

FINAL REPORT

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (ACACIA): THE CASE OF SOUTH AFRICA

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PROJECTS INCLUDED:

- The South African Acacia Advisory Committee (Project number 004381)
- The National Information and Communication Program for South Africa (Project number 002294)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

South Africa's transition from an authoritarian apartheid rule to a democratic dispensation eight years ago meant that a new governance systems and policy frameworks had to be created in nearly every sphere of national activity. The policy environment had to reflect a new set of values - transparency, participation in decision-making processes and commitment to the upliftment and development of the majority of South Africans neglected and oppressed by the past regime. Nowhere was this need more urgent than in the communication and information arena: one of the most important priorities was the transformation of the public sector decision-making environment. With the implementation of the new government's *Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP)*, effective communication and information systems were necessary to support planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation activities. The unilateral parastatal reforms initiated by the outgoing government and which were aimed at ensuring continued white dominance in key areas, also had to be dismantled or adapted. The new Government of National Unity was faced with the need to balance the desperate needs of the poor majority with those of a modern economy competing in a highly competitive global arena.

This helped to open a policy window for ICT policy renewal during the transition period. Other factors also contributed: Activities by those opposing the apartheid regime had gone ahead in this sector. Rigid state controlled institutions had to be turned into instruments that could serve a democratic state. The liberalization of the telecommunications sector was in process, in line with developments elsewhere in the world. National policies had to provide a nurturing environment for business in rapidly expanding global markets, yet focus on the needs and aspirations of the previously disadvantaged in an effort to address the enormous disparities caused by apartheid. The movement from authoritarian to democratic values also meant that policy formulation processes had to incorporate the views of all stakeholders as far as possible - including those of a very active civil society.

As a result there was a dire and urgent need for institutional transformation and national capacity building in policy formulation and implementation. The IDRC had been actively supporting the ANC in exile and it had worked with many of the country's emerging leaders, building a relationship of trust. As one of the first international agencies to establish an office in South Africa during the transition to democracy, and one of the first to focus on the use of ICTs for development, its priorities were in synergy with the priorities of the new government. Common foci included information sector reform, policy research capacity building and a focus on the previously disadvantaged.

In line with the IDRC focus in South Africa on the facilitation and support of policy processes rather than the influencing of policy content, the *National Information and Communication Project (NICP)* was established as a major initiative to support the new government's efforts at creating an enabling policy environment. This project is perceived as one of the IDRC's most successful contributions to the ICT policy arena in South Africa. Mechanisms and activities that contributed to its policy influence included the appointment of knowledgeable and respected key IDRC advisers and staff who could provide technical expertise where required; the support of research studies that raised policy issues and informed policy processes; the support and facilitation of, and participation in, policy formulation processes; and the support and facilitation of meetings and forums where policy makers and representatives of various sectors could meet to discuss policy issues.

Although the IDRC was one of a number of role player in the ICT policy arena, key contributions highlighted the NICP role in influencing ICT policies and programs. Among these are the national Position Paper at the *Information Society and Development (ISAD) Conference*, the parallel Helderfontein Workshop *Empowering Communities in the Information Society* where MPCCs were for the first time discussed in detail by a mainly community-based audience, and the National Telecommunications Policy Project (NTPP), which became a model for the subsequent development of White Papers due to the participatory nature and credibility of the policy formulation process.

The NICP supported several research studies that informed policy and planning processes, including the study (and later book) on “Universal Service, Policy and Regulation: A Selective Review of Experience Internationally” by Seán Ó Siochrú, and an inventory of MPCCs conducted by the National Information Technology Forum. In spite of these important contributions, a need remains to develop a sustained base of policy research expertise in South Africa, *i.a.* by providing secure long-term financial support to research centers to conduct longitudinal, comparative long-term research studies in order to assess whether policy models have failed or succeeded, and the factors influencing these successes or failures.

The emphasis in the IDRC activities was on the process, and on building consensus within that process, rather than on influencing a particular outcome through a specific piece of research. However, the IDRC, through the NICP, is given credit for having promoted the concept of universal service in various ways during this critical policy making period. This helped to bring about a strong focus on universal service in the Telecommunications White Paper published in 1996, the establishment of the Universal Service Agency (USA), and national telecenter and Multipurpose Community Centre Programs (Recent studies and evaluations indicated severe weaknesses in the universal service system, especially in the operations of the USA. This does not negate the concept of universal service).

