focused on e-governance
- ii. **UNDP's Oslo Governance Centre**- a research centre on the topic of governance with a range of publications around the thematic area of e-government
- iii. **World Bank Governance and Public Sector Management**⁷
- iv. **World Bank's Actionable Governance Indicators Data Portal**⁸
- v. **Transparency International**⁹
- vi. **The Quality of Governance Institute (Gothenburg Institute)**¹⁰

b. Regional Level: At the regional level there is,

- i. **UN's Project Office on Governance UNPOG**, a regional office of DPADM/UNDEAs based in Seoul, South Korea.
- ii. **UNDP's Regional Public Administration centre**, Singapore to be launched soon.
- iii. **UNESCAP's APCICT- Asia-Pacific Centre for Information and Communications Training**, a programme focused on training on ICTs, Seoul, South Korea
- i. **The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Regional E-Government Framework**,¹¹ A regional programme

⁷<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPUBLICSECTORANDGOVERNANCE/0,,contentMDK:20206128~pagePK:210058~piPK:210062~theSitePK:286305,00.html>

⁸ <https://www.agidata.org/Site/About.aspx>

⁹ <http://www.transparency.org/>

¹⁰ <http://www.qog.pol.gu.se/>

¹¹ In December 2007, Terms of Reference to develop a Regional e-Government Framework were drawn by the COMESA Secretariat under the project framework of the Regional ICT Support Programme (RICTSP) funded by the 9th EDF and under a corporation framework between: Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC), the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) and the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC).

focused on co-ordinate and developing links between the countries in the region on e-government based in Lusaka, Zambia.

8. As the above list and the one in the **Annex** shows that there are a growing number of institutions that provide varying levels of e-government support. Yet for many governments this is itself a core part of the problem, it can be very confusing and difficult for governments to search and identify the most appropriate solutions for their needs and level of development. As noted by Tino Schuppan, *“experience based upon the cooperation between different public administrations have already shown that a simple transfer of concepts is not sufficient... Certainly when questioning to what extent e-government is suitable in the context of the problems facing (developing countries) administration, the existing institutional situations, and specific administrative culture and other environmental factors (such as economic, social, or political administrative aspects) must be taken into consideration.”*¹²

9. In the application of e-government models there is a distinction, for many developed and industrial countries it is largely based on a *self-service* through the internet, where as for many developing countries it will be a *hybrid* model of automated and manual services.

10. In general the discussion about the effectiveness of and prerequisites for e-government in developing countries is still in its infancy, especially the measures of what could be considered a good practice. Despite a number of e-government studies conducted by large consulting firms (Accenture and Cap Gemini 2006), UNDESA and academia (West 2005), they provide very little information about the state of e-government in developing countries as well as a number of methodical shortcomings (Bannister 2007, Janssen, Rothier & Snjikers 2004). There is still no effective measure on actual usage levels and/or their impact or a measure of how effective the organizational changes have been which are key to a successful implementation.

11. A core of the problems as been a skew of investment by many institutions on largely funding academic case studies (noting that many of these are done by academic institutions from developed countries) on various developing country models and experiments of e-government. This in turn as created a wealth of cases studies yet there has been relatively little real investment on moving on from *theoretical case studies and/or discussions to implementation*. There needs to be a move towards a horizontal approach in promoting and implementing south-south cooperation in e-government, for example investing in a south-south project where Sri Lanka and Sierra Leone assisted each other in their respective paths of e-government development.

¹²E-government in developing Countries: Experiences from sub-Saharan Africa, Tino Schuppan, *Government Information Quarterly*, 26 (2009) 118-127

12. Governments are often faced with a difficult list of options and one where it is very difficult to discern which is the most suitable and appropriate option, especially has e-government is very *young* in development terms for a valid. As noted by the World Bank, *to date the benefits of e-government have been largely anecdotal*, exemplified by a World Bank evaluation of four projects in India that were originally hailed as successes (even awarded by international organizations) and now where two of the four are moving towards failure (<http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/bnpp/egovupdate.htm>)¹³

