



# Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships

Issue Paper



*Pulling together to uplift and empower the world*

## AUTHORS

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The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) is the UK's leading independent think-tank on international development. The institute has a programme on "Optimising the Development Performance of Corporate Investment" which aims to design and align business management tools and public policy instruments to enhance the development performance of corporations investing in developing countries.

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The Foundation for Development Cooperation (FDC) is an independent, not-for-profit think-tank based in Brisbane, Australia. It undertakes and supports strategic research, policy dialogue and advocacy to promote development cooperation leading to sustainable development and poverty reduction, with a particular emphasis on the Asia and Pacific regions.


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Multi-Stakeholder  
**Partnerships**



# FOREWORD

In recent years, the term “multi-stakeholder partnership” (MSP) has gained much currency in development circles, trouncing the popularity of Public-Private Partnerships (PPP). However, proof of successful practice in the realm of Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D) is scant as documented examples of truly effective MSPs are few.

MSPs are about partnerships that are greater than the sum of its parts and about creating lasting and meaningful impact at all levels of action. They are meant to promote a more holistic approach to development and better governance.

The concept of MSP as an instrument for achieving development goals is sound, particularly when stakeholders with unique complementary strengths or core competencies add value to development efforts and pool their resources and assets in solving problems. But while many laud the virtues of MSPs, most are struggling to make them work.

The central challenge seems to revolve around the nurturing of a working relationship based on trust, mutual respect, open communication, and understanding among stakeholders about each other’s strengths and weaknesses. Stakeholders from each sector bring their own organisational mandates, interests, competencies and weaknesses to partnerships. Without open acknowledgement of these factors, and without processes in place to facilitate negotiations among stakeholders for optimal outcomes, effective MSPs will not emerge.

This publication is part of the Global Knowledge Partnership's (GKP) "Knowledge For Development Series", an overall effort to increase the availability of information and knowledge on various issues in the area of ICT4D. It is a GKP attempt to help mainstream understanding about MSPs, how they work, how they can be effectively formed and sustained, and their potential and actual contribution to the global effort to bridge the digital divide, deliver digital dividends and realise the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It also serves as a basis for GKP consultation and input to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

Knowledge about MSPs as reflected in the contents of this publication is not perfect. It is meant to trigger debate and to serve as an open invitation for all stakeholders with MSP experiences in the area of ICT4D to share their perspectives and knowledge on the subject. What the GKP would like to obtain is a thorough and comprehensive understanding of how MSPs work and can be made to work effectively – knowledge which we ultimately intend to share with the rest of the world.

The GKP is the world's first MSP operating at the global level in the area of ICT for Development. It precedes the G8 Digital Opportunities Task Force (DOT Force) and the Digital Opportunities Initiative (DOI).

Members of the GKP network comprise governments, bilateral donor agencies, private sector companies, civil society organisation, networks and multilateral/international institutions that are committed to harnessing the potentials of ICT for equitable and sustainable development.

The framework of GKP enables stakeholders to come together and seek solutions to development problems collectively through the sharing of knowledge, expertise, experiences and resources, as well as through the collaborative development of action-oriented partnerships that improve lives and empower people.

The GKP has begun the process of soliciting feedback on this publication and some of the commentaries are included for the benefit of readers. Others who wish to contribute can send their comments to the GKP Secretariat at [gkps@gkpsecretariat.org.my](mailto:gkps@gkpsecretariat.org.my).

The GKP expects to produce a second version of this publication after consultations at WSIS 2003 in Geneva.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper is to serve as a basis for consultation and input by the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). The paper highlights the uniqueness of multi-stakeholder partnerships in general and their contribution to international development and implementation issues in particular.

## PARTNERSHIP DEFINITIONS

Strategic alliances between business, government and civil society are a growing feature of both developed and emerging economies. Such multi-stakeholder partnerships are necessary because it is increasingly clear that no one sector in society can deliver the complexities of sustainable development alone. Drawing on the discussion in this paper and the language of the Digital Opportunities Initiative (DOI, 2002), the following definition for multi-stakeholder partnerships in the ICT sector is proposed:

Alliances between parties drawn from government, business and civil society that strategically aggregate the resources and competencies of each to resolve the key challenges of ICT as an enabler of sustainable development, and which are founded on principles of shared risk, cost and mutual benefit.

## PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES

A set of principles for multi-stakeholder partnerships was drawn up in a preparatory conference in Bali, Indonesia in 2002, as input to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In this paper we identify ways in which the 'Bali Principles' might be re-worked to align them with the task of formulating partnerships that involve the ICT sector. The resulting principles are summarised in **BOX A**.

## MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ICT PARTNERSHIPS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The challenges of achieving greater ICT penetration and access in the developing world, and of the subsequent utilisation of this access to reduce poverty, are many. They include: ineffectiveness in the regulatory regime to attract new investment; public-private ICT transactions that fail to deliver affordable ICT solutions; unprofitable business models for rural ICT access; ICT strategies that fail to exploit the diversity of technologies on offer; and content that is irrelevant to the livelihood priorities of poor communities.

**BOX A**

**PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE MANAGEMENT OF MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ICT PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.**

**PRINCIPLE 1** Know when to apply a multi-sector ICT partnership.

**PRINCIPLE 2** Before agreeing to enter into partnership, weigh its merits against the alternatives and risks.

**PRINCIPLE 3** Multi-stakeholder ICT partnerships work best when they mutually reinforce the interests of all partners.

**PRINCIPLE 4** Successful partnerships are built on complementary competencies and resources that, in combination, meet the parameters of some strategic design.

**PRINCIPLE 5** The resources and competencies contributed to the partnership should be drawn from as close as possible to the core ‘business’ of the partner organisations.

**PRINCIPLE 6** Consensus should be sought for a written document identifying, at a minimum: the shared vision of the partnership; the objectives of each partner for the partnership, and the division of roles and responsibilities.

**PRINCIPLE 7** When evaluating the outcomes of multi-stakeholder ICT partnerships, care should be taken to identify the incremental contribution of the partnership activities over and above external factors and the next most likely alternative.

Six case-studies are presented in the paper. These illustrate the breadth of multi-stakeholder ICT4D partnerships and provide examples of how the approach is currently being interpreted to address some of the challenges facing the deployment of ICTs for development and poverty reduction.

**TABLE 1** shows which challenges are addressed by which case-study.

**TABLE 1**

**IMPACT OF THE CASE-STUDY MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS ON RESOLVING PERSISTENT ICT4D CHALLENGES**

Persistent ICT4D Challenges		Case-Studies					
		Global Knowledge Partnership	e-Asean forum	Peru Telecoms Investment Fund	Grameen Village Pay Phones, Bangladesh	Ericsson Response	Dikahotole Digital Village, South Africa
Enabling Environment <small>(policy, strategy, regulation)</small>	Regulatory Frameworks	✓	✓				
	Risk management		✓	✓			
Hardware <small>(infrastructure and technology)</small>	Business Models	✓		✓	✓		
	Technology delivery customisation	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Software <small>(content, applications, human resources)</small>	Livelihood-critical information	✓				✓	✓
	ICTs for social capital	✓			✓		✓

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper makes a number of recommendations relating to the role of GKP in the context of the ICT4D Platform at the World Summit for the Information Society. These are as follows:




**Recommendation 1** – in the context of the evolving framework for promoting ICT partnerships within the WSIS process, GKP is to encourage the WSIS Secretariat to review the discussion of the Bali Principles contained in this paper and consider incorporating the seven Principles for successful multi-stakeholder ICT partnerships.

**Recommendation 2** – as part of the WSIS ICT4D Platform, the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) is to provide generic guidance on how to evaluate multi-stakeholder ICT4D partnerships, enabling the key lessons to be drawn out and best practices substantiated and brought to scale.

**Recommendation 3** – the GKP, WSIS Secretariat and Summit, sponsors to combine their efforts to co-ordinate and resource a select programme of highly visible, results-based, multi-stakeholder ICT4D partnerships. The partnerships should be strategically chosen to target those areas of ICT4D that persist as unresolved challenges, and for which other, more conventional approaches to ICT design and implementation have so far failed to deliver. The programme should integrate closely with the dual-Summit format of the WSIS thereby harnessing its full development potential.

## KEY LESSONS FROM THE CASE-STUDIES

The case-studies highlighted some lessons:

-  the importance of taking a strategic approach to developing design parameters for a partnership (such as through reference to the DOI Dynamic Development framework) and finding partners able to contribute the necessary 'mix' of resources and competencies, in particular to ensure the long-term sustainability of ICT interventions;
-  the importance of business partners understanding their commercial case for entering the partnership, be that reputation, local knowledge, testing of new products and services, or viable financial rates of return; and
-  recognition by the public sector that to reach poor communities living in remote locations, there may be a need for subsidies for private investors and/or concessional rates for network access.

## PRIORITY AREAS FOR FURTHER EXPERIMENTATION

The case-studies also suggest some priority areas for further research and experimentation, as follows:

- ✦ whether the business model demonstrated by the Grameen Phone partnership is replicable for other businesses interested in tapping into the low-income consumer market in developing countries;
- ✦ whether the engagement of community groups and development NGOs in the design of regulatory frameworks for PPP-based ICT access in remote rural areas, might result in more balance in the competitive bidding among operators, between achieving least cost (and/or subsidy) and livelihood-driven performance; and
- ✦ what the design parameters of partnership projects should be, when formulated in part for ICT companies to test the financial viability of marketing or product/service development targeted at low-income consumers.







# PREAMBLE

In July 2003 the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) commissioned the Foundation for Development Cooperation, Australia, in collaboration with the UK Overseas Development Institute, to prepare an Issue Paper in the area of ICT (Information and Communications Technology) for development. The paper is to serve as a basis for consultation and input to the United Nations World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). The terms of reference for the work required the paper to highlight “the uniqueness of multi-stakeholder partnerships in general and its contribution to development and implementation issues in particular”.

## GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIP

The Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) is a worldwide network committed to harnessing the potential of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for sustainable and equitable development. GKP’s vision is a world of equal opportunities where all people can access and use knowledge and information to improve their lives. The network enables the sharing of information, experiences and resources to help reduce poverty and empower people.

Within the GKP framework, governments, civil society groups, donor agencies, private sector companies and inter-governmental organisations come together as equals to apply ICTs for development (ICT4D). Such alliances are known as ‘multi-stakeholder partnerships’, a relatively new approach for forging collaborations among different sectors sharing a common vision and goal.

Founded in 1997, GKP now comprises more than 80 members from 34 countries covering all continents. It is governed by an elected Executive Committee and serviced by a Secretariat based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.





# 1. THE UNIQUENESS OF MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS

## 1.1 Introduction

Strategic alliances between business, government and civil society are a growing feature of both developed and emerging economies. Such multi-stakeholder partnerships are necessary because it is increasingly clear that no one sector in society can deliver the complexities of sustainable development alone.

In the context of this paper, let us begin by saying what multi-stakeholder partnerships are not. They are not conformist client-contractor relationships or outsourcing arrangements, where one party unilaterally determines the actions of another, and where recourse to resolving problems or realising emergent opportunities associated with the relationship, lies wholly within the terms of the contract. Neither are they public-private partnerships (PPPs) in the conventional sense of the term, where, although there may be collaboration on financing, and even on resourcing and project management, the central idea remains a shift in responsibility and risk from one part of society to another, usually from the government to the private sector. And, neither are they a replacement for institutional forms of democratic decision-making, not least since the alliances so nurtured are essentially about the design and/or implementation of programmes or projects for which the conventional democratic process has already assigned priority.<sup>1</sup>

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*1. The role of multi-sector partnerships in global governance is not covered in this paper.*

In contrast, multi-stakeholder partnerships are unique in both character and substance. They are generally directed at the problems and challenges of sustainable development, from environment protection and management, to social inclusion and sustainable economic growth. They are about sharing not shifting risks; finding innovative ways to pool resources and talents based on each parties' core strengths; and designed and maintained over time in such a way as to deliver mutual benefits for all collaborating parties.<sup>i</sup> Multi-stakeholder partnerships pursue a shared vision, maintain a presumption in favour of joint problem-solving, promote a work ethos that exploits mutual self-interest, and adds value beyond that achievable by the principal alternatives.

## 1.2 Stakeholder Perspectives

Different types of organisations in society view multi-stakeholder partnerships in different ways.

### 1.2.1 Business Perspective

From the business perspective, no single company can deliver the myriad expectations surrounding sustainable development articulated by all its stakeholders: staff, shareholders, customers, suppliers, regulators and local communities. The reputation of the business, its ability to manage non-commercial risks, its capabilities to meet both internal and external requirements for corporate social responsibility, and its ability to realise opportunities for growth that benefits those socially excluded, will all depend on a business model that fully exploits its core competencies, whilst concurrently partnering with other organisations who can bring the necessary complementarities to form more complete solutions.<sup>ii</sup> From this perspective, multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development are thus no different in many of their principles from conventional business-to-business strategic alliances.<sup>iii</sup>





In addition, companies, particularly those that market, source or operate in more than one country, are under pressure to embrace the globalisation of social responsibility alongside the globalisation of business opportunity.<sup>iv</sup> And yet they often lack the experience and competencies to manage this aspect of their operations, especially in regions with which they are unfamiliar and that may be characterised by poverty, disease, corruption and violence. Strategic partnerships with government agencies and civil society groups more familiar with these ‘alien’ business environments make commercial sense.

### 1.2.2 Public Sector Perspective

In the context of the dual forces of economic liberalisation and the proliferation of (or demand for) democratic decision-making, both central government and municipal authorities find it increasingly challenging to achieve the right balance between their wide range of civic duties relating to sustainable development. The regulation of the free-market to ensure corporate responsibility, the promotion of foreign investment to stimulate employment opportunities, social inclusion, environmental protection, the provision of affordable public services and responsive governance. For example, demands for mandatory instruments to protect the environment are sometimes in conflict with the lobbying objectives of business for more voluntary and market-driven mechanisms. Again, the opening of domestic markets to global trade can have adverse consequences for local employment. Sometimes, meeting public expectations for high quality and affordable services may be pushing governments towards a more risky public-private financing formulae, which the principles of subsidiarity and decentralisation in the decision-making of government can create delays in policy delivery. In this context, it is not surprising that there are increasing numbers of examples of government departments and agencies seeking partnering opportunities with business and civil society organisations in order to enhance their capacity to administer the challenges of sustainable development.

### 1.2.3 Civil Society Perspective

The term ‘civil society’ is disputed and the actors within its boundaries are far from homogenous, including NGOs, charitable foundations, church groups, trade unions, academic institutions and a range of other special interest groups. The size and influence of this “third sector” has been increasing in the last two decades. Recent international studies of its economic contribution have shown this to be significant and growing<sup>v</sup> – particularly in developed countries where a substantial proportion of social services are delivered through civil society organisations (CSOs). Likewise, in developing countries, an increasing proportion of development aid is being delivered through CSOs. Furthermore, through the help of information technology, civil society organisations are becoming increasingly vocal and

organised in pursuit of their advocacy goals. With an increasingly ubiquitous media, there is an elevating expectation from society in a wide range of areas relating to sustainable development; from environmental protection and human rights, to social welfare and corporate governance. With this new political force comes a choice. Civil society groups can either play an advocacy or campaigning role, or they can become part of the solution, drawing on their local knowledge, capacity for innovation and trust of the general public to contribute in partnership to sustainable solutions.