The South African Acacia Advisory Committee (SAAAC) was created in 1999 to oversee and advise the IDRC’s Acacia program. Acacia was aimed at determining the potential of ICTs to empower poor African communities. The SAAAC did not play a significant role in policy influence in the ICT sector. There are several factors that have contributed to this. During the period of the SAAAC establishment there was a focus on policy implementation rather than design; a strong focus on the latter would therefore have been less appropriate than in some of the other Acacia countries. Soon after its establishment the Committee decided for example decided not to pursue the concept of an overarching information society policy, but rather to play a role in reviewing policies and their implementation. The environment in which the SAAAC had to operate was complex, with many role players and a variety of policy agendas among stakeholders. The change in leadership and in macroeconomic policies from the RDP to the Growth, Employment and Reconstruction (GEAR) strategy in 1996-1997 required shifts in policy approaches. The ANC government now depended more on consultant inputs, preferring a somewhat more autocratic approach to policy formulation processes than was the case during the GNU (This caused suspicion and cynicism among stakeholders, especially in the private sector).

The SAAAC was furthermore affected by the strategic review of the thrust and impact of Acacia and of the IDRC Regional Office for Southern Africa; activities had to be put on hold while clarity on the way forward was awaited. The SAAAC also felt the need for clearer guidance from the IDRC on the role that it had to play. There was tension between many of the Committee members’ belief in a more grassroots focus and a role in high-level advocacy and assistance with planning. The latter seemed to have been the approach frequently espoused by the IDRC. The Committee had been constituted to be representative of relevant sectors of society; not all members were recognized as ICT (policy) experts and this contributed to the perception that the SAAAC “was just another committee linked to a donor initiative”, rather than a pool of ICT expertise available to government.

In South Africa, with its strong focus on racial equity, care has to be taken to ensure that processes, policies and outcomes are sensitive to issues of gender and that implementation reflects this clearly. The NTPP consultative process included representatives from labor, the disabled, and women’s organizations. Even though the government representatives and various committees assisting in the drafting process of the Telecommunications White Paper were overwhelmingly male, the national focus on the previously disadvantaged ensured that the policy reflected this priority quite strongly. Although it is not an engendered policy, the redress of existing imbalances is a major theme of the document and is most strongly reflected in the establishment of the USA.

It is not clear what role the NICP activities and the SAAAC played in promoting gender issues within the NTPP and other ICT initiatives. There are indications that the SAAAC had only limited engagement with gender issues and that the lack of a clearly articulated gender strategy in Acacia might have lessened the impact of both Acacia and the SAAAC in this respect.

PREAMBLE

Key Events that shaped the Development of ICTs in South Africa

- 1991 *National*
Telkom is commercialized.
- 1992 *National*
A regional IDRC Office is established in Johannesburg.
- 1993 *International*
The IDRC has its first exploratory mission to South Africa.
- National*
ANC holds the first workshop on *Telecommunications in a Post Apartheid South Africa*, organized by the CDITP.
Development of the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act.
Two mobile operators are licensed, MTN and Vodacom.
The ANC prioritizes ICTs before the democratic elections in 1994.
The National Communications Forum (NTF) is established, comprising of stakeholders in industry.
- 1994 *National*
The Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) is established.

The first ever democratic elections are held in South Africa; a Government of National Unity comes to power.

The Reconstruction and Development Plan is released
- 1995 *International*
First African Regional Symposium on Telematics for Development, organized by UNECA, ITU, UNESCO and the IDRC, held in Addis Abeba, 3-7 April, with major international representation.
Pres Mandela highlights importance of ICT development at the *International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Conference*, Geneva, 3 October.
The *COMNET-IT '95 Workshop* for national policies and strategies in Commonwealth countries takes place.
- National*
The Green Paper on Science and Technology is drafted.
The National Telecommunications Policy Project is launched and the Green Paper is released for public comment.
A Colloquium after the Green Paper process is held to prepare the ground for the White Paper.
- 1996 *Regional*
Information Society and Development (ISAD) and Helderfontein Conferences held in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The *African Information Society Initiative (AISII)* is approved by the Conference of African Ministers of economic and social development and planning.

National

COMTASK is established to develop a strategy for the South African Government's communication, December, resulting in the Communications 2000 report.
As a result of the NTPP, the White Paper on Telecommunications is completed.
Telkom is licensed.
Completion of the White Paper on Science and Technology.
The Telecommunications Act is adopted.

1997 *International*

Telkom partners with a consortium between Malaysia Telecom and SBC Communications as strategic equity partners, and starts a 6-year exclusivity period in South Africa.
Global Knowledge Conference (GK1) in Canada, June.

Regional

The Acacia Initiative is approved.
The *Telecommunications Development in sub-Saharan Africa Conference* is held in Harare, Zimbabwe, in April.

National

The South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (SATRA) is established.
The TELI Strategic Plan for Education and ICTs is completed.
The Universal Service Agency is launched.

1998 *International*

The *COMESA Third Conference of Heads of State* focuses on the importance of ICTs.
The *African Telecoms Conference* is held with a focus on input for the African Renaissance.