13. E-government projects and programmes are resource intensive by nature, especially in financial terms in the first phase of development where there is purchasing and development of software & hardware, training of staff and/or re-profiling and revising workflows and systems. This is often the greatest barrier for many developing country member states; given that these initiatives will not produce any tangible profits to contribute to repayment of loans. For example, Canada has spent up to US\$210 million on e-government projects in 2002, with a projected increase of expenditure up to US\$ 450 million by 2005¹⁴. In addition, it should be noted that the success of e-government in developed countries such as the UK, USA and/or South Korea have been largely due to a good public-private sector joint venture. In some cases it has also been due to a tri-party effort, for example in the UK and USA a NGO and media campaign on “open government” data lead to the successful launch of open government data platforms such as [www. Data.gov.uk](http://www.data.gov.uk)¹⁵, for example in March 2006, the UK paper the Guardian initiated a “Free Our Data Campaign”.¹⁶ In essence financing these initiatives and developing effective and “win-win” public-private partnerships are some of the big challenges for developing and especially least developed countries (LDCs) members states.

14. Governments also need a central point that can facilitate sharing and collaboration on new e-governments tools and systems as well as provide an environment that is supply side technology neutral where the demander is not being pushed or biased towards a particular supplier and/or range of products, etc.

15. In essence, governments in developing countries are often faced with:
- a. No central point of access
 - b. Varying levels and categorization of knowledge products that make searches and digestion of the information hard
 - c. No means of validating and/or assessing which solution is the most appropriate

¹³ Building Blocks of e-government: Lessons from developing countries, *The World Bank Prem Notes, Public Sector, August 2004, Number 91*

¹⁴ Building Blocks of e-government: Lessons from developing countries, *The World Bank Prem Notes, Public Sector, August 2004, Number 91*

¹⁵ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Data.gov.uk>

¹⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_Data_in_the_United_Kingdom

- d. No incentive to share and/or collaborative with each other, especially given that most e-government systems and tools are resource intensive (human, technical and financial).
- e. A variety of options to allow for financing of e-government initiatives and the development of effective and “win-win” public-private sector partnerships

III. Multi-lateral Support Platform: South-South Gate

- 16. In light of the above, a number of tasks have to be undertaken,
 - a. A mapping of what the member states are demanding in the area of e-government, i.e. what areas of policy, strategy and/or key elements of e-government such as e-procurement and/or e-land registration are they seeking technical assistance on?
 - b. A mapping and validation of suppliers of policy experts and/or e-government systems. For example recently the development banks (Asian, African, EC, Latin with UNDESA and World Bank) having noted the demand from members states on e-procurement systems as well as their on changing policies on requiring loan recipient have a more transparent and accountable system in place, have led to them hosting a series of regional meetings on e-procurement. They are (as a group) also creating a guide for members states on developing policies, plans and implementation of e-procurement systems¹⁷. These meetings themselves have highlighted the vast nature and diversity of applications available and the need for validation and/or a neutral assessment to assist governments in making the right choice. For instance the South Korean e-procurement model has been promoted as one, however its success is due to a number of additional factors such as good infrastructure and a good legal framework.
 - c. A mapping and validation of a roster of experts from all sectors (public, private, academic and ngos) that can be utilized for all aspects of e-government.
 - d. A e-government tools and equipment data bank hosting technical data and assessments of these various tools (hardware, software and other tools such as mobile e-voting systems, etc); in essence an e-government ‘amazon’ platform

- 17. In addition to the above, a platform and/or a market environment that facilitates a demand and supply for south-south triangular e-government products and services, one that is
 - a. Is a central point of access
 - b. Provides a uniformed set of knowledge products
 - c. A validation of best practices, policies, strategies, tools and systems
 - d. Creates an incentive for participants to share and promote themselves and their products

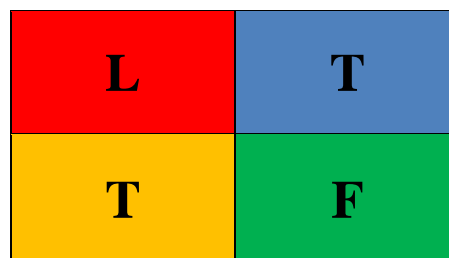
¹⁷ http://adbprocurementforum.net/?page_id=1411

- e. An environment that allows for all sectors to share and collaborate on new systems and tools
- f. An environment that promotes and provides members a variety of financing options as well as assists them in developing a “win-win” public-private sector partnership