With the public sector often perceived as slow and unresponsive, and many business sectors characterised by highly efficient, but impersonal, commercial models, there is at present genuine scope for stakeholders from civil society to transform the ability of business and government to contribute to sustainable development.

### 1.3 Definitions of Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships

#### 1.3.1 The Bali Principles

A set of principles for multi-stakeholder partnerships was drawn up in a preparatory conference in Bali, Indonesia in 2002 as input to the World Summit on Sustainable Development.<sup>vi</sup> Designed for so-called 'Type II' partnerships, the principles are as follows:

Partnerships should:

- ✦ help achieve the further implementation of Agenda 21 and the Millennium Development Goals, consistent, where applicable, with sustainable development strategies and poverty reduction strategies;
- ✦ be voluntary and self-organising;
- ✦ be based on mutual respect and shared responsibility of the partners involved;
- ✦ have a multi-stakeholder approach, arranged among any combination of partners, including governments, regional groups, local authorities, non-governmental actors, international institutions and private sector partners; and
- ✦ be international in their impact, beyond the national level.

#### 1.3.2 Re-Working the Bali Principles for the ICT Sector

The Bali principles were successful in launching more than 200 partnerships for sustainable development.<sup>vii</sup> However, over time, as researchers of multi-stakeholder partnerships around the globe have analysed both good and poor practices, it is possible to identify ways in which the Bali Principles might be re-worked, in particular to align them with the task of formulating partnerships that involve the ICT sector.

Firstly, successful multi-stakeholder ICT partnerships for sustainable development must be consistent with Local Agenda 21 objectives, poverty reduction strategies of developing countries and the development goals of official development agencies. They will also need to be aligned with the national and/or local strategic ICT priorities and sustainable development goals of the region within which the partnership actions are directed. The needs and priorities of communities benefiting from the partnership activities must also be considered together with the underlying and strategic interests of each of the parties within the partnership.

Second, for the most part, it is a valid presumption, and indeed critical to the effectiveness and sustainability of many multi-stakeholder partnerships, that there should to some degree be self-organising, i.e. that partners learn to solve problems jointly and reach agreement and divide responsibilities without dependence on a third-party broker. However, problems can and do arise in convening and brokering partnerships, in particular where there are large numbers of partners involved, or where partners have conflicting work cultures and ethics. In these circumstances, third-party brokering at strategic points in the partnering process, such as negotiating a formal Partnering Agreement, becomes not only defensible, but often decisive.<sup>viii</sup>

Third, both the long-standing experiences of 'Project Partnering'<sup>ix</sup> between client and contractors in the construction industry, and the four-year World Bank Business Partners for Development (BPD) programme looking at the extractive industries and the water and sanitation sector, concluded that it is quite possible for formal contracts to form a part of a partnership arrangement. Although such contracts should be subordinate 'in spirit' to the partnership principles of mutual respect and shared responsibility, they are nevertheless sometimes required to manage the flow of financial resources between partners.<sup>x</sup>

Fourth, the Bali Principles refer to the multi-stakeholder approach as an arrangement among any combination of partners, from: central government agencies, regional groups, local authorities, non-governmental actors, international institutions and private sector partners. However, most other programmes and projects looking at multi-stakeholder approaches tend to take the definition of the UN Global Compact<sup>xi</sup>, where the business sector is always one of the partners involved. Some partnership programmes, such as the BPD programme, explicitly looked at tri-sector partnerships – multi-stakeholder partnerships engaging parties from each of the three sectors in society: business, government and civil society.

Fifth, the Bali Principles require that multi-stakeholder partnerships should be international in their impact, i.e. their outcomes reach beyond the national level. The interpretation of multi-stakeholder partnerships in this paper is slightly

different. If those advocating a partnership approach to catalysing ICTs for sustainable development wish to see the concept move beyond the pilot-demonstrator phase, then a key test will be, not whether the partnership itself has an international impact, but whether the form of partnership is 'scalable', i.e. will either grow to have international significance, be able to be duplicated or be self-reproducing. Such scalability is unlikely where the formulation of the partnership requires sustained input from third-party partnership 'brokers', or its implementation is dependent upon either government subsidy, the charitable contributions of companies or the services of volunteers.

### 1.3.3 Multi-Stakeholder ICT Partnerships – a Definition

One of the dangers of the current 'partnership' movement is that the idea is fast becoming an 'end in itself', rather than a 'means to an end'. The conclusions of the Digital Opportunities Initiative<sup>xiii</sup> suggest that since ICTs are in practice an 'enabler' of sustainable social and economic development, thus multi-stakeholder ICT partnerships (i.e. strategic compacts between different ICT players) are likewise an enabler and not an end in themselves.

The DOI concluded further that the complexity of meeting the challenge of ICT as an enabler of sustainable development requires a holistic approach: the strategic combination of policies, infrastructure, technology, human capacity, enterprise and content. The logic is that the interaction of ICT with the goals of sustainable development is so complex, and the range of resources and competencies that need to be brought together to create complete solutions to specific challenges, so broad, that stakeholders across society (from government, business and civil society) need to be involved both in the design of these solutions and their implementation.

As an example, the newly launched CATIA (Catalysing Access to ICTs in Africa) programme, sponsored by the UK Department for International Development, is one such effort to draw on the conclusions of the DOI and take a more strategic approach to the design of a programme of ICT-driven development. The goal of the programme is to increase the numbers of poor people in Africa able to access and influence the information flows they need for their own development. The strategy,



developed through consultation, includes the following strategic design: policy debates and networks across Africa; leading to more positive regulatory environments for radio broadcasting and internet access; low cost satellite internet access; a more robust internet backbone with strengthened ISPs; low cost computers with open source software; and more emphasis on the content of radio broadcasting. With these ICT components in place, the aim is to enable networks of local communities and organisations to create, synthesise, adapt and exchange information and knowledge relevant to wealth creation and livelihood security.

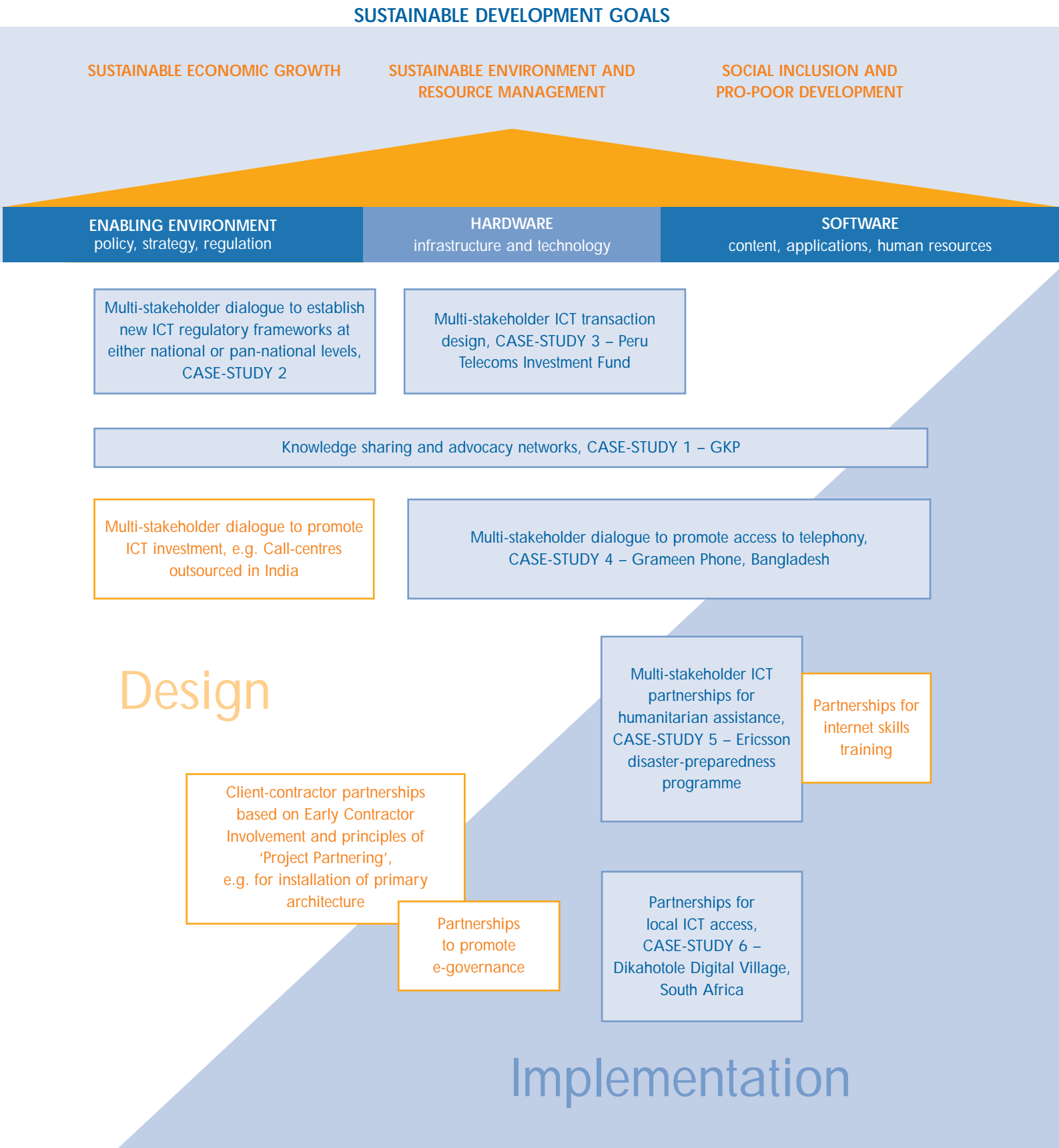
Such examples of strategic ICT planning clearly suggest that the range of organisations involved in designing a solution might not always be the same as those who collaborate in its implementation. The first stage of any multi-stakeholder partnering process is therefore to identify the 'design parameters' of the desired solution. Only then can one scan society to find partners with the right suite of competencies, resources and incentives to collaborate in successful implementation. Multi-stakeholder ICT partnerships are therefore both about modelling the requirements of ICT-based solutions and finding the right partners for implementation. Drawing on these ideas, and the language of the DOI, we propose here a new definition for multi-stakeholder partnerships in the ICT sector:

**Multi-stakeholder ICT partnerships:** alliances between parties drawn from government, business and civil society that strategically aggregate the resources and competencies of each to resolve the key challenges of ICT as an enabler of sustainable development, and which are founded on principles of shared risk, cost and mutual benefit.

#### 1.4 A Typology

A typology of ICT multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development is presented in **FIGURE 1**<sup>xiii</sup>. The examples given are discussed in greater detail in **SECTION 2**. With reference to the above discussion, multi-stakeholder partnerships convened essentially for the strategic purpose of informing or setting the rules of the enabling environment for ICT (policy, strategy, regulatory regime etc.) are essentially 'design-orientated' partnerships, whilst those that are about improving access to ICTs through the use of ICT software, e.g. training or developmental applications (e-health, e-government, e-education, e-commerce) can be thought of as 'implementation-orientated' partnerships. Some partnerships, for example, those that seek to develop and deploy new forms of ICT hardware – technology or infrastructure – tend to combine design with implementation.

**FIGURE 1**  
**A TYPOLOGY OF MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ICT PARTNERSHIPS**



## 1.5 Principles of Multi-Sector ICT Partnerships

A series of principles for the formulation and evaluation of multi-stakeholder partnership principles are discussed and presented below. These should be considered as work-in-progress.

### 1.5.1 Knowing When To Partner

In the previous section it was proposed that the complexity of interaction between ICTs and sustainable development, combined with the wide range of resources and competencies needed to find solutions, means that multi-stakeholder partnerships are likely to become a common feature of the application of ICT to sustainable development.

It will take time for this proposition to be proven. In the interim, how do governments, companies and civil society groups know where to place their efforts in developing partnerships? Drawing on a number of sources,<sup>xiv</sup> **BOX B** lists some of the persistent challenges facing the application of ICTs to sustainable development.

#### **BOX B**

#### **PERSISTENT CHALLENGES IN DEPLOYING ICTS AS ENABLERS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

##### **Sustainable Economic Growth**

- increasing ICT competition such that it drives down prices
- establishing the necessary backbone architecture for wireless communication
- keeping pace with demands for transmission capacity in order to prevent bottlenecks that affect e-dependent public services and businesses
- regulating the burgeoning growth in service providers
- alignment between the pace of private sector investment in ICTs and the capacities in society to exploit new ICT services and ICT-related productivity gains

##### **Sustainable Environment and Resource Management**

- decoupling economic growth from the depletion of non-renewable natural resources, e.g. through transport substitution, electronic commerce, substitution of products with services,
- resource efficiency within the ICT sector, e.g. through 'light weighting'
- addressing concerns over the health implications of electromagnetic fields

##### **Social Inclusion and Pro-poor Development**

- pro-poor regulatory frameworks and ICT transactions
- affordable ICT access in remote rural regions and urban slums
- customised ICT delivery that exploits the variety of communication technologies
- widening access to non-English speaking peoples and maintaining linguistic diversity
- channelling information critical to sustainable livelihoods.

**Principle 1** – Knowing when to apply a multi-sector ICT partnership approach is about recognising the confluence of the following three features:

- ✦ those aspects of the sustainable development agenda to which ICT can act as an enabler;
- ✦ the persistent challenges to the deployment of ICT as an enabler of sustainable development, in particular, cases where the design of solutions by single parties in society or by contractual relationships have failed;
- ✦ those persistent ICT4D challenges that, because of their complexity, require the strategic alignment of resources and competencies from across business, government and civil society.

### 1.5.2 Drivers of Partnership

Individual organisations will enter a partnership with an expectation of securing some type of gain over and above that which they could achieve working alone or within a conventional contract. For the private sector (ICT operators, manufacturers, contractors, various forms of service providers etc.) these drivers could include global reputation, market penetration, operational cost saving, risk management, access to finance or more visible compliance with internal or mandated standards for corporate social responsibility.

For those public sector agencies involved in ICT regulation, the driver might be to ensure that change in the regulatory regime achieves the right balance between: (i) sufficient incentive to attract private capital, and (ii) taxes, tariffs and pricing policies, along with environmental and social safeguards, that satisfy the needs of customers and the interests of civil society groups.

For local government authorities, ICT-based partnerships might be seen as a way to achieve greater efficiency in the allocation of scarce resources, or the faster delivery of commitments to public service improvements contained in economic development plans, either in ICT access or in the areas of education or access to health care, employment and market opportunities or government services.

The drivers for different types of civil society may, for some, be about shifting from an advocacy role to one of more direct influence, especially over government policy. Others may be driven by the desire to leverage new resources, and others still, as simply a faster way to deliver on the organisation's strategic objectives for environmental protection, social inclusion or poverty reduction.