Regional

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Southern Africa (TRASA) is established, with six SADC states as members, incl. South Africa.

National

Establishment of the Presidential Review Commission on IT for Government.
The Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) is launched.
The *MPCC Conference* is held with the aim of devising a way forward and sharing experiences with respect to MPCCs.

1999 *International*

The United Nations Economic Commission to Africa (ECA) convenes the *African Development Forum (ADF '99)* in Addis Ababa, with the theme "The Challenge to Africa of Globalization and the Information Age".
African Telecommunication Union established, December.
The Universal Service hearings are launched to redefine Universal Service and Access.

Regional

Adoption of the SADC Theme Document, "The Challenges and Opportunities of IT for SADC in the New Millennium", Zambia.
First Acacia Ministerial Meeting, 22-23 September.

National

The e-Commerce debate is launched.
The South African Information Technology Industry Strategy (SAITIS) Project commences, promoted by the Department of Trade and Industry.

The Broadcasting Act is promulgated.
 An IT Policy for Government process is initiated by the Department of Public Services and Administration.
 The DACST National Foresight Exercise is completed, with IT and Global Trends as one of the focus areas.

2000 *International*

Second Global Knowledge Conference (GKII), Malaysia, 7-10 March.
 WTO Trade Rules on Telecommunications Regulation and Licensing published.

Regional

SADC IT/Management Information Systems (MIS) Workshop, Botswana.
 TRASA workshop on Universal Access in Swaziland, February.

National

The National Assembly passes the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA), 21 January.
 SATRA and IBA combine to form ICASA.
 The State Information Technology Agency (SITA) is established to merge defense, police and administration information networks.
 The e-Commerce Green Paper is published for public comment.
 The position of Chief Government IT Officer (CGITO) and a Council are created to draft an IT policy, describing the national vision of government.
 An ICT Sector Development Framework is in place, as a result of the SAITIS process.

2001 *National*

A Telecommunications Policy Colloquium is held to request public input.
 Gauteng Online.Com is launched in Gauteng Province.
 The National ICT Forum is established to guide national ICT strategy.
 An e-Law Workshop is held for fast-tracking development of e-Commerce legislation.
 Cabinet approves the new telecommunications policy

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABT	Agreement of Basic Telecommunications
ADF	African Development Forum
AISI	African Information Society Initiative
ANC	African National Congress
ATU	African Telecommunications Union
AU	African Union
BICA	Building the Information Community in Africa
BITF	Black IT Forum
CBOs	Community-based Organizations
CDITP	Centre for the Development of Information and Telecommunications Policy
CGITO	Chief Government IT Officer
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COMTASK	Task Group on Communications
COSATU	Committee of South African Trade Unions
CSSA	Computer Society of South Africa
CUASA	Communications Users Association of South Africa
DACST	Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology
DIBU	Development Information Business Unit
DOC	The Department of Communication
DOE	Department of Education
DPRU	Development Policy Research Unit
DPSA	Department of Public Services and Administration
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
ECA	United Nations Economic Commission to Africa
ECASA	e-Commerce Association of South Africa
EEC	Electrotechnical Export Council
ELSA	Acacia's Evaluation and Learning System
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
GCIS	Government Communication and Information System
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Reconstruction
GK I	First Global Knowledge Conference
GK II	Second Global Knowledge Conference
GNU	Government of National Unity
IBA	Independent Broadcasting Authority
ICANN	Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers
ICASA	Independent Communications Authority of South Africa
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IETF	Internet Engineering Task Force
IISA	Information Industries South Africa

IMST	Information Management, Systems and Technology
ISAD	Information Society and Development
ISETT-SETA	Information Systems, Electronics and Telecommunications Technologies Sector Education and Training Authority
ISPA	Internet Service Providers Association
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
MIS	Management Information Systems
MPCCs	Multi-purpose Community Centres
MTN	Mobile Telephone Networks
NACI	National Advisory Committee on Innovation
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NICI	National Information and Communication Infrastructure
NITF	National Information Technology Forum
NP	National Party
NRF	National Research Foundation
NTF	National Communications Forum
NTPP	National Telecommunication Policy Project
NTUG	National Telecommunication User Group
PAIA	Promotion of Access to Information Act
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Program
SAAAC	South African Acacia Advisory Committee
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SACP	South African Communist Party
SAITIS	South African Information Technology Industry Strategy Project
SANCO	South African National Civics Organization
SAPOS	South African Post Office
SAPT	South African Posts and Telecommunications
SATA	Southern African Telecommunications Association
SATCC	Southern African Transport and Telecommunications Commission
SATMA	South African Telephony Managers Association
SATRA	South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (now called ICASA)
SAVA	SA Value Added Network Services Association
SITA	State Information Technology Agency
TELI	Technology Enhanced learning Investigation
TIPS	Trade and Industry Policy Secretariat
TRASA	Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of southern Africa
UDF	United Democratic Front
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization
USA	Universal Service Agency
W3C	World Wide Web Consortium
WTO	World Trade Organization