18. The above platform will be the catalyst that can help to assist, promote and effectively facilitate and co-ordinate between existing south-south triangular programmes and projects, such as the Republic of Korea’s National Information Agency’s (NIA¹⁸) The Information Technologies Cooperation Center (ITCC)¹⁹. As well as cultivate the interest of new development partners such as those from the Arab, Latin America and/or small islands states such as from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Brazil, Mauritius and/or Sri Lanka, to undertake exchanges between themselves. There needs to be a paradigm shift where we are now actively promoting our theories of south-south triangular cooperation into reality as well as changing our models of financing for development, especially given the various declarations from the Paris Declaration, Accra Agenda for Action and the Fourth high level forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan (November- December 2011),²⁰ to the most recent UN High Level Meetings for the Review of South-South Cooperation and the Nairobi Outcome Document (2009) have all highlighted the need for all sectors (NGOs, academia, public and private, etc) to utilize resources effectively for south-south triangular cooperation.

19. The platform should be central to facilitating a neutral and open environment for *Ministerial level* discussion and engagement on sharing and promoting south-south triangular cooperation; for overall success it is important that the highest levels of government meet and agree to the overall objectives and engagement on a south-south triangular partnership. As the cube below highlights there are 4 key factors for successful implementation of an e-government initiative.

Diagram 1. The Cube of Success!



i. Leadership – ideally support from the President or Prime Minister Office with a leader who will chair and monitor progress of the initiative

¹⁸ http://eng.nia.or.kr/english/Contents/01_about/message.asp?BoardID=201112231149579647&Order=101

¹⁹ http://eng.nia.or.kr/english/Contents/02_programs/itcenter.asp?BoardID=201112231150552199&Order=202

²⁰ <http://www.oecd.org/dac/aideffectiveness/parisdeclarationandaccraagendaforaction.htm>

ii. Technical capacity- human and technical capacity to design, implement and manage the initiative

iii. Technology- the national infrastructure especially in terms of ICTs needs to be develop and/or developing to accommodate the needs of the initiatives such as good internet band width

iv. Financing (short, medium to long term) as well as sustainability – financial resources are required throughout the lifespan of the initiative, to ensure that it does not become another white elephant!

Forward Steps

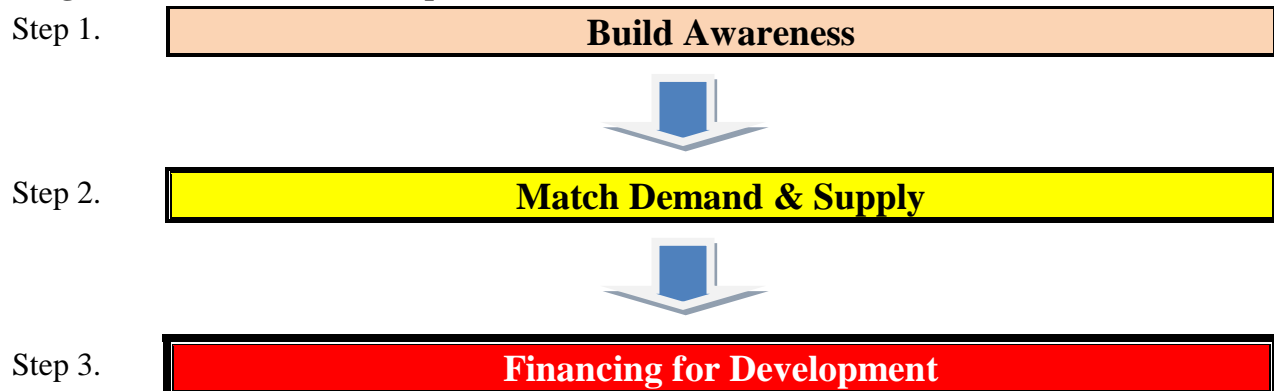
20. There needs to be a platform created that progresses positively from theory into reality and enables greater south-south triangular horizontal cooperation. A platform that will *add value* to the existing range of programmes, projects and documented cases studies by translating them into actual implementation utilizing the members states themselves and advancing new models and means of financing for development. As the illustrated by the diagram listed below:

Step 1 – **Build Awareness**- creating standard and easily to understand knowledge packages on the various e-government initiatives

Step 2- **Matching Supply & Demand**- through a regulate and enabling environment as well as a validation process promote and facilitate south-south triangular cooperation

Step 3-**Financing Development**- facilitating through traditional and new models financing for the development and implementation of these initiatives.