With reference to the above discussion, as well as interpreting the experience of the World Bank's Business Partners for Development programme, two further principles of multi-stakeholder ICT partnerships can be deduced as follows:

**Principle 2** – Before agreeing to enter into partnership, its projected value in satisfying the main drivers for participation should be objectively weighed against the available alternatives and risks?

**Principle 3** – A multi-stakeholder ICT partnership will work best when it is in the self-interest of each party to pro-actively seek solutions that satisfy the interests of the other parties, i.e. when the partnership is *mutually reinforcing*.

### 1.5.3 Design Parameters and Core Complementary Competencies

The Development Dynamic framework presented by the DOI in their final paper (2002), identified an inventory of policy and resource components that, in various strategic combinations, are needed if ICTs are to succeed as an enabler of sustainable development. Convergent with this, recent thinking on multi-stakeholder partnerships<sup>xv</sup> in other industrial sectors emphasises the importance of partnerships being built on 'core complementary competencies'. Partnerships are likely to be more robust and effective if the following two principles are followed:

**Principle 4** – Successful partnerships are built on complementary competencies and resources that, in combination, meet the parameters of some strategic design; and

**Principle 5** – The resources and competencies contributed to the partnership need to be drawn from as close as possible to the core 'business' of the partner organisations, in order to both retain the relevance of the partnership to the objectives and day-to-day activities of the organisation, and to exploit the efficiencies of partners contributing from their existing costs, i.e. variable, costs base, rather than introducing new, fixed costs.

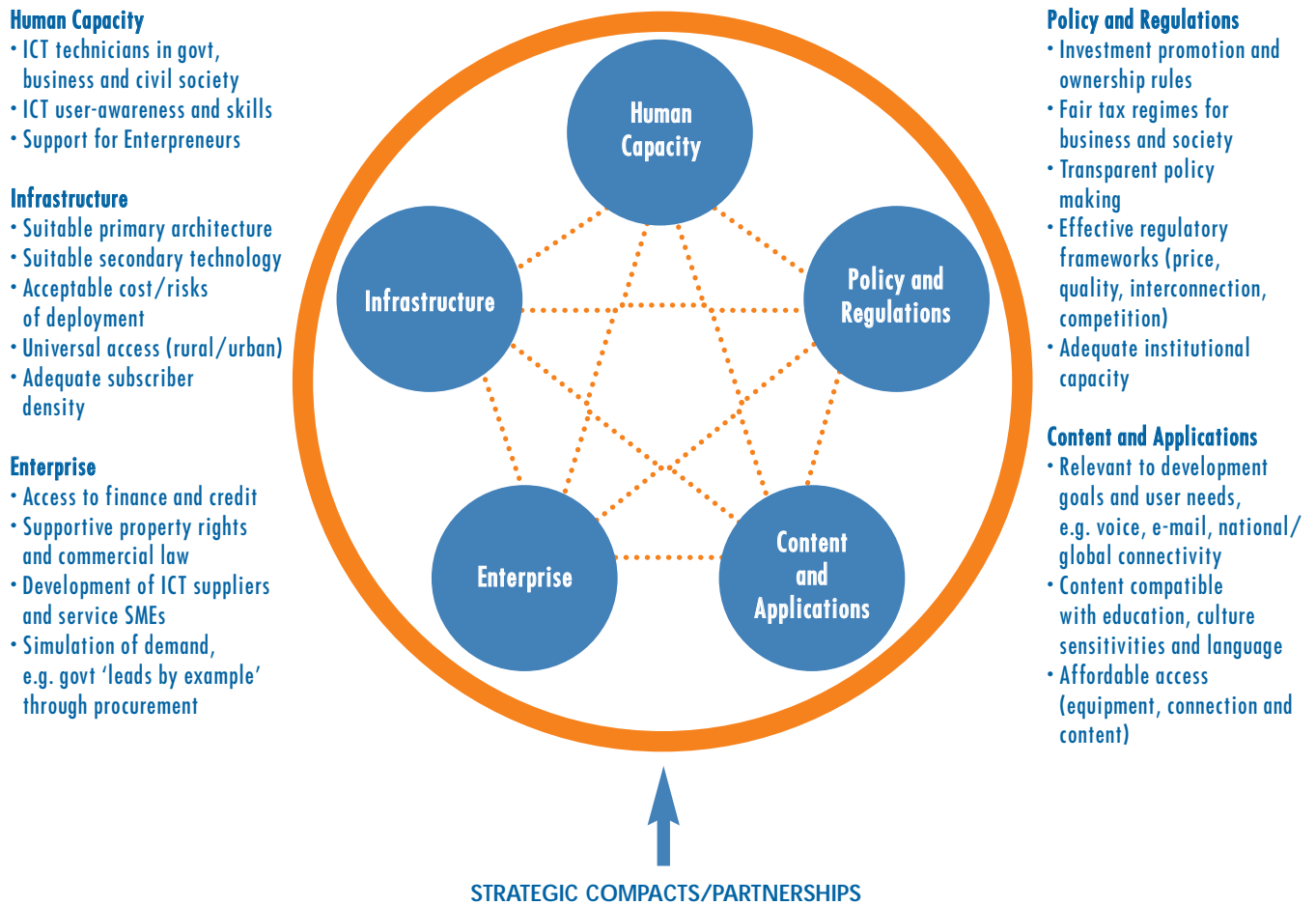
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2. For example, an alternative for the private sector might be to rely on its charitable giving to achieve the same reputational gains anticipated to result from an ICT partnership around social inclusion. For a local government authority there may be a risk that the partnership will draw resources away from other priority areas of policy. And for a civil society organisation, it may believe that the loss of independence that comes with engagement in a multi-stakeholder partnership would undermine its capability to raise donations from the general public.

An adapted version of the DOI framework is presented in **FIGURE 2**. This is offered for use in establishing the design parameters for successful multi-stakeholder ICT partnerships.

**FIGURE 2**

**DESIGN PARAMETERS FOR FORMULATING STRATEGIC MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ICT PARTNERSHIPS**

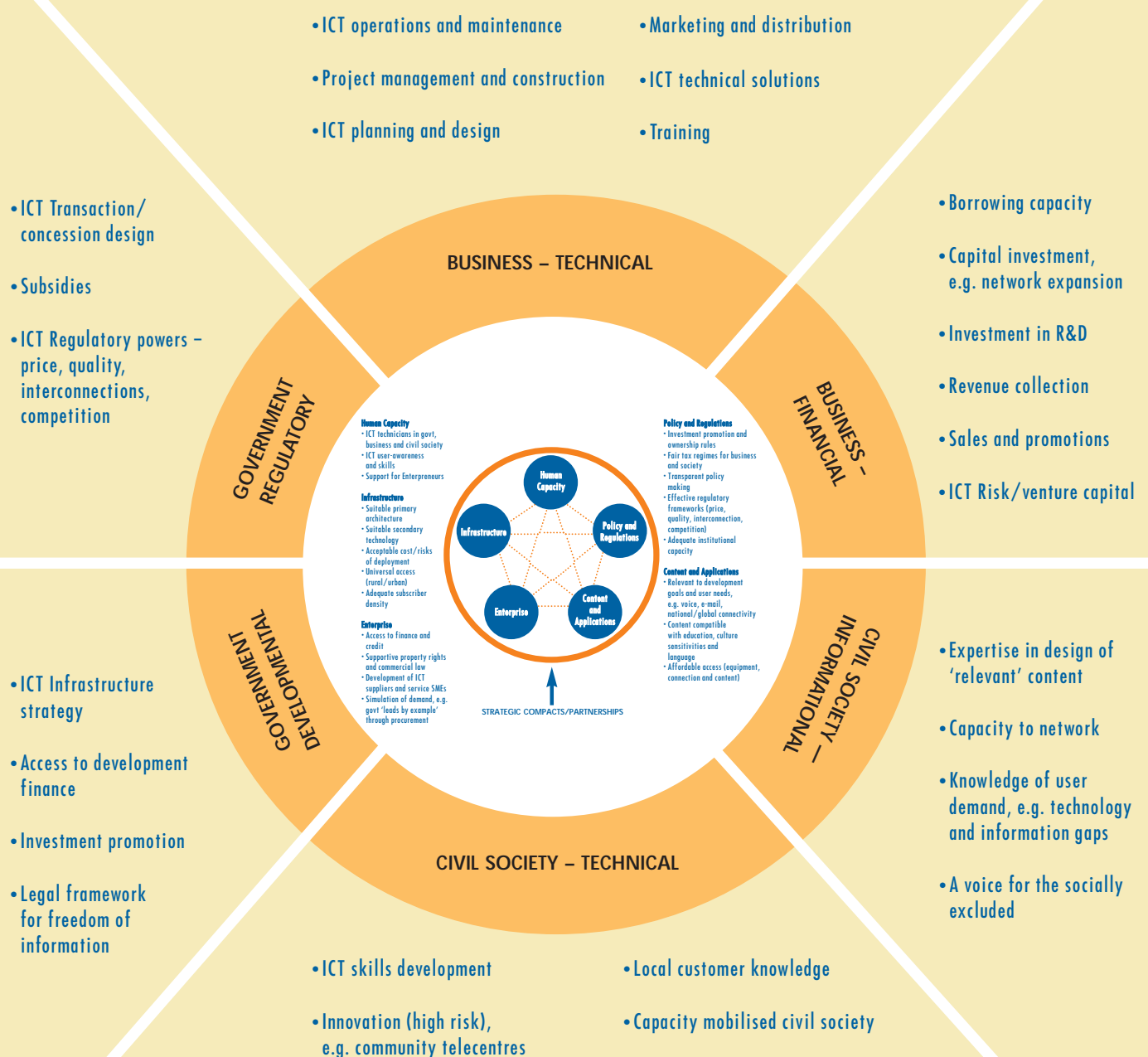


ODI/FDC (2003)<sup>xvi</sup>, adapted from DOI (2002)

Every multi-stakeholder ICT partnership will likely have a different configuration of resources and roles, pursuant to the sustainable development goal to be achieved, the political and economic context in which the partnership is formulated and operative, and the underlying interest and drivers of each partner. It should be no surprise, then, that the development of partnerships is as much about face-to-face negotiation as it is about desk-top design (**SECTION 2.6** looks in more detail at the process of consensual negotiation that lies behind successful partnerships).

Nevertheless, there are some obvious patterns of resources and roles for particular types of partners that can be considered in the design of multi-stakeholder ICT partnerships. In comparison, recent research into partnerships in the water and sanitation sector identified clear comparative advantages between the business, public sector and civil society sectors:<sup>xviii</sup> Drawing on this research, and with reference to the adapted DOI Development Dynamic framework for ICT partnerships, **FIGURE 3** summarises the complementarity of core competencies between the ICT business sector (technical and financial), government authorities (regulatory and developmental) and civil society organisations (technical and informational).

**FIGURE 3**  
**COMPLEMENTARITY IN THE CORE COMPETENCIES OF POTENTIAL ICT PARTNERS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**



#### 1.5.4 Partnering Agreements

Although the different types of multi-stakeholder partnerships are many, it is common for the partners to consolidate their arrangement through the preparation and agreement of some form of written statement.

Design-orientated multi-stakeholder partnerships, such as consultation processes convened to develop new regulatory frameworks or e-strategies, may have very loose rules of engagement, captured in an informal letter of invitation, or for more structured dialogue, a document such as a Memorandum of Understanding.

More 'hardware' based partnerships, such as those convened to install mobile telephone base-stations, may be built around the practice of Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) – a process of contractor engagement with the client and other parties that leads either (i) to the main contract containing partnership-principled clauses (such as a commitment to 'joint' risk analysis, a 50/50 'pain-gain' clause to manage costs, or protocols for 'joint' project management), or (ii) to a specific Partnering Agreement, separate from the main contract. In legal terms, this latter document is generally subordinate to the main contract. However, if its formulation has been properly carried out, all parties will use it as the first and principal point of reference for resolving client-contractor disputes or exploiting opportunities.

More complex, multi-stakeholder, partnerships – for example, one designed to improve access to the internet for local schools between a regional internet service provider, computer manufacturer, local education authority and various parent/teacher associations – might have an even more detailed Partnering Agreement comprising some or all of the ingredients listed in **BOX C** <sup>xvi</sup>

#### BOX C

#### INGREDIENTS OF A FORMAL PARTNERING AGREEMENT

- assumptions
- representatives of each partner organisation and their status
- geographical boundaries and/or target population of the partnership activities
- a (common) vision statement
- the objectives of the partnership: shared by all parties; specific to each organisation
- joint workplan, encompassing: activities, schedules and performance indicators; resource commitments; and responsibilities
- funding arrangements/contracts
- decision-making principles
- grievance mechanism to resolve differences
- procedures for transparency and on-going communications between partners
- measures to strengthen the capacity of partners to implement their commitments
- results of a joint risk analysis and mitigation measures (both against internal and external risks)
- a protocol for communicating with constituents and other interested parties
- procedures for monitoring and measuring the performance of the partnership against both the business and wider social objectives
- rules for individual partners to leave or join the partnership, and exit strategy for the partnership as a whole

In the light of this, a further principle can be identified as follows:

**Principle 6** – Regardless of the type of multi-stakeholder ICT partnerships, prior consensus should be sought for some form of written document identifying, at a minimum: the shared vision of the partnership; the objectives of each partner for the partnership, and the division of roles and responsibilities. The moral and legal status of the document will be dependent on circumstances.

### 1.5.5 Outcomes and Impact

When evaluating the outcomes of a partnership over time, it is not uncommon for all that is accomplished by the partners to be attributed to the presence of the partnership. This may not be accurate. Not only are there likely to be external factors affecting these outcomes – such as the positive effect of other related projects, the adverse effect of changes in political support, or new forms of commercial competition arising during the life of the partnership – but more importantly, each partner is likely to have had an alternative plan of action to achieve their objectives for the partnership had the partners not come together. In any evaluation of outcomes, this alternative needs to be taken into consideration.

**Principle 7** – When evaluating the outcomes of multi-stakeholder ICT partnerships, care should be taken to identify the incremental contribution of the partnership activities over and above external factors and the next most likely alternative, i.e.  $\text{Added Value of Partnership} = \sum \text{Value of Partnership Outcomes} - (\text{External Factors} + \text{Most Likely Alternatives})$ .<sup>xix</sup>

## 1.6 The Partnering Process

Multi-stakeholder ICT partnerships for sustainable development will invariably involve new forms of collaboration between non-traditional parties. Partners may therefore have quite different organisational cultures, ways of taking decisions, perceptions of accountability, methods of working and modes of behaviour. For example, ICT businesses (technology manufacturers, telecommunication operators etc) may, given the current economic difficulties in the sector, be looking for very rapid solutions that reduce costs or afford penetration into new markets. They may also perceive their accountability to lie more with internal line managers and shareholders, rather than those in society with a direct stake in some issue of sustainable development.

In contrast, public sector (developmental) agencies are likely to be bound by relatively slow-paced procedures, decision-making by committee, and may perceive their accountability to be aligned less with business objectives or civil society and more with the policies of different internal government departments.