Chapter I

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

I.1 INTRODUCTION: THE STUDY

Many IDRC programs and projects reflect the expectation that the research supported will influence public policy at the national and local levels. This implies that the organization should have a clear understanding of what it means by policy influence and how this is achieved through its project and program activities. Three key questions have to be answered:

- ❑ What constitutes public policy influence in the IDRC experience?
- ❑ To what degrees, and in what ways, has IDRC supported research or projects influenced public policy?
- ❑ What factors and conditions have facilitated or inhibited the public policy influence potential of the IDRC supported research?

A number of initiatives are being undertaken by the IDRC as part of a concerted study aimed at answering these questions. It is envisaged that the study will provide an opportunity for learning at the program level, where it can enhance the program and project design to address policy issues. It will also support corporate level learning by providing input into strategic planning processes, enable feedback on performance and assist in the design of the next corporate program framework.

One of the components of the policy influence study is a series of case studies in a variety of countries in which the IDRC is active. These are conducted to explore the work undertaken by the IDRC, the changing context in which it was carried out and the processes that were used. They have to present rich, detailed stories of the policy influence process, developed through a document review as well as interviews with program leaders, participants, those said to have been influenced and relevant IDRC staff. The study is being conducted by a team of international evaluators in various developing regions in the world. The Acacia program, aimed at the development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Africa, was selected as the focus for the case studies on the African continent, in particular in Mozambique, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda.

Further information can be found in the abbreviated Terms of Reference of the consultant (*Addendum 1*).

I.2 THE CONSULTANT

Dr Zenda Ofir, Executive Director of *Evalnet*, an evaluation consultancy company based in Johannesburg, South Africa, was contracted for a period of 45 days to conduct the case studies in Mozambique, South Africa and Uganda.

Although the consultant is an experienced evaluator and has worked in the policy arena in several capacities, she has not been involved in Acacia or in the ICT field prior to this study.

The Acacia case studies in French-speaking Senegal were conducted by a consultant from that country.

I.3 PROJECT SELECTION

Acacia has been ongoing since 1997 in four countries in Africa, namely Mozambique, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda. Acacia has as central hypothesis that new ICTs will empower communities to take effective control over their own development. To test this, a number of different models of community access were established in the participating countries. According to project documents this was done through linked and simultaneous action in four areas: policy, infrastructure, tools and technologies, and applications. It was envisaged that this approach would stimulate the demand for, and supply of, connectivity at a community level.

The Acacia case studies for this study were selected by the IDRC based upon a set of criteria designed to identify suitable case studies in all regions. Considerations included the range, uniqueness, comparability, type of influence, the type of organization doing the research, the type of organization being influenced, the duration of the IDRC involvement with the partners, intentional versus unintentional influence and the IDRC programming type.

The main case studies selected by the IDRC from the various projects were the National Acacia Advisory Committees and projects that had as a direct objective the creation of national ICT, or information policies in countries participating in Acacia.

In South Africa, the selected projects are as follows:

- ❑ The NAAC Project (Project number 004381)
- ❑ The National Information and Communication Program (Project number 002294)

The choice of South African projects has been somewhat limiting. It might have been more appropriate to add some of the relevant policy-related Acacia projects to the portfolio to be in line with the case studies selected for the other countries, especially as the NICP was not officially part of Acacia (although they were frequently interwoven in their activities).

I.4 METHODOLOGY

The case studies were to be used to explore the work undertaken by the IDRC, the changing context in which the work had been carried out and the processes used. They had to present detailed stories of the policy influence process in order to ensure case studies “rich” in information for analysis.

Information Collection

Data gathering was done through a desk study and interviews with key informants.

Document review

The document review was an important part of the study. It provided the necessary background information for the consultant to understand the project contexts and activities, to ensure focused interviewing and to help with the triangulation of information obtained from other sources.

In the case of South Africa the set of official project documents was obtained from the IDRC Head Office in Ottawa due to the closure of the Regional Office for Southern Africa in 2001. A substantial number of documents were obtained from the Internet and several from the IDRC Office based in South Africa. Key informants also occasionally provided relevant documentation.

Documents studied include project proposals, IDRC Project Approval Documents, progress reports, evaluation reports, policy documents, various expert publications, meeting minutes and dissemination material. A list of the documents and Websites used is attached as *Addendum 2*.

Interviews with key informants

One-on-one, in-depth interviewing was regarded as the most appropriate method of data gathering from project participants and observers. Surveys or focus group interviews would not adequately allow for the perception and follow-up of subtle nuances in information, or allow for the depth of discussion needed for the purpose of the study.