Diagram 2. The Platform in Operation



References

- <http://www.pnc.gov.za/index.php/e-government/why-is-e-government-important>
- <http://www.itu.int/osg/spu/wsis-themes/UNMDG/Goal2.html>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_government#cite_note-ruma-1
- E-government in developing Countries: Experiences from sub-Saharan Africa, Tino Schuppan, *Government Information Quarterly*, 26 (2009) 118-127
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Annex A

IV. Table 1- Mapping of Institutions in e-Government

Name	Weblink	Mandate/Mission Statement	Key Products and Services	Comments
Global Level				
<p>UNDESA's Department of Public Administration and Department of Management (DPADM)</p>	<p>http://www.unpan.org/DPA/DM/Home/tabid/420/language/en-US/Default.aspx</p>	<p>DPADM provides secretariat support to the United Nations Programme on Public Administration and Development. It assists the Member States of the United Nations in fostering efficient, effective, transparent, accountable, clean and citizen-centered public governance, administration and services through innovation and technology to achieve the internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs.</p>	<p>1. UNPAN – a database on various areas of e-governance ranging from strategies and policies to other elements such as e-procurement 2. UNPACs- country studies on public administration 3. Bi-annual e-governance survey 4. Secretariat for Committee on Experts on Public Administration (CEPA)</p>	
<p>UNDP's Oslo Governance Centre</p>	<p>http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/democraticgovernance/oslo_governance_centre/</p>	<p>The Oslo Governance Centre (OGC) works to position UNDP as a champion of democratic governance, both as an end in itself, and as a means to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. This is done through knowledge networking and multi-disciplinary team work, as well as through close partnerships with leading policy and research institutions in different parts of the world</p>	<p>5. Conducting systematic analysis and reviews of UNDPs governance work around the globe aimed at learning from experiences in the field; 6. Based on the analysis and reviews, contributing to UNDP's programming and policy advisory services at the national, regional and global levels; 7. Supporting countries to conduct nationally owned and driven democratic governance assessments that serve to strengthen democratic</p>	

			governance at the country level. 8. Addressing new and emerging areas of democratic governance and building the capacity of UNDP's front-line staff to address these new challenges.	
World Bank Governance and Public Sector Management	http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPUBLICSECTORANDGOVERNANCE/0,,contentMDK:20206128~pagePK:210058~piPK:210062~theSitePK:286305,00.html	To assist governments in their efforts to improve transparency, accountability and service delivery, the Bank's work on governance and public sector management has two main focus areas. It helps strengthen public sector management systems within the executive branch, including the management of public finances and public employment. It also seeks to improve the broader governance environment within which the public sector operates, supporting institutions for public accountability, such as parliaments and offices of the ombudsman, and tracking improvements by measures of the rule of law, state legitimacy and trust in government institutions. Efforts to reduce the risk of corruption are prominent in both of these.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Governance & Public Accountability (GPA) 2. Public Finance (PF) 3. Public Employment & Management (PME) 4. Implementing the Public Sector Management (PSM) Approach 	
World Bank's Actionable Governance Indicators Data Portal (AGI)	https://www.agidata.org/Site/About.aspx	The AGI data portal has been developed in response to the increasing demand for governance indicators that could help design specific reforms and monitor their impacts. The portal consolidates information on actionable governance	The main features of the portal An interactive data set composed of over one thousand actionable governance indicators is available through this site, from different data sources, with links to the non-	