Civil society organisations may be less worried with speed of action, and more with whether the partnership is accountable to those directly affected by such issues as social inclusion and environmental protection. More specifically, within many areas of sustainable development, the relationship between business and not-for-profit organisations has, at times, been confrontational. Consequently, the business and civil society organisations that comprise multi-stakeholder ICT partnerships are likely to have to find ways to rebuild trust.

Finally, the case has been made in Section 1.5.2 that a key principle of successful partnerships is their ability to satisfy the drivers and interests of all the partners.

Bringing these strands together, effective partnerships have to manage cultural differences, build trust and satisfy underlying interests. This requires effort to be placed not only on structural components of the partnership – the objectives and division of roles within a partnership – but also on the design of the process of multi-stakeholder partnering itself. Although the ‘partnering process’ is likely to be different for different types of partnerships, there are some common steps (see **FIGURE 4**). These are discussed below.<sup>xx</sup>

### 1.6.1 Partnership Exploration

Drawing on the principal conclusion of the Digital Opportunities Initiative, namely that ICTs are enablers of sustainable development rather than ends in themselves, the first task in developing a multi-stakeholder ICT partnership is to understand what the development goal is that the partnership is intended to deliver. In the first instance, this is most likely to be chosen by that organisation self-elected to convene the initial discussions, and is usually developed as a simple and consistent ‘theme’. Over time this theme often transforms, by consensus, into the overall vision or leading objectives of the partnership.

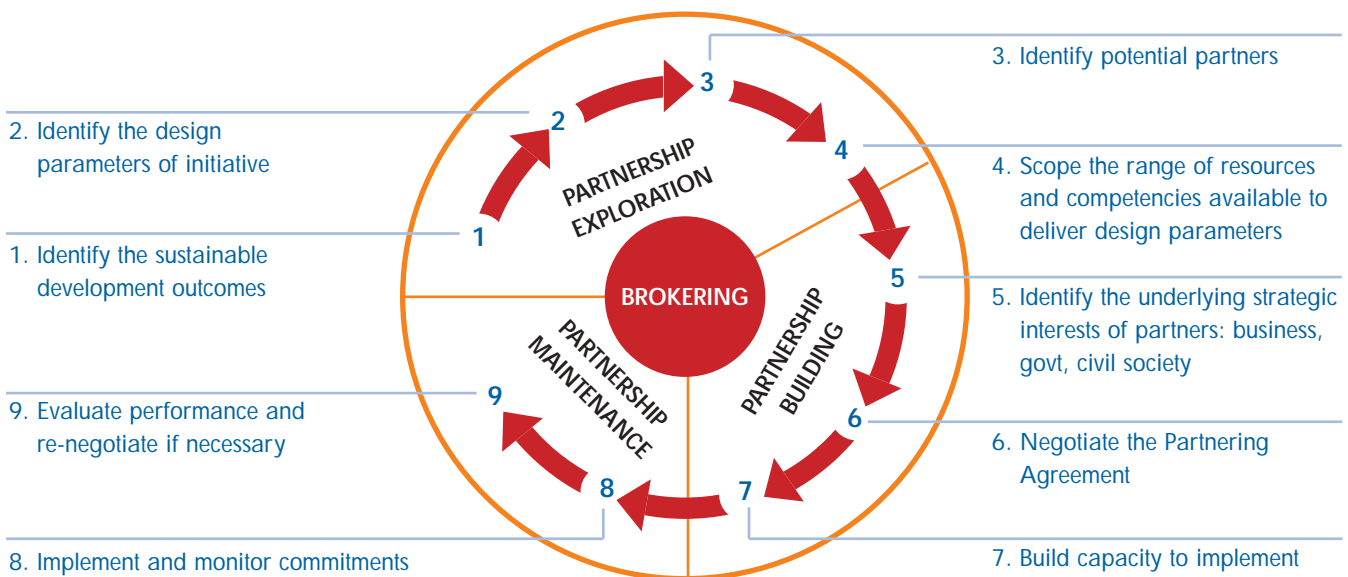
A frequent error of any organisation contemplating entering into a partnership arrangement is to launch into discussions with others before fully understanding their own internal needs and interests. This includes:

- 👉 the organisational drivers and interests to be served by the partnership;
- 👉 which in-house activity, programme, management system or department the partnering process and resulting partnership will integrate with;
- 👉 the organisation’s negotiating strategy during the early consultation period; and
- 👉 the anticipated benefits of the partnership weighed against the costs and risks.

Working through these steps will enable each prospective partner to judge the merits of entering into collaboration. However, once this assessment is complete it is still not certain that a partnership will develop. Before this can happen a degree of 'buy-in' has to be generated within suitable partner organisations. A targeted process of consultation is the best way to secure this. The consultation should:

- ✦ establish channels of communication with a range of potential partners and other interested parties;
- ✦ develop the strategic design parameters of the partnership dialogue or solution that will deliver the agreed sustainable development goal, i.e. 'requirements modelling';
- ✦ identify those parties best positioned to bring the right resources and competencies to meet the design parameters, and assess their likely capacity to implement the future commitments; and
- ✦ agree on a process by which the partners will consult and negotiate the terms of the partnership.

**FIGURE 4**  
COMMON STEPS IN THE PARTNERING PROCESS<sup>xxi</sup>



### 1.6.2 Partnership Building

A partnership will not progress (or at least not last for long, or fail to generate its intended objectives) unless all parties are able to reach consensus over how their underlying interests will be fulfilled and who will take responsibility for what action. For ICT firms, this may mean seeking assurances from the other partners that business deadlines or financial rates of return will not be affected by unnecessary delays due, for example, to additional consultation or community empowerment activities. In return, these firms will be expected to assist the other

partners achieve their underlying interests, be that alignment with government ICT infrastructure and/or sustainable development policies, or contributing to the livelihood security of poor communities.

What should be avoided is any one partner dictating the objectives and terms of the partnership. Building agreement over the details of any collaborative arrangement requires all partners to adopt a style of negotiation that accommodates differences in both culture and interests, and still achieves consensus. Conventional 'adversarial' styles of negotiation often lead to 'win-lose' outcomes and are therefore a poor basis for developing mutually reinforcing partnerships. More likely to be effective is a consensual, 'win-win', style of negotiation, where mutual understanding and a 'celebration of difference' are key features. **BOX D** summarises the four principles of consensual negotiation.

#### **BOX D** **PRINCIPLES OF CONSENSUAL NEGOTIATION**

1. Build trust through mutual understanding and meaningful communication
2. Focus on satisfying underlying interests rather than surface positions
3. Widen the options through joint-problem solving
4. Reach agreement that adds value for all parties

In negotiating the objectives, responsibilities and resource commitments that will form the basis of the partnership, partners can choose to either negotiate together directly face-to-face, or invite a third-party facilitator or broker to guide the negotiation process. If a partnership broker is invited, the following factors need to be taken into consideration:

- 👉 do all parties agree to the choice of broker?
- 👉 is the broker professionally trained in multi-party negotiations?
- 👉 does the broker have experience working in both the ICT sector and relevant aspect of sustainable development?

Central to the effectiveness of multi-stakeholder ICT partnerships is the quality of resources and competencies committed by each party, and the degree to which these match the required design parameters (refer to **FIGURE 3**). In addition to the more obvious resources and competencies, there are also those that are 'hidden' and yet which might play a key part in the success of the partnership. These include: staff secondments, local knowledge, office and other standard equipment, project management skills, administrative services, mediation skills, influence over and access to key individuals, willingness to adopt a leadership role, an ability to borrow capital at low interest rates, and a capacity to leverage resources from others.



Once the vision and objectives of the partnership are agreed upon, along with a workplan outlining the division of roles and resources and other required structural components (see **BOX C**), the final task is to ensure that the partners have the capacity to implement their commitments. If necessary, implementing the details of the joint workplan should be delayed until measures have been taken to strengthen this capacity.

### 1.6.3 Partnership Maintenance

Whether in networking, dialogue, hardware or software types of partnership, as the partners begin to work together there are bound to be tensions. Over time, the partners may need to convene to re-negotiate certain aspects of their original set of agreements, including, for example, the range of resources committed, key roles of certain partners, and the addition (or deletion) of new objectives or partners. Conventional organisational management tools such as SWOT analysis and Decision-Trees have proven to be useful at this juncture.

This need to adapt the configuration of multi-stakeholder ICT partnership over time is likely to derive from one or more of the following causes:

- 🔸 unanticipated behaviour of, or between, the different partners;
- 🔸 design parameters that lack the strategic complexity to deliver the intended sustainable development outcome;
- 🔸 an insufficient capacity within a partner organisation to implement its resource commitments or roles;
- 🔸 changes in the external business or political environment; and
- 🔸 completion of agreed 'milestones' in the workplan (e.g. the end of the design or construction phase, or the planned review of a 'pilot' or beta site).

In addition to occasional re-negotiations, the partners need to be in regular communication with each other, so preventing differences from escalating into disputes, and solving problems jointly and creatively. The more the partners interact, the more likely it is that the partnership will be successful. If the original set of agreements governing the partnership has been properly structured, ensuring on-going communication and transparency should be no more than a question of implementing the agreed procedures (refer to **BOX D**).



## 2. MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ICT PARTNERSHIPS IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### 2.1 The Global Knowledge Partnership and ICT4D

The Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) recognises that “access to information and knowledge is essential if the disadvantaged, the marginalised, and the poor are to improve their lives and lives of their children”.<sup>xxii</sup> In the context of international development, the GKP views multi-stakeholder ICT partnerships as the combined efforts of the public and private sectors and civil society stakeholders to:<sup>xxiii</sup>

- ✓ better inform policy and decision making on development;
- ✓ encourage shared commitment to common development goals;
- ✓ increase the impact and extend the reach of ICT development initiatives;
- ✓ leverage human and financial resources; and
- ✓ maximise the outcomes of applying ICT.

At the second Global Knowledge Partnership conference in March 2000, delegates highlighted the importance of multi-stakeholder ICT4D partnerships,<sup>xxiv</sup> recommending that: “the GKP promote the creation of multi-stakeholder partnerships to increase access to ICTs”.

As part of the challenge to ‘create’ multi-stakeholder ICT4D partnerships, the GKP has agreed to organise the ICT4D Platform of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). The Platform will showcase a number of multi-sector ICT4D partnerships and, it is hoped, begin the task of developing a strategy for formulating pioneer partnerships integrated with the dual-summit format of the WSIS process.

### 2.2 World Summit on the Information Society

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) is a global process led by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). The dual-summit format – with conferences in Geneva 2003 and Tunis 2005 – will establish a political declaration and action plan. The first PrepCom meeting for the Summit was held in July 2002. This concluded the rules of procedure and participation for the Summit, and opened the process to private sector and civil society involvement. Principles and themes for the Summit were also discussed and refined further in the course of subsequent meetings, including the Informal Meeting in Geneva in September 2002, and regional conferences held in all major regions.

From these discussions, two broad directions for the Summit have emerged: the first concerning the identification and negotiation of solutions to the development of the information society globally; the second concerning the potential of ICT to contribute to development and poverty alleviation, particularly in relation to the UN Millennium Goals. These latter 'digital divide' issues have been given particular weight by developing country government delegates.

Subsequently, the role of multi-stakeholder ICT partnerships as a means to bridge the 'digital divide' was a theme of each of the five WSIS regional conferences. In addition, at the WSIS Prep Com II, Roundtable 8 on "The Role of Different Stakeholders in the Information Society" and a separate side event provided platforms for promoting the concept of multi-stakeholder ICT4D partnerships. In addition, a number of actors in the WSIS process have noted the importance of the concept<sup>xxv</sup> (see **BOX E**).

#### **BOX E**

##### **ENDORSEMENT OF ICT4D PARTNERSHIPS AS PART OF THE WSIS PROCESS**

- Marc Furrer (State Secretary of Switzerland for WSIS, Director General of the Federal Office of Communications) – "It is most important that the multi-stakeholder process is in place. We have had substantial and difficult discussions at PrepCom, and we have made progress on some fronts. Political negotiations have to start now to improve the Declaration."
- Pierre Gagne (Executive Director, WSIS Secretariat) – "Information and communications technologies are enormously powerful tools for development. One of the most pressing challenges is to harness this extraordinary force, spread it throughout the world, and make its benefits accessible and meaningful for all humanity, in particular the poor. This cannot be done by Governments alone. Partnerships will be one of the crucial elements in the action plan to be developed by the Summit process."

### **2.3 The Persistent Challenges of ICT4D**

Information and communications technology can make a significant contribution to poverty reduction and development in the developing world and there is a large and growing literature on this subject. ICTs can improve the effectiveness of disaster relief, for example, through speeding procurement of the more urgent types of humanitarian assistance; enhance the efficiency of health services, in the form of improved record keeping, more accurate diagnosis and information exchange on prevention; and provide access to educational services, for example through distance learning. ICTs are also a means of improving the responsiveness of government to local priorities, disseminating information and opportunities for rural producers and poor urban dwellers to tap into new markets or find employment, and for engaging civil society and business in the reform of public sector institutions.

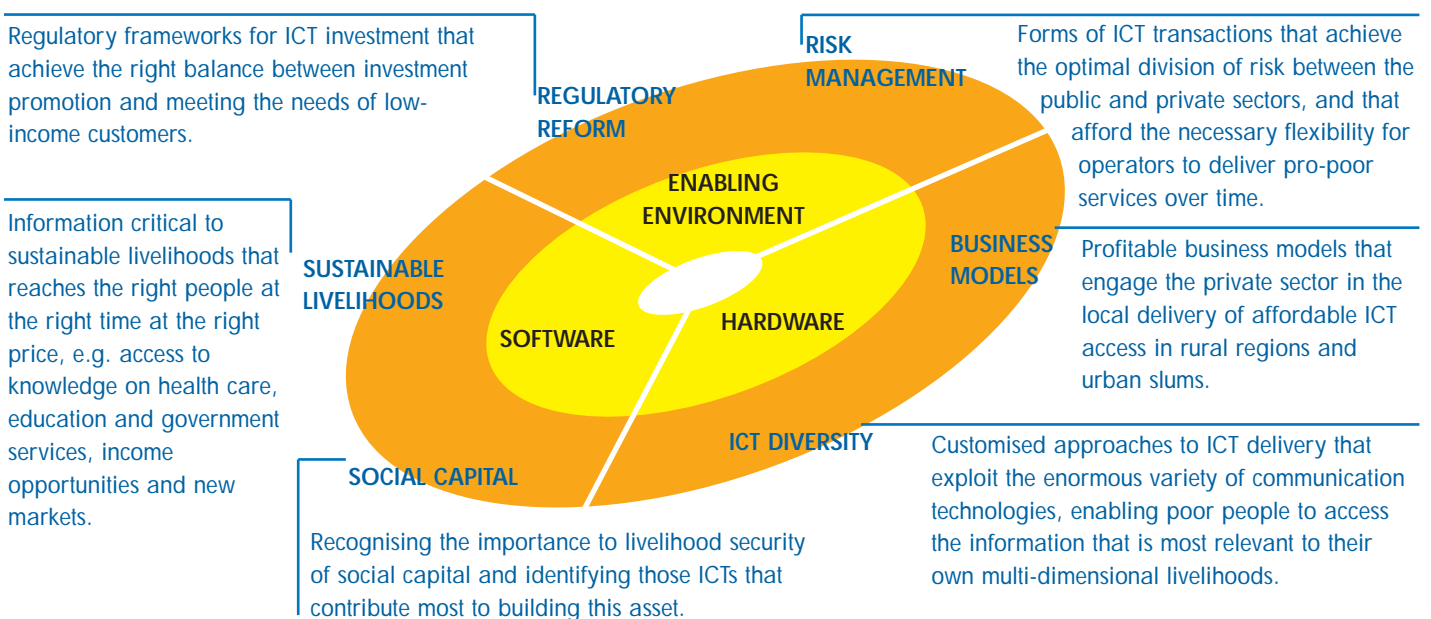
Beyond these more obvious applications, there is growing interest in the value of ICT in international development for two further reasons. The first is the sheer diversity of technologies on offer. The range of communication types available should mean that different technologies can be strategically selected to offer the closest fit with the needs of poor communities. For example, communities within microwave radio reach of fibre optic

cable links can make use of a range of Wireless Local Loop (WLL) technologies such as the corDECT system. For those more distant from the countries' infrastructure backbones, or in hilly terrain, VSAT (Very Small Aperture Terminal) satellites are now available and actively promoted by some international development agencies<sup>xxvi</sup> Connectivity based on VHF or UHF wireless technology is another, narrowband, option.