Interviews were mostly conducted with project staff and participants directly involved in the Acacia project processes. These were the people who could provide the consultant with the most comprehensive information within the limited time available. In South Africa informants on the periphery of the projects, or observers of the processes, were also interviewed to provide additional perspectives. Most of the South African interviews were conducted with key role players in the ICT field who had broad insights into the policy processes and ICT activities in the country and in Africa over the past decade.

The Southern African Regional IDRC Office closed in 2001 with its personnel subsequently scattered across the world. Weaknesses in the interviewing schedule include the lack of contact with some of the key IDRC staff and limited time with another, as well as a lack of interviews with key government decision-makers who could provide important perspectives on the policy influence.

The interviews were planned to be semi-structured, using interview guides developed by the IDRC in consultation with the consultants to direct the questions. A challenge was that many of the informants had participated in, or had insight into, a number of projects. In such cases the interviews tended to address particular issues in a “cross-cutting” manner, with informants giving their perspectives across projects; or providing a complete story rather than responding to particular questions. The conversation was often allowed to flow more freely than initially planned, with occasional guidance by the interviewer to address the key issues required. This was not necessarily negative as it provided opportunities for information to be given that might not have been solicited through a more structured question-and-answer format. Data analysis was somewhat more complicated than it would have been with a more structured interview format. Wherever possible, time was devoted to in-depth probing of particular issues for clarity or data validation purposes; in several cases this was found to have been inadequate and had to be followed up with subsequent interviews with the same or with new informants.

Most of the interviews were recorded and used for reference during the writing of the reports. No transcriptions were made due to the time and cost involved in their production.

People were in general open in their response to interview questions. Most of the interviews required 1.5-2 hours for an in-depth discussion. Where informants were involved in one project only, 1.25 hours were usually sufficient. Discussions often led to suggestions for further interviewing; in such cases the informants sometimes agreed to meet at very short notice, but this could not always be achieved.

After completing a first draft report, a second round of interviews was held with eight of those interviewed during the first round. Another three key informants were also added to the list. The list of key informants for this study is attached as *Addendum 3*.

Analysis and validation

Triangulation was used extensively during interviews and through the documentation to ensure validity of findings. In some cases the relevant information could be obtained through telephonic or email follow-up activities. Some issues could require further probing and validation as certain gaps in information still exist. In several cases this was due to the fact that key informants, especially government ministers and other officials, could not be interviewed as meetings could not be arranged, or were cancelled at short notice.

Reporting

The information collected was analyzed, integrated and synthesized into the case study report. The first draft was read by respondents whose comments were included in a second draft. It was also refined through a series of follow-up telephonic interviews.

A workshop held on 8-9 November 2002 with Acacia staff and invited experts was used to obtain comments before final submission of the final report to the IDRC.

I.5 TYPES OF POLICY INFLUENCE

The types of policy influence used in this study were derived from definitions developed by Lindquist¹, while the study also explored additional types of influence which would not fit this categorization. While often mentioning activities through which policy influence could be achieved, such as lobbying, the informants did not provide new insights into the *results* of such actions.

The categories of policy influence according to Lindquist are:

Expanding Policy Capacities

These could include activities that

- ❑ improve the knowledge or data of certain actors;
- ❑ support recipients to develop innovative ideas;
- ❑ improve capabilities to communicate ideas;
- ❑ develop new talent for research and analysis.

Broadening Policy Horizons

These could include activities that

- ❑ provide policy makers with opportunities for networking or learning within their jurisdiction or with colleagues elsewhere;
- ❑ introduce new concepts to frame debates, putting ideas on the agenda, or stimulating public debate;
- ❑ educating researchers and others who take up new positions with broader understanding of issues;
- ❑ stimulate quiet dialogue among decision-makers (and among, or with, researchers).

Affecting Policy Regimes

These could include activities that

- ❑ modify existing programs or policies; or
- ❑ lead to the fundamental re-design of programs and policies.

A new aspect can be added to this category: the creation of a new policy regime in an emerging field of endeavor. The field of information and communication technologies is a good example.

¹ *Discerning Policy Influence: Framework for a Strategic Evaluation of IDRC-Supported Research*. Evert A Lindquist, School of Public Administration, University of Victoria. 1 September 2001.

Another aspect raised by informants that requires some thought (although it might be included in the current definition) is the “unintended” yet important consequences of a particular policy process, for example in influencing other (related) policy processes or content (in education, health, etc. or in e-commerce, e-business, etc.). In this study this effect was frequently observed, as highlighted in subsequent chapters of this report.