		<p>indicators, provides a one-stop-shop platform to navigate these indicators and their documents and offers customized tools for data management, analysis and display.</p>	<p>governmental, multilateral, and academic institutions that develop these indicators.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Indicators are organized by source, with highlighted features explaining the nature of each dataset.2. Indicators are also grouped by topics, based on six broad dimensions of governance.3. Indicators are available for quick download, with regional, lending, and income averages available for comparison. <p>The AGI data portal aims to serve as an information clearinghouse on AGIs and governance indicators.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Guidance on the nature of governance indicators is also available through Guidance Notes on Indicators, which provide information of AGIs and other types of governance indicators, guidance on how to select appropriate indicators, and a discussion of the limitations of AGIs.2. On each data source page, there is a variety of information on the features of each data source, helping to determine the most appropriate use	
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			<p>of the indicators for a given context.</p> <p>3. In addition, the website offers an explanation of AGIs as well as clarification on the different uses of AGIs in development projects and research.</p> <p>4. The portal provides access to the World Bank AGI Initiative website, various course presentations on AGIs, as well as theoretical and methodology papers on AGIs.</p> <p>5. Selected literature on the use of indicators in governance and corruption studies is available, along with links to other governance indicators that are considered actionable, broad, and a combination of both, and that capture important information about the dimensions of governance systems.</p> <p>6. Links are provided to other World Bank AGI projects that are developing and applying new AGIs in sectors and thematic areas.</p>	
Transparency International	http://www.transparency.org	A world in which government, politics, business, civil society and the daily lives of people are free of corruption	1. Global annual surveys and publishing of the state of corruption	
The Quality of Governance Institute (Gothenburg Institute)	http://www.qog.pol.gu.se/aboutus/	Conduct and promote research on the causes, consequences and nature of Good Governance and the Quality of Government (QoG) – that is, trustworthy, reliable, impartial,	1. Our research addresses the questions of how to create and maintain high quality government institutions and how the quality of such institutions influences public	

		uncorrupted and competent government institutions.	policy and socio-economic conditions in a broader sense.	
United Nations University Center on e-Governance	http://egov.iist.unu.edu/cegov/center	To support governments in developing countries in strategic use of technology to transform the working of public organizations and their relationships with citizens, businesses, civil society, and with one another.	1. Applied and policy research, capacity building and various forms of development – strategy development, software development, institutional development and development of communities of practice	
Regional Level				
Asia-Pacific				
UNDESA’s UN Project Office on Governance (UNPOG), Seoul, ROK	http://www.unpog.org/	principal mission of assisting Member States improve their governance capacity.	conducted innovative research and capacity-building activities and disseminated global and local best practices on participatory, transparent and effective democratic governance. As a process by which all stakeholders such as government, private sector and civil society collaborate to effectively address various needs of multifaceted modern society, governance will continue to have a crucial role in promoting development, especially in this era of globalization and innovation.	
UNDP’s Centre for Public Service Excellence (Singapore)	http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2012/07/02/the-united-nations-development-programme-and-the-government-of-the-republic-of-singapore-to-	strengthening the capacities of developing countries to design, identify and implement effective policies and processes that support the delivery of efficient public services leading to lasting, sustainable socio-economic development.	leading research hub that draws upon the best quality material emanating from think-tanks and universities, and from on-going policy practice in Singapore and other countries, in order to	

	establish-global-centre-for-public-service-excellence-in-singapore-/		supplement UNDP’s existing knowledge and research capability. It will also be a convening hub that uses the unique position of Singapore to bring together and connect diverse experiences in promoting South-South collaboration, sharing, exchange and co-creation. UNDP’s global outreach and networks are expected to help the Centre become a global hub for all knowledge sharing and policy thinking on public service capacity for sustainable development.	
UNESCAP’s APCICT Asia-Pacific Centre for Information and Communications Training	http://www.unapcict.org	strengthen the efforts of the member countries of ESCAP to use ICT in their socio-economic development through human and institutional capacity building.	APCICT’s work is focused on three inter-related pillars – Training, Research and Advisory Services. Together they form an integrated approach to ICT human capacity building.	
Africa				
The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Regional E-Government Framework	http://egov.comesa.int/index.php/en/regional-e-government-framework	The overall objective of RICTSP is to contribute to the regional integration agenda through an effective and efficient Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) environment which will reduce the costs of trade and investment and thereby stimulate economic growth and reduce poverty. The purpose of the programme is to achieve a	<p>Result 1: Development, monitoring of implementation, of ICT policy guidelines and strategies and monitoring of e-readiness status.</p> <p>Result 2: Provision of high-speed Internet connectivity to key regional stakeholders, and installation and use of ASYCUDA++ (software) in</p>	

		reduction in the digital divide by removing some of the constraints to the efficient use of ICT	selected countries. Result 3: Improved and more efficient access to economic, commercial and practical information for the public and private sector through establishment of regional internet portals, information clearing houses and database-driven websites coupled with improved SME ICT skills.	
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