The second is concern over the low level penetration of ICT in the poorer regions of the world<sup>xxvii</sup> Some interpret this as a future opportunity for business, namely that the mass of rural populations offers an as yet untapped market. Hewlett Packard, for example, is promoting its 'e-Inclusion' initiative: a strategy for achieving long-term business growth by deploying its core business and research and development resources to develop new products and services, often in partnership, in order to serve the needs of low-income customers. The stated mission of the initiative is to "close the gap between the technology-empowered communities and the technology-excluded communities on the planet by making it profitable to do so"<sup>xxviii</sup> (see Case-Study in Section 2.4.6). Others view the lack of ICT penetration less as a business opportunity and more as a moral imperative for poverty reduction. Either way, as Chapman and Slaymaker argue: "the contradiction between the potential for ICTs to address the challenges faced by rural and urban development, and the current failure to harness them for this purpose, is striking".<sup>xxix</sup>

The challenges of achieving greater ICT access for poor communities and the subsequent utilisation of this access to reduce poverty are many. They include the ineffectiveness of the regulatory regime to attract new investment; the design of ICT transactions with the private sector that fail to deliver affordable ICT solutions; unprofitable business models for rural ICT access; ICT strategies that fail to exploit the diversity of technologies; and content that is irrelevant to the livelihood priorities of poor communities. **FIGURE 5** below

**FIGURE 5**  
UNRESOLVED CHALLENGES TO ICT AS AN ENABLER OF POVERTY REDUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT



describes some of the unresolved challenges to ICTs as an enabler of poverty reduction and development in the developing world.

## 2.4 Case-Studies

As an illustration of the principles outlined in **Section 1**, six multi-stakeholder ICT4D partnership case-studies are presented below:<sup>3</sup> With reference to **FIGURE 1** (on page 14), these are intended to both highlight some of the different types of partnerships, and show how the partnership approach is uniquely able to address some of the persistent challenges facing the ICT sector as an enabler of poverty reduction and development.

**TABLE 1** (reproduced below) shows which challenges are addressed by which case-study.

**TABLE 1**  
IMPACT OF THE CASE-STUDY MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS ON RESOLVING PERSISTENT ICT4D CHALLENGES

Persistent ICT4D Challenges		Case-Studies					
		Global Knowledge Partnership	e-ASEAN forum	Peru Telecoms Investment Fund	Grameen Village Pay Phones, Bangladesh	Ericsson Response	Dikahotole Digital Village, South Africa
Enabling Environment <small>(policy, strategy, regulation)</small>	Regulatory Frameworks	✓	✓				
	Risk management		✓	✓			
Hardware <small>(infrastructure and technology)</small>	Business Models	✓		✓	✓		
	Technology delivery customisation	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Software <small>(content, applications, human resources)</small>	Livelihood-critical information	✓				✓	✓
	ICTs for social capital	✓			✓		✓

Each case-study is described under the following headings:

- ✦ the development aims of the partnership;
- ✦ the partners, their underlying interests/drivers and resource and competency contributions;
- ✦ milestones in the partnering process; and
- ✦ the outcomes and added value of the partnership.

3. There are many multi-sector initiatives underway throughout the world. The case studies presented below were selected for illustrative purposes only – i.e. to view a range of partnerships types through the lens of the partnership principles, and to show the way in which these principles apply in practice. The case studies are not intended to be a rigorous evaluation of best practice of multi-sector partnerships in ICT – which is beyond the scope of this paper – although this paper does recommend that consideration be given to doing such an exercise in the near future.

With reference to the partnership principles described in **Section 1.3**, some analysis of the case-studies is provided and key lessons highlighted.

### 2.4.1 Global Knowledge Partnership<sup>xxx</sup>

The GKP is one of the few global networks that seeks expressly to operate as a multi-stakeholder partnership.

In accordance with partnering Principles 2, 3 and 4 (see **Section 1.5**), members are drawn from across business, government and civil society and must meet specified membership criteria; the partnership is mutually reinforcing with the benefits of shared information accessible to all parties; and the resources of the partnership drawn from the members' core competencies, be that as cash or contributions in kind.

The GKP Secretariat itself can be thought of as the partnership broker, empowered by the members to guide the strategic direction of the network, and, increasingly, to act as the convenor of design-orientated partnerships such as the ICT4D Platform at the WSIS.

#### CASE-STUDY 1

### GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIP (GKP)

#### Development Aims

GKP is an evolving network of public, private and civil society organisations described as the first broad-based, global, multi-stakeholder partnership in ICT for Development (ICT4D). Its aim is to promote access to, and effective use of, knowledge and information as tools of sustainable development, by sharing information, experiences and resources to realise the potential of ICTs. Its key areas of activity are: advocacy on ICT4D policy issues; services and events to enhance members' effectiveness and promote synergies; and provision of a knowledge and information sharing platform. Its Secretariat is based in Kuala Lumpur.

#### Partners, Drivers and Contributions

GKP is an actively expanding network which presently comprises 90 members, including:

- 4 governmental organisations from the North/bilateral donor agencies (Switzerland, Canada, UK and Sweden)
- 8 governmental organisations from the South (Malaysia, Bangladesh (2), Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Egypt, Fiji, Mauritius)
- 14 international and multilateral organisations
- 7 networks
- 51 non-profits (CSOs and foundations)
- 6 private sector organisations

Motivations for joining vary for different partners, but include a commitment to the overall goals, a desire to gain from the pooled knowledge and experience, increase influence/impact by working as a group, and to seek both new opportunities and resources (intellectual capital, partners, funding etc.). Likewise, partners contribute many of the above things according to their status – including grants from the donor agency members.

#### The Partnering Process

The GKP had its origin in the outcome of the 1997 Global Knowledge Conference, backed by the Canadian Government. The GKP is a complex form of partnership which is still relatively new, and whose nature continues to evolve as new partners join according to specified membership criteria. As a minimum requirement of membership, all partners must contribute in cash or in kind on an annual basis, the scale and nature of the contribution specified according to the characteristics of the organisation. Partners maintain their own identity and autonomy and have equal rights, within an environment that emphasises shared values, mutual respect, trust and transparency. A central criterion for the partnership and the division of tasks among members is the principle of subsidiarity whereby decisions

are taken at the lowest/optimal competent level. Benefits of the partnership are accessible to all members on an equal basis, and clear agreements on values, objectives and principles are established through consultations.

#### Outcomes and Value Added

GKP's outcomes, almost by definition, come largely from the value of networking and information exchange. Its impact includes activities carried out directly under the GKP banner (which include organisation of international events such as the ICT4D Platform at the WSIS), as well as value added to the activities of individual partners or groups of partners. For smaller organisations, GKP provides a means through which they can have greater influence and visibility in international fora (including for e.g. the G8 Dot Force Initiative, and the WSIS). It can also help sustainability through combined commitment to broadly shared goals, exposure to quality standards and viable funding. The multi-sectoral nature of the partnership also adds value through exposing different agendas to scrutiny of other stakeholders and encouraging the negotiation of "win-win" outcomes.

What will be interesting in the future is to see how the GKP Secretariat evolves as a broker of more implementation-orientated partnerships. For example, will it (as we recommend in this paper) begin to utilise its membership base and convening power to move beyond information sharing to more actively broker (or build the capacity for others to broker) a programme of results-based multi-stakeholder ICT4D partnerships that harness the development potential of the WSIS?

#### 2.4.2 e-ASEAN Initiative<sup>xxxi</sup>

Although the private sector are not signatories to the e-ASEAN (inter-governmental) Framework Agreement, their input to the overall design has been significant.

Closer to the concept of multi-stakeholder partnerships is the e-ASEAN Task Force: a forum comprising both government and private sector representatives, with a stated objective to look for ways to pool comparative advantages.

### CASE-STUDY 2

#### e-ASEAN INITIATIVE

##### Development Aims

ASEAN countries believe they must embrace ICT, its development and use, if they are to sustain economic growth and remain competitive in the global market place. ASEAN leaders thus agreed to promote collective efforts to complement national development strategies in this sector. The e-ASEAN initiative establishes a region-wide approach to making comprehensive use of information and communication technologies in business, society, and the government. In November 2000, ASEAN governments signed the e-ASEAN Framework Agreement to facilitate the establishment of the ASEAN Information Infrastructure. While its stated objectives include the intention to promote cooperation between the public and private sectors, there is no further outline of respective roles in the document. In the consultative phase of the initiative however, private sector input was sought and had a significant influence. There was however little or no input from civil society.

The e-ASEAN Task Force was created in 1999 to develop a broad and comprehensive action plan. It is the only advisory body to ASEAN that is composed of representatives from the public and private sectors, and explicitly

states its intention to allow the private and public sectors to bring their respective comparative advantages together. The action plan itself includes a number of pilot projects across a range of enabling environment, hardware and software initiatives, most with strong private sector involvement. Several of these are, in themselves, formal multi-sector partnership arrangements. Again, however, the opportunity to strengthen the partnerships with civil society involvement seems to have been largely missed.

##### Partners

- Governments of 10 ASEAN countries
- Private sector representatives of e-ASEAN Task Force and consultative groups
- Partners in individual pilot projects including national government, local and international companies

##### The Partnering Process

There were several stages to the process of partnership development, comprising a consultative phase and ongoing forum, international agreements, and an action plan. At the enabling environment level, the governments of ASEAN countries have a formally signed agreement governing interconnectivity

and technical inter-operability among their telecommunication systems and equipment, and have established working mechanisms and an action plan for promoting ICT4D applications. At a consultative level, private sector representatives of e-ASEAN Task Force and consultative groups were able to introduce a strong private sector perspective into the subsequent action plan. In some cases pilot projects within the action plan have formal partnering agreements e.g. the "e-learning for life" project of Coca Cola, UNDP and the Government of Malaysia.

##### Outcomes and Value Added

The framework agreement, Task Force and action plan are proving to be important catalysts to both harmonising and promoting ICT4D initiatives in the region. The strong involvement of the private sector, which is unusual in ASEAN inter-governmental fora, is seen as significantly improving the effectiveness of the outcomes. There is, though, some criticism levelled at the ongoing rigidity of the ASEAN processes with respect to genuine partnerships and the absence of meaningful civil society input in the e-ASEAN process.



A key consideration of the Task Force has been development of protocols for interconnectivity and technical inter-operability. These have been designed to deliver the mutually reinforcing objectives of investment promotion and regional competitive advantage (the principal interests of the public sector) and market access and penetration (the key interest of the private sector).

The absence of serious civil society involvement in the Task Force has possibly limited the weight given to protocols that facilitate the delivery of government policy for poverty reduction. However, the pilot partnership projects identified in the Task Force action plan do advance ICT4D, not least the “e-learning for life” project of Coca Cola, UNDP and the Government of Malaysia.

Comparing the e-ASEAN Task Force to other sector-based national and pan-regional multi-stakeholder fora, there is a similarity in functions, including: advocacy of government; identification and convening of pilot partnership projects; and the scaling up of best practice.

#### 2.4.3 Peru Telecoms Investment Fund<sup>xxxii</sup>

The Peru Telecoms Investment Fund underpins a form of public-private partnership. The model recognises the additional investment required in rolling-out backbone ICT infrastructure to remote rural areas. Furthermore, the emphasis on results-based performance (e.g. for network congestion, time to dialling tone and user uptake) provides a degree of confidence that the goal of rural connectivity is being taken seriously and is not simply subordinate to performance standards based only on the construction of physical infrastructure.

A key test for the model over time will be whether providing fixed-line telephony is the most appropriate form of technology in terms of the local livelihood priorities and capabilities of people living in remote rural areas. Key issues here will be affordability, physical access (i.e. how far people have to walk) and content. Engagement of community groups and development NGOs in the re-design of the regulatory framework and PPP model is one area where a more multi-stakeholder partnership approach might add value. This could lead to the inclusion of additional ‘local livelihood’ driven performance targets in future tender documents, thereby increasing the overall emphasis of operators on their quality submissions, and enabling greater flexibility to be granted by FITEL in the level of subsidy.



At present, low profit margins mean that operators are unlikely to enter into local partnerships involving civil society stakeholders due to the elevated risks. Partnering with local community development organisations to deliver on new local livelihood-driven performance targets might make the risk worth taking, especially if this leads to a more commercially viable level of subsidy.

#### 2.4.4 Grameen Village Pay Phones, Bangladesh<sup>xxxiii</sup>

The business model of the VPP programme combines the following elements:

- ✦ a high concentration of low-income customers;
- ✦ detailed knowledge of customers;
- ✦ affordable micro-credit for equipment purchase, end-user equipment viewed as an entrepreneurial activity, and entrepreneurial training provided, combined to increase subscriber demand;
- ✦ concessional access rates to the network;
- ✦ minimal public sector involvement.

The model is interesting because it may have applications to other areas of ICT other than GSM mobile phones, such as VSAT and WLL systems.

### CASE-STUDY 3

#### PERU TELECOMS INVESTMENT FUND

##### Development Aims

Traditional approaches to telecoms provision in Peru, first a government monopoly, then since 1998, a liberalised competitive market, have made little progress in providing telephony access to Peru's highly dispersed rural areas. Recently the government has pursued an innovative approach in which private operators meet defined requirements for universal access in rural areas under contract to government, with a subsidy component provided from a support fund, allocated by competitive auction based on the criteria of 'minimum subsidy'. The transaction design process involves three steps:

- selection of a project area based on expressed local demand and definition of the service to be provided;
- selection of an operator by competitive (least subsidy) auction; and
- results-based performance monitoring

##### Partners, Drivers and Contributions

- OSIPTEL – the Government regulator of private telecoms, has driven the design of

the scheme, with an objective of promoting universal service while retaining most of the benefits of a competitive environment. OSIPTEL administers FITEL (see below), selects projects for funding and monitors compliance.