Chapter II

THE POLICY ARENA IN SOUTH AFRICA

II.1 SOUTH AFRICA: BRIEF OVERVIEW

General

South Africa is a large, scenically beautiful and culturally diverse country at the foot of Africa. It is a dry country, with an annual average rainfall of 464 mm, around half of the world average. Its climate is moderate and the topography ranges from grasslands to semi-desert to subtropical swamps – home to some of the world's most diverse animal and plant kingdoms. It is the only country with an entire floral kingdom – the Cape “fynbos” – within its borders. It also has a splendid coastline almost 3 000 kilometers long.

South Africa has a population of 44.6 million people from at least 20 ethnic groups, spread over nine provinces. Seventy seven percent are African, 10% white and 9% of mixed descent. Fifty percent of the population live in urban areas, concentrated in four main metropolitan areas. The homelands policies of the old apartheid government affected population distribution patterns, concentrating the African population in “rural homelands”. During the past two decades this has changed rapidly as rural black people moved to urban areas in search of work. Millions now live in poverty and squalor in urban townships or squatter camps on the perimeter of cities and towns.

History

The turbulent history of South Africa during the last century was shaped by the tensions between the Dutch settlers (who eventually became the Afrikaner nation) and British colonial interests. These tensions led to the Anglo-Boer war at the turn of the 20th Century. The only uniting force between the two groups was the notion of the need for domination over the black majority. In particular this facilitated the use of cheap black labor, especially in the mining industry which was the mainstay of the South African economy since the late 1800s.

In 1910 South Africa became an independent Union linked to the Commonwealth and part of the British Empire. Negotiations during this period excluded the majority black population. As a result they were deprived of land and of voting rights in three of the four provinces. With all the political and economic power in the hands of the white minority, deep dissatisfaction was created among the black population; this led to the formation of the African National Congress (ANC) in 1912.

Afrikaners were also denied real power in nearly all sectors of the economy except agriculture, leaving them with a deep sense of economic deprivation and cultural oppression. Afrikaner nationalism thus found a home in the National Party (NP), which to the surprise of the whole nation won the whites-only elections in 1948. The NP began the process of realizing Afrikaner nationalism, based mainly on a system of legalized racial segregation called "apartheid" - a rigid system of territorial, social and political segregation and black subjugation to white minority rule. By this time South Africa was a modern, industrialized nation. Afrikaners took over the civil service and moved towards strong state intervention in sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing. Industrialization was encouraged and the white farming sector uplifted. Huge parastatals were created to enable import substitution and later, as sanctions limited access to goods and resources, to provide self-sufficiency in strategic areas.

In 1961 South Africa withdrew from the Commonwealth and declared itself a republic. Black hostility and resistance to apartheid increased rapidly during the next two decades. Over time the ANC resorted to an armed struggle, the international community applied sanctions and civil unrest increased within the country. Racial classification had by then led to huge disparities in job opportunities, education, property rights and the right to live in an area of choice. Nelson Mandela and many other activists were imprisoned and the black majority subjugated to a series of harsh laws, including forced resettlement of hundreds of thousands of people into so-called "homelands".

In 1983 the UDF was created as a loose political alliance of hundreds of community organizations and trade unions in an attempt to unify black opposition. They helped to wage a struggle on many fronts within the country until 1990, when FW de Klerk released Mandela and unbanned the ANC. Lengthy negotiations by a multi-party negotiation forum followed over a new political dispensation. In April 1994 this resulted in the first ever democratic elections in South Africa, bringing the ANC to power as the leading party in a "Government of National Unity" (GNU). International sanctions were lifted and South Africa reclaimed its place in international and regional organizations and events.

The South African Constitution came into effect in December 1996 as one of the most progressive in the world. Together with Mandela's policies of reconciliation, the Constitution laid the foundation for a truly multi-racial society based on democratic principles. In January 1999, the second democratic elections returned the ANC to office, only one seat short of a two-thirds majority in the national parliament. Thabo Mbeki became President on 16 June 1999.

South Africa is often described as the "Rainbow Nation" because of the extraordinary diversity of its people and landscapes. It is a term of hope, yet the country's divisive past will continue to affect it for many decades. The goal of racial harmony remains somewhat elusive. Many people are still learning to live with new-found freedoms. The protection of human rights remains a major concern in a society in the throes of transition and faced with serious problems of unemployment, poverty, crime and HIV/AIDS. In spite of these challenges the various peoples in South Africa are learning to live with one another and even to celebrate their differences.

The Economy

South Africa's per capita income places it in the group of middle-income countries, but its income disparities are among the most extreme in the world. While 13% of the population live in "first world" conditions, 53% live in "third world" conditions.

In this latter group only 25% have access to electricity and running water; only half have primary school education and over a third of the children suffer from chronic malnutrition. It is also estimated that more than 20% of the population are HIV positive.

