e-Africa 2002
Building e-Governance capacity in African countries

Project Proposal

Executive Summary

- Revised Draft -
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0. **Executive Summary**

The international debate and several United Nations documents, such as the *Millennium Declaration* and the *Monterrey Consensus*, have highlighted the centrality and importance of “good governance” for sustainable development. Sound economic policies, solid democratic institutions responsive to the needs of the people and improved infrastructure are the basis for sustained economic growth, poverty eradication and employment creation. Freedom, peace and security, domestic stability, respect for human rights, including the right to development, and the rule of law, gender equality, market-oriented policies, and an overall commitment to just and democratic societies are also essential and mutually reinforcing.

To succeed in these objectives, the primary responsibility of each country for its own economic and social development is recognized by governments across the world and the international community encourages South-South cooperation, supporting development frameworks initiated at the regional level, such as the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and similar efforts in developing regions, also including cooperation to facilitate exchange of views on successful practices and experiences, pointing out the global commitment to improve the essential role of strengthening the political and administrative framework of governments in African countries.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) provide a powerful tool to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Thus, the “mainstreaming” of ICTs within planning and design of development strategies is pivotal, both at national and regional level. The advent of Information Society, in fact, is creating unprecedented conditions for bridging the digital divide through supporting government operations to strengthen the establishment of efficient, effective and transparent governance systems. Electronic tools can significantly improve the services and information flows from administrations to their constituencies. Communication among administrations and citizens and businesses can be enhanced and, at the same time, ICTs offer unique opportunities for the re-use and exploitation of public sector information within the emerging digital economy. Bringing out this potential will create vast economic opportunities for African Countries.

It is now necessary to convert these commitments into reality.

The preparation activities towards the “World Summit on the Information Society” (WSIS), which will take place in two phases (Geneva, December 2003, and Tunis, 2005), and several initiatives at international and regional level, aim to raise awareness of the opportunities offered by the use of ICT to foster democracy, efficiency and transparency, with particular regard to the developing of regional “e-strategies” for the creation of an enabling environment, capable of taking full advantage of ICT potentials.

Having this background in mind, and in respect of its mandate of supporting the improvement of governance systems and the performance of the public service in African countries, the African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development - CAFRAD, in the context of its partnership with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs - UNDESA, and under the banner of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development - NEPAD, intends to carry out a multi-year project on “Building e-Governance capacity in African countries: e-Africa 2002”.

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1 The present document has been drafted by CAFRAD, under the responsibility of Prof. Tijjani Muhammad Bande (Director General of CAFRAD), the supervision of Mr Mamosi Lelo (CAFRAD Expert) and with the Technical Assistance of Dr Gianluca Carlo Misuraca (Associate Expert UNDESA/DPEPA, detached at CAFRAD within the framework of UNPAN project - United Nations Public Administration On-line Network).
The introduction of digital, knowledge-based economy in Africa would have a strong impact on the life of all citizens. It can be a powerful engine for growth, competitiveness and jobs, while at the same time improving citizens’ quality of life. Recognizing the importance of information and knowledge for democratic and civic life, “e-Africa 2002” proposes a set of actions designed to overcome some practical difficulties that threaten African ICT market, addressing in particular the issue of the exploitation of public sector information.

This draft project proposal has been designed within the context of CAFRAD partnership with UNDESA. CAFRAD, in fact, since 1999, has established one of the African On-line Regional Centre (ORC) of the United Nations Public Administration on-line Network - UNPAN. UNPAN is a virtual network that promotes the sharing of knowledge, experiences and best practices throughout the world in sound public policies, effective public administration systems and efficient civil services, through capacity-building and cooperation -via an electronic platform based on web technologies- among member States, with emphasis on South-South cooperation and commitment to integrity and excellence.

During its first phase of implementation (December 1999-March 2001) UNPAN Network has been established. Thanks to the World Wide Web, through UNPAN, African countries now have immediate and ongoing access to a vital tool for strengthening and enhancing the capacity of public sector policy formulation and management. Having established its own information and knowledge infrastructure, CAFRAD is acting as “African Information and Knowledge Clearinghouse”, authenticating and interpreting information and data customized through an “Information exchange system” between CAFRAD and African States, to be developed taking into consideration what is meaningful and useful for capacity-building in African Countries.

The second Phase of UNPAN (started in April 2001) faces the challenges related to effective information and knowledge management, enhancing governance capacity in African countries. In this regard, the expansion of UNPAN Network to national level, involving Governments and other African ORCs and regional institutions, within the framework of the NEPAD Plan of Action and in consistency with the preparatory activities of the “World Summit on the Information Society”, will play a pivotal role in enhancing governance capacity in African countries.

The overall objective of the project “e-Africa 2002” is therefore to improve the governance and the management of the public service in Africa for a better performance, enhancing the delivery of the public services through the integration of ICT in the process of decision-making, planning, coordination and management carried out by governments. This involves design and coordination of a regional strategy on operational implementation of the UNPAN Network to national level in Africa, supporting the improvement of the UN ICT Regional Network - African Stakeholders Network, focusing on e-Governance, and providing assistance for the development of collaborative partnership among the several actors involved in the process of improvement of ICT capacities in Africa.

In particular, through the establishment of National Focal Point in the African member States of UNPAN-ORC-CAFRAD, the “e-Africa 2002” project aims to strengthen the participatory process in the development of an Information Society for all in Africa”, involving policy and decision makers, public administrators, the private sector and the civil-society in the implementation of activities, and enabling them to share information and knowledge on Governance and public sector, and facilitating access and affordability of ICT.
This is essential in building capacity and sustaining development, benchmarking “best practices” and foster cooperation on developing common policies and activities in a variety of sectors, such as improvement of public services, partnership and democracy building through the enhancement of participation.