- FITEL: manages the development (subsidy) fund to support universal service provision. This is funded by a levy on telecoms operators of 1% of their annual gross revenue and is used exclusively for financing private services in rural areas of social importance. FITEL also seeks to leverage private investment. FITEL has future plans to broaden its economic impact, including the development of telecentres and extension of pilot projects which include development applications.
- Private service providers – notably GTH Peru and RuralTelecom Co. – provided the winning bids. They have invested in infrastructure and operate the rural network under a contractual requirement to serve remote areas. Profitability has been enabled by the subsidy from FITEL, which is paid twice a year subject to performance.

##### The Partnering Process

This is a contractual Public-Private Partnership with limited civil society engagement at least at this stage. Its design has been driven by the public sector, drawing on international best practice in transaction design.

##### Outcomes and Value Added

The programme has succeeded in increasing rural access. By the end of 2003, 5,000 settlements will have access to around 10,000 public telephones. It has met most of the government aims, but provided only marginal financial returns for the private providers. The level of subsidy bid for by the operators was surprisingly low. This has led to some disquiet over whether the least-cost-subsidy approach of competitive tendering might not reduce the financial incentive of future operators to bid for concessions in the remoter areas of the country.

The inability to engage the public sector – notably the telecoms agency, BTTB – in the partnership has possibly weakened the model. BTTB has a monopoly over the antiquated fixed line network, and has been unable to increase its interconnect capacity (despite GP's offer to assist). Thus mobile operators are unable to connect additional phones to the national switched network and instead have had to offer primarily mobile-to-mobile phone services.

Overlaying the above business model on the DOI Dynamic Development framework allows us to gauge which other strategic ICT components might need to be put in place to enhance the reach of the VPP. This perhaps includes the stimulation of demand for mobile phone services through the creation of other forms of micro-enterprise, development of relevant local content and integration with existing public services in health and education and government services.

#### 2.4.5 Ericsson Response – Disaster Relief <sup>xxxiv</sup>

From the business perspective, the Ericsson Response Programme is a model partnership of how the ICT sector can contribute to international development.

Firstly, the resources the company contributes – mobile technology and technical staff – relate closely to its core business, meaning greater efficiency and less risk during periods of market contraction.

#### CASE-STUDY 4

### GRAMEEN VILLAGE PAY PHONES, BANGLADESH

#### Development Aims

The Village Pay Phone (VPP) programme of GrameenPhone (GP) and the Grameen Bank (GB) seeks to expand rural connectivity as a means of economic empowerment – particularly of poor women. Bangladesh is one of the world's least-wired countries, with very little rural access. The long-term goal is to place a phone in each of Bangladesh's 68,000 villages.

#### Partners, Drivers and Contributions

- Grameen Phone (GP): A commercial organisation – with four institutional owners including GrameenTelecom (see below) and companies from the US, Norway and Japan – which is now the country's dominant mobile phone service provider in both urban and rural areas. GP contributes access to its existing infrastructure network and technology at a concessional rate.
- Grameen Bank/Grameen Telecom: The Grameen Bank(GB) is an NGO specialising

in rural micro-credit with a presence in 35,000 villages in Bangladesh. GrameenTelecom (GT) is a non-profit subsidiary of GB that handles telecommunications programmes. GB leverages its extensive presence and programme in rural areas to operate the VPP, to provide detailed knowledge of rural customers, expand effective economic demand for phone services, and provide credit for handset purchase

- Individual women micro-entrepreneurs – one in each village – are provided with a handset on credit, and trained to extend services to the whole village as a micro-business.

#### The Partnering Process

This is a private/NGO partnership with minimal public involvement (see comment). The primary partners have a close institutional relationship. Both partners were involved in conception and design of the VPP, which sought to deepen the outreach of

GP's existing services while also contributing to GB's social development objectives. GP applied for and won a mobile phone licence. However, there has been no other overt government involvement in the VPP.

#### Outcomes and Value Added

The VPP has substantially increased rural access to telecommunications in Bangladesh. By the end of 2001, more than 5,000 villages had been reached – however, progress toward the ambitious goal of the venture has been slower than hoped for due to regulatory and infrastructural bottlenecks. For GP, the VPP is profitable. For GB, the programme contributes to its social goals of increased rural access and economic empowerment of poor rural women, as well as returning a small profit for use in its other operations. Had GP attempted to offer rural services without GB involvement, subscriber uptake would have been much slower due to affordability factors (as is the case with some competitors).

Second, the business case, though complex, is clear. Global reputation is assured through engagement with high profile humanitarian response to disasters; company objectives for staff recruitment, human development and retention of benefit; and there is the added strategic benefit of exposure for Ericsson's products.

Third, the programme is flexible. It allows for specific partnerships to be rapidly built in response to demand, and draws in new partners (from business and the NGO sector) as and when needed to fill resource and competency gaps.

Less clear is the 'development case' for the programme. In accordance with partnering Principle 2 (Section 1.5), to what extent do the Red Cross, UNHCR etc, undertake an assessment of the alternatives and risks of partnering with Ericsson on particular humanitarian disasters? For example, for very remote areas, is mobile phone technology the best option?

## CASE-STUDY 5 ERICSSON RESPONSE PROGRAMME

### Development Aims

The need for rapid and reliable information and communication capacity in emergency response situations, both within the response area and with the outside world, is one area in which new ICT technologies can make a difference – often in areas where existing communications systems are either damaged or weak to begin with. Ericsson Response is the company's initiative to tackle this opportunity, in partnership with international relief agencies. The programme includes several facets:

- deployment of communications systems and operators in disaster situations (using mobile phone technologies);
- a volunteer program in which staff are trained for use by relief agencies in both technical and more general capacities;
- research into means of improving emergency telecoms, through a Technical Reference Group within the company, and external fora, such as the Working Group for Emergency Telecommunications;
- advocacy to increase support for disaster response, promote policies to facilitate the humanitarian use of ICTs; and to promote inclusion of humanitarian priorities within commercial contracts.

### Partners, Drivers and Contributions

- Ericsson: Ericsson's stated mission for the program is "to be perceived as an excellent corporate citizen, the preferred partner and the employer of choice". The volunteer program also explicitly aims to provide employee incentives. Its contribution is in both equipment and expertise. The program relates closely to the company's core competencies, and allows market exposure for its products.
- Red Cross (IFRC) and UN agencies (UNOCHA, WFP, UNHCR): Benefit from Ericsson's technical support, contribute their own expertise in the broad range of emergency and humanitarian issues, and offer their "good offices" to the exercise.
- Local NGOs, government agencies and local companies involved in relief operations

Ericsson also actively seeks other private sector partners in technical areas outside its core expertise

### The Partnering Process

Formalisation of the partnership builds on long-standing involvement by Ericsson in this type of programme. A formal partnership agreement was signed between Ericsson and

the IFRC at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, covering not only operational needs, but broader issues such as disaster mitigation and risk reduction and harnessing cutting edge technology. It is the first of its kind between the private and humanitarian sector focussing on disaster telecoms. Partnership arrangements with other partner agencies vary according to the specific emergency situations.

### Outcomes and Value Added

The program has effectively engaged in a range of recent emergency situations including complex emergencies (e.g. providing communications for the Afghanistan humanitarian response work in 2002), natural disasters (e.g. the Gujarat earthquake, 2001) and support to the handling of refugees (e.g. western Tanzania), to increase operational efficiency and staff security. In addition, there is now a pool of trained volunteers within the company ready for deployment in new situations, and ongoing R & D work on how to harness evolving technologies in these demanding situations which is of value to both the international relief efforts and to the company's product development.

### 2.4.6 Dikahotole Digital Village, Hewlett Packard (HP)

What is striking about this project is the intention of HP – an influential ICT multi-national company – to make a strategic shift in its approach to social responsibility, from charitable giving for purposes of reputation assurance, to direct engagement with poor communities in a manner that aligns with core business.

At this stage the aim of HP is to work through multi-stakeholder ICT partnerships as a means to explore and learn about the new, but alien, market opportunities presented by poor communities. What is not altogether clear is the precise form that this commercial benefit will eventually take. For example, has the Dikahotole Digital Village project been designed to establish the utility of the donated computer equipment and software, such that future HP and Microsoft products can be developed that meet the specific needs of schools and government agencies in developing regions? And has it focused on the future financial viability of selling existing (or adapted technologies) to low-income customers or government agencies and NGOs in poorer countries.

In addition, and with reference to Principle 4 (the idea that successful ICT4D solutions require a strategic mix of resources and competencies), what might be the strategic components for an ICT4D model that brings the Dikahotole Digital Village concept to scale so that similar livelihood-critical information is accessible to a wider population? For example, to what extent do schools in other poor urban areas across Africa have access to the same backbone architecture that presumably was available to the Digital Village and local schools; and will similar initiatives started also be dependent on donated computers, or will HP find some way of reducing the potential costs?

#### CASE-STUDY 6

#### DIKAHOTOLE DIGITAL VILLAGE, SOUTH AFRICA

##### Development Aims

Dikahotole, a community of 8,000 just outside of Johannesburg, suffers from 30% unemployment, deficiencies in water supply, electricity and housing. Many families are female-headed. The partnership project has three aims: (1) to provide young people from the Dikahotole community with training in basic computer, Internet, business skills and employability skills with the aim of improving opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship. Training is to be provided through the 'Dikahotole Digital Village', a telecentre with 90 Internet-enabled workstations; (2) to develop the computer resources and skills in the region's schools, train teachers and pupils in computer skills and upgrade and install computers and Internet facilities within schools; and (3) to train local government employees in basic computer and Internet skills, and install computers in the workplace to allow effective communication and information sharing.

##### Partners, Drivers and Contributions

- Hewlett Packard (HP) South Africa. HP's corporate e-Inclusion initiative, of which

the Dikahotole Digital Village is one project – is a way to pilot new solutions to eventually increase revenues for the company's current lines of business while promoting economic development in emerging markets. HP is donating most of the computers and other equipment to the Digital Village, providing training to teachers and pupils in essential computer skills and upgrading and installing computers and Internet facilities within schools.

- Organisation for Rehabilitation and Training (ORT) South Africa – co-ordinating the project management, training and placement services
- Microsoft – a similar driver as HP, and contributing software
- Macsteel – with a view to potential recruitment and satisfaction of community outreach policies, the South African industrial-steel producer is providing the training room and related offices.
- Local schools. The project will provide access via the internet to additional learning materials as well as provide training for pupils in learning and future

employability skills. Staff are likely to be contributing much free time to the project.

- Local government authorities. There are likely to be efficiency gains for government from an enhanced capability to share information. Staff are likely to be contributing time both in and out of office hours.

##### The Partnering Process

It has not been possible to find information on the process of partnership formulation, or whether a formal, or informal, partnering agreement has been signed laying out the division of costs and expected benefits.

##### Outcomes and Value Added

The project is in its early phases. It is too early to judge the added value of the partnership over and above what would have happened without the project in terms of assistance to the youth of Dikahotole village in finding paid employment, the access for teachers to additional learning materials, and the benefits of information sharing within local government.



## 3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 3.1 Multi-Stakeholder ICT Partnering and the WSIS

At the time of writing, the WSIS Secretariat was engaged in adapting the Bali (Type II) partnership principles, with the aim of developing a framework to filter applications from interested parties for specific ICT partnerships to be officially adopted as part of the WSIS process.

#### Recommendation 1

In the context of the evolving framework for promoting ICT partnerships within the WSIS process, we recommend that the GKP encourage the WSIS Secretariat to review the discussion of the Bali Principles contained in this paper (Section 1.3.2) and consider incorporating the seven Principles for successful multi-stakeholder ICT partnerships (Section 1.5).

To maximise the learning from these partnerships, it will be important for a single organisation to co-ordinate their evaluation, such that credible comparisons can be made, the lessons synthesised and best practices scaled up. In developing guidance on partnership evaluation, consideration should be given to the evaluative methodologies developed by other multi-stakeholder partnership initiatives, including the G8 DOT Force initiative on Building Digital Opportunities, the WEF Digital Divide Task Force as well as non-ICT sector initiatives such as the World Bank's Business Partners for Development programme.

#### Recommendation 2

We recommend that the Global Knowledge Partnership provide generic guidance on how to evaluate multi-stakeholder ICT4D partnerships, enabling the key lessons to be drawn out and best practices to be substantiated and brought to scale.

As discussed at Roundtable No 8 of the WSIS Pre Com II, the dual-Summit format of the conference provides a unique opportunity to pioneer a highly visible, strategically targeted, results-based, suite of multi-stakeholder ICT4D partnerships. These would be directed at specific areas of ICT and development that persist as unresolved challenges, and for which other, more conventional approaches to design and implementation have so far failed to deliver. The different phases of such a programme – training partnership brokers, modelling design parameters, identifying partners, negotiating Partnering

Agreements, maintaining progress, and evaluating and showcasing outcomes – could be dovetailed with the different stages of the WSIS process. Tying the programme closely to the schedule of the Summit would afford delegates and observers an opportunity to learn directly from these partnership experiences.

A draft Road Map for integrating a strategic programme of pioneer, results-based, multi-stakeholder ICT4D partnerships with the WSIS process is shown in **FIGURE 6**. The Road Map identifies the linkages between the strategic programme and the wider, official, adoption of partnerships within the WSIS.

### Recommendation 3

We recommend that the GKP, WSIS Secretariat and the Summit sponsors combine their efforts to co-ordinate and resource a specific programme of highly visible, results-based, multi-stakeholder ICT4D partnerships, strategically chosen to target those areas of ICT4D that persist as unresolved challenges, and for which other, more conventional approaches to ICT design and implementation have so far failed to deliver. The programme should integrate closely with the dual-Summit format of the WSIS thereby harnessing its development potential.

## 3.2 Multi-Stakeholder ICT4D Partnerships – Key Lessons and Priority Areas

The six case-studies in Section 3 were selected to demonstrate both the breadth of multi-stakeholder ICT4D partnerships currently in operation and to provide examples of how the multi-stakeholder approach is being interpreted and applied to address some of the more pressing ICT4D challenges. The studies highlighted some key lessons and priority areas for further investigation, as follows:

### 3.2.1 Key Lessons

Key lessons from the case-studies include:

- the importance of taking a strategic approach to developing design parameters for a partnership (such as through reference to the DOI Dynamic Development framework) and finding partners able to contribute the necessary ‘mix’ of resources and competencies, in particular to ensure the long-term sustainability of ICT interventions;
- the importance of business partners understanding their commercial case for entering the partnership, be that reputation, local knowledge, testing of new products and services, or viable financial rates of return; and
- recognition by the public sector that to reach poor communities living in remote locations there may be a need for subsidies for private investors and/or concessional rates for network access.