In spite of this, South Africa's economy remains the most dominant in Africa; it generates nearly a quarter of the continent's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Its infrastructure, both in size and sophistication, dwarfs those of other African nations. Modern financial and industrial sectors are supported by highly developed systems of telecommunications, road, railroad, air and electric power grids. The economy is based largely on the abundant mineral and energy resources found in the country. These remain critically important to the economy in terms of employment, exports and foreign exchange earnings. However, the economy has undergone major changes over the past 50 years, with manufacturing and financial services now the largest sectors - although much of the manufacturing sector remains based on mining, while exports are still led by gold and diamonds.

In the post-apartheid era the government focused on controlling the budget deficit while striving to step up spending on social programs to combat inequality. Official policies have reduced inflation, the budget deficit, taxes, interest rates and tariffs, while increasing investment and GDP. In spite of this, economic growth remains slow and employment stagnant. The average GDP growth of just over 2% during the last four years is well below the 5% needed to absorb new entrants into the job market each year. Further economic growth now rests on the government's goals of increasing overall living conditions, cutting employment and promoting exports.

A widely debated aspect of government policy is privatization. The government wants to sell at least part of its R40.6 billion key parastatal and company assets, especially Eskom (electricity), Telkom (communications), South African Airways (SAA), Transnet (transportation) and Denel (defense). The ANC's labor partners have resisted the program, knowing that restructuring will cost jobs.

II.2 EMERGENCE OF AN ICT POLICY FOCUS IN A DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA²

Apartheid required strict control over the systems and institutions of communication - the press, broadcasting and telecommunications. State-owned monopoly enterprises (parastatals) already existed before the Nationalist government came to power in 1948 and served as tools for stronger state intervention during the apartheid era. These included posts and telecommunications (the South African Posts and Telecommunications - SAPT) and broadcasting (the South African Broadcasting Corporation - SABC). Public corporations were also created in the industry and in agriculture, where a number of "control boards" were set up.

² The content of this section has been quoted extensively from two excellent books in the field:

- James, T (Ed) (2001). *An Information Policy Handbook for Southern Africa*. Published by the International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, Canada;
- Horwitz, RB (2001). *Communication and Democratic Reform in South Africa*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-79166-9.

In order to develop self-sufficiency, domestic manufacturing capability was developed. This model was characterized by import controls, overvalued exchange rates, binding ceilings on interest rates, public ownership and widespread price regulation³. Horwitz notes that although the South African economy was capitalist, "it was clearly a mixed system in which the state played an enormous role as dominant participant in many key sectors and as a kind of regulator in most others – all within the context of racial domination". By 1986, state ownership through public corporations and public authorities was at nearly 60% of capital stock; the parastatals also served as excellent vehicles for the provision of jobs for white Afrikaners.

During the apartheid years, several institutions dominated the communication sector, among others,

- ❑ The SABC, which functioned *i.a.* as a mechanism of social control over blacks;
- ❑ SAPT, which operated a sophisticated telephone network that served whites and business, leaving most of the areas of black settlement without the required infrastructure;
- ❑ The South African Communication Service, which functioned as a state information agency in the service of apartheid;
- ❑ The South African Information Bureau, which aimed to supply information about South Africa to other countries.

By the 1980s the apartheid government was forced to initiate reforms as response to major problems in the South African economy. Their aim was to end formal apartheid but reconsolidate white supremacy in various ways, among others through the privatization of parastatals in a manner that would entrench white dominance. In 1991 the government started to liberalize the telecommunications sector by commercializing the national operator, Telkom. In 1993 it licensed two mobile operators.

A major problem with these efforts was that there was no clear separation between the responsibilities of the state and the operators, with the state even having stakes in some of them. After the release of Nelson Mandela in February 1990 the political dynamics in the country consisted of the government positioning itself for negotiations and moving ahead in "reform" efforts. At the same time the ANC had to make a rapid transition from an exiled liberation movement to a functioning political party, at the same time having to oppose the government's efforts at unilateral parastatal reform.

Years of struggle had led to community political associations (the "civics") formed between community groupings and strong labour movements united under the umbrella federation, COSATU. This, and the ANC's commitment to the political rights of individuals, resulted in civil society activism and the emergence of "stakeholder forums" - new arenas for the discussion and formulation of policy. This was a key feature of the transition phase to democracy. The forums were broadly consultative bodies championed by the liberation movement, where stakeholders, including business, NGOs, apartheid regime government officials and the civics, met to discuss how to transform a government function or sector and bring services to the people in line with emerging democratic principles.

³ Horwitz, RB (2001). *Communication and Democratic Reform in South Africa*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-79166-9. p30.

The forums constituted a novel concept in a country where transparency and consultation was never practiced or promoted. They also served to present and publicize the viewpoints of the ANC. After the 1994 elections, the work of the forums was transformed into consultative processes for the formulation of Green and White policy papers.