Therefore, the specific objectives of the project are the following:

✓ Increase awareness of the role of ICT in the development process;
✓ Enhance the design of e-Governance strategies for Africa;
✓ Strengthen e-Governance Networking activities in Africa;
✓ Formulate new ways of interaction among ICT and the decision making process;
✓ Improve the use of ICT and e-Governance capacity in African countries;
✓ Improve public-private partnership to promote e-Governance.

In order to achieve this purpose, the project is focused on networking and harmonization actions, incorporating the promotion and building of collaborative partnerships, stressing the improvement of an information exchange system among African countries and between Africa and partner states and institutions. To meet this challenge, the process involves an active interaction among all different partners, and in particular, it will take advantage of technical support, training and advisory services available within UNPAN, and coordinating the activities with the UN ICT African Stakeholders Network.

The project proposal is divided into the following complementary component actions - some of them new, others representing an enhancement of activity already under way- that form a coherent whole:

A. Organization of regional workshops on building e-Governance capacity in African countries;
B. Analysis of African countries’ capacities and needs for e-Governance implementation (“e-readiness” analysis);
C. Support to building partnership for the implementation of e-Governance in African countries;
D. Assistance in the formulation of policies to improve ICT infrastructure in African countries;
E. Advisory services and Training in the implementation of e-Governance.

As conceived, the project will be implemented in two phases.

1. The first phase (the present) constitutes the “Pilot phase” of the Project: it is expected to be accomplished between 2002 and 2005, and will be carried out in five countries selected from all the Sub-Regions of the continent on the basis of criteria to be discussed during the “Kick-off” Workshop;

2. The second phase of the project will concern the extension of the experience to potentially all African Countries, also involving increase of partnership and improvement on advisory activities in the field of infrastructure development and coordination of “satellite” initiatives decentralized on local African institutions. A first assessment of the Project, involving 10 more African countries, will be made between 2005 and 2008.
The “First Regional Workshop on building e-Governance capacity in African countries”, “Kick-off” meeting of the “e-Africa 2002” project, is organized, under the banner of NEPAD, by the Ministry for Public Service and Administration of South Africa and the CAFRAD, in partnership with the UNDESA/ DPEPA, and will take place in Johannesburg (South Africa) from the 28 to the 31 October 2002.

The picture below represents the relation linking the main activities to the specific and the overall objectives envisaged by the project.

For the project to reach its full potential, African and international institutions should take an active role in building and sustaining a collaborative partnership for e-Governance development. According to this, particular importance is given to complementarities and synergies between current and planned activities related to e-Governance.

CAFRAD is already performing activities on e-Governance within the framework of projects related to new technologies and public administration reform and will guarantee the operational coordination among them, taking advantage of the experience gained and the capabilities improved within UNPAN.

The project will also benefit of the integration among CAFRAD activities planned for the period 2002-2004, connected to the governance of the public sector and, in particular, will consider the provision of support to the follow-up of the implementation of the “Charter for Public Service in Africa”, adopted by the “Third Pan African Conference of Ministers of Public Service”, held in Windhoek (Namibia), in February 2001, organized by CAFRAD in collaboration with UNDESA, in preparation of the forthcoming “Fourth Pan African Conference of Ministers of Public Service”, scheduled to be hosted by South Africa in 2003.

This process will also take advantage of the activities of the forthcoming 4th Global Forum on Reinventing Government, to be held in Marrakech (Morocco) between 10 and 13 December 2002, organized by the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco, in collaboration with UNDESA and the assistance of other international agencies and institutions, and focused on «Building partnerships between civil society, business and states for the promotion of development and democracy».

In this context, regional and international support, including financial and technical assistance, and through United Nations activities for development, is indispensable. In particular, the Project is to be considered as part of the on-going activity of major institutions supporting capacity building, such as the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), and especially within the framework of the Partnership for Capacity Building in Africa (FACT), and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), the African Information Society Initiative (AISI), the Partnership for ICT in Africa (PICTA), the Information Technology Centre for Africa (ITCA), the African Connection (AC), the African Development Forum (ADF), the African Stakeholders Network (ASN), organized by the UNECA, with the support of the UN ICT Task Force, and the International initiative e-Government for Development, launched by the Government of Italy within the framework of the G8 DOT Force and in collaboration with UNDESA. The project will also consider support by other research and training institutions, such as the Association of African Universities (AAU), the African Civil Service observatory (OFPA), the Arab Administration Development Organization (ARADO), the African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM), etc., and from the civil society, such as the African Association of Non governmentl organizations.
In accordance with the strategy planned, is underlined the importance of “on-site” guidance of the process, to identify the ways and means of utilization of new technologies in Africa. A «Steering Committee» will be established in order to ensure an efficient coordination of envisaged activities and relations between the African governments and international organizations, reviewing and recommending organizational or managerial improvements to contribute to the overall success of the Project. The activities of the “Steering Committee” will be conducted under the banner of NEPAD and in coordination of the activities envisaged in the sector by the UN system, and in particular the UN ICT African Stakeholders Network.

A “Secretariat” will be also established to ensure smooth execution of all aspects of the project. It will be involved in planning, management, monitoring and evaluation, coordination of the project and support to partners and users, networking, carrying out analysis and preparing reports of activities envisaged. CAFRAD is to play this role.

For information, contact:

_African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development - CAFRAD_

P.O. Box 310 - Tangier - Morocco

Tel + 212 61 30 72 69 - Fax + 212 39 325785

Email: cafrad@cafrad.org

Web sites:  www.cafrad.org
           www.unpan.org