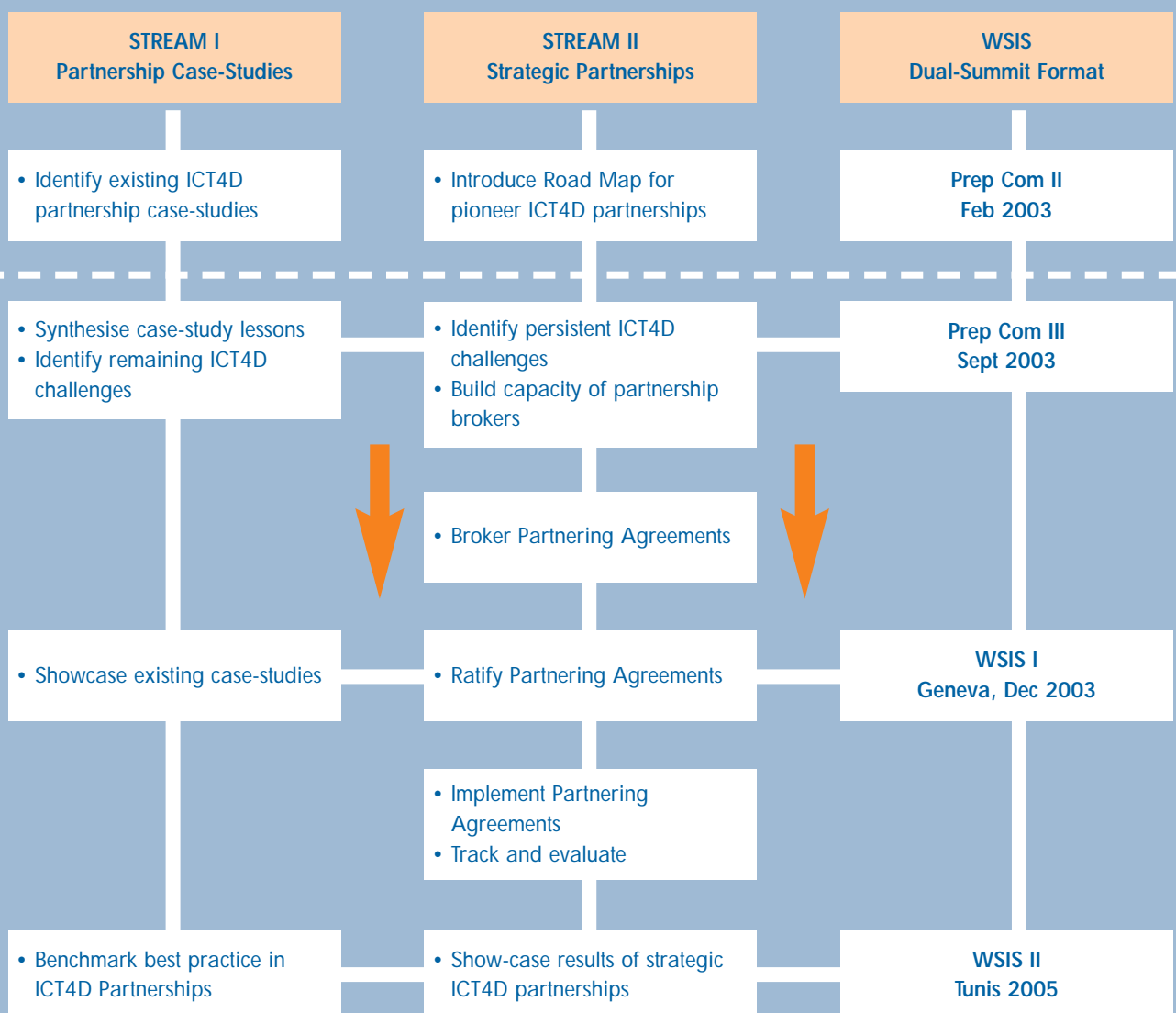
### 3.2.2 Priority Areas

The case-studies suggest some priority areas for further research and experimentation, as follows:

- ✦ the relevance of the business model demonstrated by the Grameen Phone partnership to other ICT businesses interested in tapping into the low-income consumer market;
- ✦ whether the engagement of community groups and development NGOs in the design of regulatory frameworks for PPP-based ICT access in remote rural areas, might result in more balance in the competitive bidding of operators between achieving least cost (and/or subsidy) and livelihood-driven performance; and
- ✦ what the design parameters of partnership projects should be when formulated in part for ICT companies to test the financial viability of marketing or product/service development targeted at low-income consumers.

FIGURE 6

#### ROAD MAP FOR INTEGRATING A STRATEGIC PROGRAMME OF PIONEER, RESULTS-BASED, MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ICT4D PARTNERSHIPS WITHIN THE WSIS PROCESS





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# REVIEWS



I came to the task of reviewing this paper with more than an open mind. I wanted to like it too, to dispel any lurking prejudice I might unfairly apply to multi-stakeholders partnerships (MSPs) as a result of experience with its first cousin, the public-private partnership (PPP). And indeed, right in the introduction a clear and reasonable distinction is drawn between the two. I might not agree with the point of difference identified: that the central idea of PPP is a “shift in responsibility and risk from one part of society to another, usually from the government to the private sector”.

In my country, Ireland, PPPs in the transport infrastructure sector involve a shift – but not of risk or even responsibility. It involves a major shift of resources from government and people’s pockets into virtually risk-free private sector hands, who take their responsibility to shareholders rather more seriously than they do to society. And the Irish position is not unique. But I am willing to overlook this in the paper – after all, they were referring only to PPPs in theory, not practice.

And there is much about the practice of multi-stakeholder partnerships that is very useful in this paper. Its re-working of the Bali principles applied to the Type II partnerships of the World Summit on Sustainable Development is for the most part good (section 1.3.2). It rightly argues the MSP idea is not an ‘end in itself’ and counsels partners not to jump hastily into MSPs and to explore other options first that might achieve the desired goal. Ensuring that MSPs are built on complementary resources that meet the parameters of strategy design, that they need to relate closely to the core activities of the partners, and that relations of trust must be deliberately built up all make sense. Had such cautious advice been taken seriously in the past, perhaps some errors could have been avoided. The case studies are also useful for illustrative purposes, though deeper analysis would be required to draw firm conclusions.

But in asking me to review the paper, I think they expected me to comment especially on aspects relating to civil society. In this respect, a few pages into the paper comes a lightning bolt. I read it three times to be sure I had not misinterpreted. The section is about the perspective each partner brings to MSPs and it reads:

“Likewise, in developing countries, an increasing proportion of development aid is being delivered through CSOs. Furthermore, through the help of information technology, civil society organisations are becoming increasingly vocal and organised in pursuit of their advocacy goals. ... With this new political force comes a choice. Civil society groups can either play an advocacy or campaigning role. Or they can become part of the solution, drawing on their local knowledge, capacity for innovation and trust of the general public to contribute in partnership to sustainable solutions.” (page 9-10; my emphasis )

This amazing aside, not even central to the argument, directly implies that advocacy and campaign groups in civil society are part of the problem – if they want to be part of the solution, they should join partnerships. A la George W. Bush, in this version of MSPs you have a choice: you are with us or against us. You can be part of the problem, or join us and be part of the solution. This is heady stuff.

Could this be just a momentary lapse of judgement? Even a misprint? Could this gratuitous slap in the face of so many CSOs that struggle against fundamental in-built inequity and greed be serious? Are the authors really unaware that many of the most effective NGOs and CSOs insist on operating at every level, advocacy, campaigning, organising, implementation and partnering? That CSOs very often earn the trust of the public precisely by exposing injustice and power imbalances, and are hardly likely to fritter it away for the benefit of an MSP? I reviewed other sections with that in mind. The further I delved, the more the thinking behind this paper revealed itself, as did the dangers for civil society and indeed society as a whole. This passage was not a lapse in judgement. It leads us right to the heart of MSPs, and their most important limitation.

For it says that if you want to join MSPs, please leave discussion of structural problems, any qualms about inequity in the balance of power, outside the door. Some questions are simply out of bounds in MSPs, and this is the problem. It is compounded later on. Talking about what drives the different actors, the paper notes:

“The drivers for different types of civil society may, for some, be about shifting from an advocacy role to one of more direct influence, especially over government policy.” (page 16)

The implication is of a shift from advocacy towards ‘direct influence’ – neglecting the fact that such ‘direct influence’ is exerted only at the price of renouncing the need for fundamental change. It also suggests that advocacy and campaigning do not directly influence government policy – if true, to the relief no doubt of many embattled governments.

Thus from the perspective of civil society, or at least that large part that believes there are deep-seated structural problems needing urgent attention, the application of MSPs as proposed here can be considered only where there is little dispute over the basic power relations and structural factors in the issue.

Unfortunately, this is rather restrictive when the global circumstances are taken into account.

For the MSPs are emerging against a backdrop of the growing power of the corporate sector globally, and the undermining of public services and of the very idea of government provision, driven by powerful corporate-captured governments. The dominance of what is sometimes termed the “Washington Consensus”, the neo-liberal policies being pursued across all sectors by WTO, the IMF, the World Bank and many powerful governments, is being challenged at every front. The model has been especially aggressively pursued in the ICT sector. Yet despite almost global application, its failure to provide for rural access and effective use of ICTs to those needing it most is more evident by the day. Many even in the mainstream believe that the privatisation and liberalisation model is largely discredited as a means to reach the poor majority, or at least has reached its useful limits, and a new paradigm – or several – must be devised and put in place.

Such a paradigm is not going to emerge from the roles allotted to the respective partners in MSPs. The idea of communities building and running their own networks, supported by government regulation and funding, is beyond this conception. There is no room in this model for business subsidising civil society to take the economic role, for instance through community-owned cooperative provision; nor indeed for the government investing in and managing the profits of the economic element: presumably the stuff of advocacy and campaigns. (To put it in context: the ITU World Telecommunication Development Report 2002 reports that, although the “growth rate in the number of new telephone subscribers plunged in 2001” (page 1), the sector remains extremely profitable – the top twenty telecommunication providers generated profits even at the height of the crisis of almost US\$50 billion on a turnover of US\$925 (page 61))

Thus there is a place for MSPs, but it is on the fringes of the most pressing needs which remain structural.

This does bear on the recommendations of this paper. For instance the first recommendation is that the GKP should encourage the WSIS Secretariat to revise the Bali Principles of the WSSD Type II partners. Whilst most of the revisions suggested are fine, one maintains that the business sector should always be a partner, which in turn limits the potential MSP scope of action. Other recommendations argue for a role for the GKP in evaluation and in coordinating and resourcing programmes. Civil



society might welcome this, but only if the delimited role of MSPs is acknowledged, and the essential role of advocacy and campaigning activities in addressing the fundamentally inequitable regime from global to local levels is recognised. Indeed, with a multiplicity of partner configurations possible, it is not unreasonable to foresee MSPs with strong advocacy and campaigning components, even including farsighted firms and governments.

The GKP would do well to disassociate themselves from the more extreme elements of this paper, which would give much credibility to its useful and constructive elements. Otherwise, it is MSPs that risk becoming part of the problem, not the solution.

REVIEWED BY

**SEÁN Ó SIOCHRÚ**

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**The paper provides a good overview of the topic of multi-stakeholder ICT4D topics and provides a useful set of principles around which partnerships can be based. Also, the case studies serve as a compelling backdrop that brings to life the broader issues and conclusions in the paper.**

There are only two areas where I believe that the paper is seriously lacking, both of which relate to the 'softer', more human side of developing successful partnerships:

#### **1. Cultural differences between sectors**

Anyone who has worked in cross-sectoral partnerships knows that there are dramatic cultural differences between the worlds of business, government and civil society. Each of these sectors brings to the multi-stakeholder table a set of assumptions, practices, values and other aspects of their 'own' culture. A simple example of this is different styles of decision making. Most private businesses value quick, clear and firm decisions that enable immediate action. Governments, on the other hand, tend to value decisions which are politically defensible and do not create undue risk. Civil society organisations usually value decision making that is consensual or at least that balances the interests and values of all stakeholders. Such a simple thing – decision making style – runs deep in each of these cultures and illustrates the broader cultural divides that exist.

In my experience, the most successful partnerships are those that are founded around an explicit recognition and understanding of the cultural differences between sectors – and between individual organisations. There are many ways to develop this kind of cross-cultural understanding. At a simple level, choosing representatives who have experience in all of the sectors at the table can be helpful. Someone who has worked in an NGO but now works in business makes a good private sector representative, and vice versa. However, in most cases, simple, organic approaches such as this are not practical. In these cases, there is a need for facilitation and even training that will allow all parties to understand and sympathise with the cultural position of others at the table. This facilitative role is different than the role of the 'broker'. The person or people in this role must have no stake or position of power in the partnership – their job is only to encourage understanding.

This may seem to some like a soft or minor point. However, an inability to get beyond cultural differences between sectors can ruin a partnership. Efforts should be made to reflect this issue in the paper.

## 2. The importance of interpersonal 'synergy'

The other major issue missing from the paper is the importance of personal synergy. All partnerships – including multistakeholder partnerships – rely on the interactions of individuals. Those partnerships that work best almost always include a key player from each of the parties who have established a personal affinity and shared vision. It is often this vision and affinity that give partnerships their most powerful fuel, providing the drive to move through conflict and bureaucratic hurdles. Again, this may seem like a soft issue – but it is nonetheless at the core of successful partnerships. It deserves prominent mention in your paper.

There are also a number of smaller issues that I noted as I read through the paper. These include:

- ✔ The discussion of the civil society role in multistakeholder partnerships is quite weak. More emphasis needs to be given to the assets that civil society brings to the table, including: a social/non-economic perspective; research; relationships; testing and feedback; evaluation tools.
- ✔ The focus on complementarity in 'core competencies' is useful, but should be expanded to also include personal affinity and mutual understanding across sectoral cultures (as above).
- ✔ The diagram dealing with the partnering process is useful, but it starts too late in the cycle. The development of shared vision and sound relationships between the parties should precede 'identifying sustainable development outcomes'.

As stated above, I feel that you have produced a valuable document that will contribute to the overall discussion of multi-stakeholder partnerships. What is needed to take the paper the extra mile is more emphasis on the social, cultural and human ingredients that play a role in successful partnerships. Hopefully, my comments will help in this regard.

### REVIEWED BY

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**The paper has adequately explored the basic principles and definition of what is meant by “partnership” within this approach (the “what” aspect) of MSPs. What seems trickier is in the elaboration on the required characteristics or fundamentals that should be institutionalised within the different stakeholders of government agencies, private sector companies and civil society organisations, from issues of leadership, to issues of participatory decision-making, transparency and accountability.**

What the paper has managed to briefly touch upon are the weaknesses of the three stakeholders. It could have looked deeper into issues behind the purpose of partnerships – as the purpose of a partnership has implications not only in terms of the nature of the partnership, but in terms of what is negotiable and what is not. The “why organisations partner” affect who the different stakeholders choose to partner, and these partnerships can be formed for a range of reasons: from purposes of basic economic productivity, to higher goals of social justice and empowerment, and/or equitable development. The paper could better address the environment within which such partnerships are to take place, the policy framework needed and prerequisites. For example, social responsibility of businesses has not been mentioned in terms of how this could be ensured. The paper also does not differentiate between MSPs at international, regional and national levels. These often face very different challenges, and very different environments.

There seems to be an assumption that “innovation” is the all-in-one solution to development problems and issues, and that MSPs will ensure a higher level of innovation and more efficient utilisation of resources. The problem, I feel, is largely the management of available funds and other resources and the inability to effect efficient decisions/planning and implementation. A recent paper by Richard Curtain on entrepreneurship developed for the GKP suggests that innovation is actually only a small part of the solution. Replication takes place as high as 93 per cent in the private sector; why not then in the development sector? Could it then mean that available funds need to be committed to replicating models that have proven effective on the ground, and in ensuring wider transference of skills and knowledge to others? Innovation is good, but funds committed to innovation should be in smaller proportion compared to funds committed to replication of models known to work and have been documented well. In supporting replications though, there is also a need to ensure that “monopolies” of technical expertise in development, or concentration of such expertise in the hands of a few, are not perpetuated.

The tripartite stakeholders described in the paper seem to pass a cursory glance over the problems of the definition of civil society. It fails to acknowledge that all stakeholders, given the existing broad definition of civil society, are civil society first. In the current definition of the WSIS, even local government units are included. So what does this then say about the stakeholder of “government”? Would not this raise conflicts within and among civil society organisations themselves? How then can civil society, with all its diversity and different mandates, be lumped together as just “one stakeholder”?

The paper could also better define what substantial support or impetus the WSIS Summit could give, while it pushes for work to be done between the two summits. Has the WSIS really adopted an MSP approach? If so, the rules around participation would have been changed to make it more conducive for civil society and the private sector to engage in the processes more effectively. What happens now are bilateral meetings between representatives of government and the private sector, and representatives of government and civil society. Opportunities to speak and express views and concerns are certainly evident, but is not a partnership, in the true sense of the word, more reciprocal in nature?

The paper may do better with a specific advocacy stand or position. It seems to mainly suggest a brokering role by the GKP, which in itself implies the establishment of another category of development experts on whom everyone else who wants to develop MSPs will have to depend. It fails to advocate for social responsibility by the private sector, and it fails to recognise people, the community themselves, be they poor or marginalised groups, as a separate but very distinct stakeholder that needs to be equally and actively involved in such partnerships. It fails to advocate for giving back ownership over self-defined development to the community itself.

The paper needs to analyse further or at least give a more in-depth discussion around mandates of the different stakeholders and how this affects partnerships – economic, political, profit, non-profit, social empowerment, welfare, etc. and the real problems behind such partnerships. Particularly, the fact that one cannot go into such a partnership without coming to an agreement on the politics of each. Neither can GKP facilitate the forging of MSPs effectively if GKP does not have an advocacy and therefore, political stance on issues. One not only needs to understand the potential gains of forging MSPs, but more importantly, the potential losses if compromises are reached, particularly when the independent agency of one stakeholder risks being weakened.

#### REVIEWED BY

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**My interest in or knowledge of multi-stakeholder partnerships comes from having participated in DOT Force, through trying to participate in WSIS; and from working on ICT policy in the AP region, I am a little familiar with GKP's work and success.**

#### **DOT Force**

My organisation did not follow the partnership building steps that the paper (correctly) recommends. The partnership was determined by the G8 and we joined. I suspect that some of the factors for involvement of partners and building the partnership that the paper identifies as important generally were less so in DOT Force. But DOT Force was probably an exception; G8 calls, people tend to do as asked.

DOT Force experience made clear that it takes time to build trust between partners. It was an unusually complex mix of international and cross sector partners, and criteria for the selection of partners were often unclear. It took about three face-to-face meetings for the group to begin to produce good work in an efficient manner. The lesson may be that results cannot be expected immediately. Trust increased the feeling of equality in the process, partners were recognised for what they brought to the table, not their name badge. Feelings of commonality of purpose (and as people in our personal goals) increased as we got to know each other. In a more normal partnership, achieving such "buy-in" might be aided by ensuring that efforts are made to emphasise that all partners are equal in the process, that design and planning of the partnership is transparent to all.

Some of the representations of Government, Private Sector and Civil Society (CS) in the paper seem forced and almost stereotypical. Similarities between sectors are strengthening. As the paper notes, the size and influence of CS is growing. It could easily go on to say that this is particularly the case in ICTs and development. Comments about CS having to choose between advocacy or becoming part of the solution are not helpful in promoting the value of partnerships. Keep in mind that common reasons given by civil society groups that are active as implementers when explaining their reluctance about multi-stakeholder partnerships is that they are concerned that partnering with the private sector and/or government, will lessen their ability to act as impartial critics (the "watchdog" role); that involvement in the process can be used to "buy them off", or be seen to be buying them off; and that such partnerships are always unequal whatever the best intentions. The perception of impartiality/independence is an important consideration, both for trust CS organisations can offer at the local level, and also when representing the work of the partnership within civil society broadly. I anticipate that few CS organisations believe that a true MSP is ever possible. The power relationships are different, and the power associated with money and governance/rule of law will outweigh more soft poor interests of civil society.

With this in mind, footnote 2 on page 17 might be reconsidered. And the order of Principles 2 and 3 reversed (3 becomes 2, etc). Key risks would include less control over one's own resources (perhaps most critical to the private firm), and for civil society the loss of independence (I see no need to mention donations.) i.e. the driver of partnership: that they offer a more efficient way to allocate resources to address the right problems in the right ways.

An experience of DOT Force was also that the nature of the partnership and its deliverables can be changed significantly by outside political factors, e.g. an election and change of government. Ever present risk of political change should be considered in "high level" MSPs.

## **WSIS**

As a participant from civil society, my experience with WSIS as a "multi-stakeholder partnership" (even of the weakest kind) has been disappointing. WSIS set false expectations about the level of participation (equality) stakeholders would enjoy in the process. WSIS was never going to be about equal partners. However, had it defined/agreed on parameters at the outset – that is, considered the principles described in the paper – it could have achieved more. I endorse the principles of multi-sector ICT partnerships described in the paper, and regarding WSIS particularly, Recommendation 1 (Bali Principles). To principle 7, I suggest that external assessment of the partnership is essential. Self-assessment of outcomes is always hard. The pressures within partnerships to achieve multiple goals make self-assessment even more problematic. How to assess MSP outcomes may be a subject for further study.

Section 2.2 of the paper (WSIS), does not mention the newer 3rd theme of confidence and trust in ICTs (cyber security, etc). The Council of Europe convention on cyber-crime has been held up in WSIS as a good starting point – some government participants in fact see it as a near end-point – for discussion of these issues. Unfortunately the CE's approach almost completely ignores privacy and rights issues. With traditional civil society issues of privacy and rights off the table in at least one of the current proposals, this new 3rd theme could be ideal for an MSP approach as a way to move forward in an appropriate manner.

From what I understand about GKP, I am surprised that the role of "convener" is not mentioned until page 30. While "brokering" is discussed, I do not believe it is the same function, nor as important. GKP Secretariat seems to carry out a convening role that needs to be present in all MSPs. The paper would do well to address the role of conveners earlier. The DOT Force secretariat was essential to the good work done by the group (when it worked well, so did the group). There is a reluctance in WSIS to accept a convening (strong) role by the secretariat and I think we can identify that the process suffers as a result. I agree that the partnership must be self-organising, but I find it hard to conceive that many will do so without a convening agency. The paper should consider giving more thought to the role of the convener, particularly in complex partnerships and those with different stages that require new actors/partners.



### **Civil society perspective**

Full inclusion of the potential CS partner from the design and planning stage is important. This will be hard for a partnership, but important if CS is to be a full partner. Civil society is typically noted for being closer to local needs, and perhaps more inclined to look to the latest solutions, certainly Civil Society has been the earlier adopter in ICTs. Local contacts/knowledge is illustrated in the CATIA example, and is discussed in the DOI as the type of benefit that civil society can bring.

A concluding “Key Lesson” from the perspective of Civil Society would be that the partnership must operate in the most transparent and open way feasible or their core value to the partnership may be compromised. The paper on multi-stakeholder partnerships is important. I hope it will help WSIS in particular to adopt a more successful way of working in the Geneva to Tunis stage of the Summit.

### **REVIEWED BY**

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The paper refers repeatedly to 'multi-stakeholder partnerships in the ICT sector' but the definition you are proposing is clearly, in DOI terminologies, about multi-stakeholder partnerships for resolving the 'key challenges of ICT as an enabler of sustainable development'. This may not be just about semantics because the reader might interpret 'ICT sector' as meaning 'ICT industry' whereas the case studies are not about the ICT sector per se but on multistakeholder partnership for ICT for development/ICT for sustainable development, universal access and provisions for the rural communities, etc.

In your proposed definition of MSP, should there be something on fairness and transparency? The sections on partnership processes and drafting agreements touch on these but should it come out in the final proposed definition? It may be important considering you speak of business models and users' trust elsewhere in the document.

Further on the definition of the MSP, the introduction is clearly trying to pull away from PPP (in the conventional sense of the term), but if you look at the case studies, PPP plays a large role, the Grameen Phone programme is an example. Perhaps it should be stated that PPP is a subset of the proposed MSP definition, if that is your intention. Although the conventional PPP is not what you want equated with MSP, it is a driving force behind some ICT4D initiatives.

On the case studies, perhaps you should state the reasons for your choice of cases, as there is a mix of things, from international/regional multi-stakeholder 'brokers' to actual national multi-stakeholder initiatives (mainly PPP focus). Also, on the matrix for the case studies, perhaps a disclaimer is needed to acknowledge that these MSP case studies are quite different from one another – one can even lump GKP with e-ASEAN (geographical scopes are greater and both are similar in that there is more 'brokering' involved, or 'design-orientated' as mentioned in the document); similarly the HP and Ericsson examples could be lumped together; as well as the Grameen Phone, Peru, and South Africa Digital Village examples lumped together. A quick glance and one might mistake the matrix as a comparative analysis of the cases and think that some initiatives are lacking than others, when their objectives and the nature of the organisations vary quite a bit. Indeed, there are many layers and types of MSP that come out through reading the document, perhaps somewhere in the beginning of the document this has to be addressed so that your MSP definition can be shown to be encompassing the types.

On the idea of reviving the Bali Principles, it might be useful to provide some more details on the event (stakeholders/participants recommendations, findings, proceedings etc.) as an annex so readers can see the weight it carries in promoting partnerships. For example, in Re-Working the Bali Principles for the ICT Sector, it reads that “the Bali Principles were successful in launching more than 200 partnerships for sustainable development” – this needs further elaboration. The Bali Principles were inputs to the World Summit on Sustainable Development – a few explanations as to what happened there as a result of these inputs, so that WSIS can follow up from what has been achieved.

On the “Ingredients of a Formal Partnering Agreement”, should there be some mention of outputs/outcomes? Or is it implied in the points about joint workplans, activities, etc? A great deal of emphasis is placed on GKP being a global broker of partnerships. Rather than the word ‘broker’, perhaps ‘facilitator’ would work better? There is a connotation of fees and profits with the words ‘broker’ and ‘brokerage’.

On FIGURE 1 – page 14. “Implementation” is at the bottom and “Sustainable Development Goals” on top. So as per the indicated arrow, it looks like you implement first, then design and then achieve the Goals. In general, there needs to be further elaboration/explanation of the figures that are provided (the principles are provided in their respective section, but reference to how to read the figures may be useful). Another example is FIGURE 3, which looks very useful but how does one interpret the terms and phrases used in it (an entire document could be devoted to the figure; however, some explanation on the ‘complimentary competencies’ would be useful).

**REVIEWED BY**

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**Overall, I must say this paper is an excellent starting point on multi-stakeholder partnerships, but the theoretical assumptions still do not question the current framework of the materialistic worldview, which does not appreciate the new realities of the digital world. Therefore, one can conclude that the paper only appears to be “rearranging the deck-chairs on the Titanic” on some key concerns. Therefore, I will make some comments regarding the definition adopted and raise concerns regarding the overall framework and embedded assumptions.**

The language of the paper as currently framed appears to be defined by a political worldview. If the target audiences are socio-economic development communities intending to use ICT for development, some minor adjustments maybe relevant. In the current and proposed definition based on the DOI, 2002, the word ‘alliances’ rather unfortunately connotes and promotes this political worldview. The minor proposal is to change this to ‘collaboration’. Alliances imply a precise and common political motive, whereas collaboration suggests a coming together with the hope of a common and agreeable outcome but does not foreclose on the specific intended goal or outcome. The difference in concepts is captured by how the new Malaysian PM articulated his difference in approach to problem solving. He encouraged his political supporters “not to work for him but to work with him.” This is a markedly different approach than Mr. Bush’s “you are either for me or against me” language. I suppose it is more in line with Mr. Blair’s third way perspective. Yet others view this as a process view.

Premised on such a rejection of the “either/or” model of the current political win-lose debate, I would like to propose an alternative philosophical approach we call the 3W2R1A model. The implicit assumption of the new model is that the virtual world allows a theoretical “increasing returns on investment” as opposed to only decreasing returns on investment. It premises itself on the assumption that a 3W or win-win-win is possible and in fact plausible in especially deploying the virtual space opportunities.

The 3W premise explicitly acknowledges a three-dimensional worldview paradigmatically defining the public, private and voluntary sectors as explicit stakeholders within the socio-economic paradigm of development. Therefore, any “alliances” are more than simply a political coming together of any two parties with a common interest within a limited or shorter duration of time with the concomitant rewards, but rather the coming alongside within a partnership while striving for a

shared and common purpose consciously inclusive of the third win. Such “collaboration” involves a willing and voluntary co-labouring because they jointly share and own the new vision for the longer time frame and not simply for some shorter-term political expediency goal. Consequentially, the resultant “mutuality of benefit” at the end of the definition is not simply a two-way “you scratch my back, I scratch yours” relationship but rather one that goes beyond the mutual and common interests of the two contracting parties, but which also includes the third party interests and defines the common good concerns of sustainability over the longer term. Such an approach and definition in process terms also changes the current business models and rules as we know and practise them. Gone is the model of uneven playing fields and instead there is a new partnership in risk-taking that defines also the concomitant new rewards sharing models that can follow. Then there is something new about multi-stakeholder partnerships, not otherwise.

Therefore, at the general level, the paper needs to transcend the current limitations of what I call the “Titanic Paradigm”, and needs to move into the post-Titanic or the post-911 worldview, wherein there is no more an assumption about a UNIVERSAL truth that is agreeable to all. Instead, can we assume that all the potential and different stake-holders having varying and different interests being at different stations of life; much like in the movie with the post-Titanic scenario where all in little boats and crafts or planks – wherein any mutuality we talk about must include the lot of the poor people on the planks, also striving for basic survival. That, to us is the real challenge of do-leadership – to build new ICT4D new solutions by example! Such leadership cannot just be built simply with money alone and needs knowledge and trust power with positive power of influence, not authority. Most in the developing world KNOW who are the sincere players and partners and who are not! Based on this new model of multi-stakeholder partnerships we can build new legacies of trust! We NEED to ACHIEVE such a new consensus at WSIS with this paper. I believe we can if we manage the process well. Otherwise, we would have failed yet again as those who tried but fell along the wayside!

**REVIEWED BY**

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The paper highlights the uniqueness of multi-stakeholder partnerships in general and their contribution to international development and implementation issues in particular. 



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