The new information technologies and their use for development had been a key area on the agenda of the ANC in exile years before the first democratic elections in South Africa. The Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) base document – the 1994 election manifesto of the ANC Alliance - already contained statements about the importance of ICTs, its crosscutting nature and its usefulness for development. The RDP provided a macro-economic vision for post-apartheid South Africa and was the product of a broad-based consultative process managed by the ANC in conjunction with several leading ANC political bodies in the Democratic Movement. It expressed the aspirations of the previously disadvantaged and in the Government of National Unity (GNU) became the platform for new government policies. Among others the RDP emphasized that civil society had to share in decisions and that the RDP should work with existing forums.

The vision of the nature and role of these new technologies in the RDP Base Document in many ways influenced policy making in the post-apartheid era, with the main principles concerning the relation between ICTs and development barely changing during this period⁴. Important obstacles had to be overcome. Bernie Fanaroff noted at an CDITP Conference on 28 July 1993 that the unilateral restructuring of the telecommunications industry by the (then) government was "a disaster: no openness, no transparency, grossly inadequate consultation and no strategy for a universal service". He proposed among others the establishment of a National Telecommunications Forum that should develop a "coherent, integrated strategy to provide an affordable telephone service of a high quality" and work towards implementation⁵.

The new political players also recognized the importance of free and open media: these had to assist with consultation, transparency and the provision of information. Broadcasting was seen as central to a democratic transition, yet had been a propaganda instrument for decades; it was therefore the first to undergo a fundamental transformation, even prior to the 1994 elections. An open broadcasting environment had to be established and policy fast-tracked for the sake of fair elections. During negotiations the parties had deadlocked on the structure of telecommunications, but reached an agreement on broadcasting. The Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) Act was passed in 1993; the IBA started its operations soon after the elections.

Policy frameworks were renegotiated during 1994-1997 and developed within a new democratic dispensation. A number of policy processes started in 1993-1994, with a second round initiated around 1997. Telecommunications was the first sector to design and take its Green and White Paper for legislation. Its consultative and participatory approach was often mooted as a model for other processes. The reform of the communications institutions was thus at the heart of the transition to democracy.

⁴ James T, Gillwald A and Van Audenhove L, in: *An Information Policy Handbook for Southern Africa. A Knowledge Base for Decision-Makers*. James, T. (Ed). 2001. Published by the IDRC, Ottawa, Canada; p 42

⁵ Fanaroff, B L. 1993. The Role of Telecommunications in Economic Growth – Projects for Southern Africa. Address at the CDITP Conference. 28 July. South Africa.

During the two-year policy formulation process the new Growth, Employment and Reconstruction (GEAR) policy replaced the RDP. The process through which GEAR was developed was non-negotiable, non-transparent and non-consultative. It was aimed at reducing government spending and deficit in order to stimulate private sector expansion and direct foreign investment. With this, the government moved from a negative attitude towards privatization of public enterprises to a position in which privatization was considered a central part of its economic policy⁶.

There were many changes in the telecommunications sector during this period. Jay Naidoo replaced Pallo Jordan as Minister of Posts, Telecommunications and Broadcasting. In 1997 a draft license for Telkom was made public and Telecom Malaysia and SBC Communications each acquired a stake in Telkom for (at the time) approximately \$1 billion. Telkom also received a six-year exclusivity on basic telecommunication until 2002. This meant that competition would gradually be phased in.

The White Paper on Telecommunications, the Telecommunications Act and the Telkom license together provided the framework within which the telecommunications sector developed over the next few years⁷. Among others policy, the regulation and the operation of telecommunications were separated; an independent regulator, the South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (SATRA) was introduced; and a Universal Service Agency (USA) was established responsible for promoting the goal of universal service and encouraging schemes to provide universal access. It was to be funded through a Universal Service Fund, financed through a levy on the three network operators.

A focus on the media arena in 1995 gathered momentum with a stakeholder conference held to discuss government communications. The media institutions were seen as tools of the old regime. The government felt incapable of getting its message across to the South African society. After the conference in December 1995, a Task Group on Communications (COMTASK) was established. They produced a report that addressed a wide range of ICT issues and recommended that a new communications structure, the Government Communications and Information System (GCIS) be established to replace SACS (This was done in 1998). It also identified as problems in South Africa a general lack of information infrastructure and a weak culture of information sharing.

Aside from the Department of Communications, a number of other government departments launched policy initiatives that touched on ICTs. These included the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Department of Education (DOE). During 1995-1996 DACST undertook a consultative policy formulation process to develop a new science and technology policy. References in the White Paper to the promotion of the Information Society led among others to the inclusion of an Information Society focus in the Innovation Fund managed by the National Research Foundation (NRF) to stimulate public-private partnerships for innovation.

⁶ James T, Gillwald A and Van Audenhove L, in: *An Information Policy Handbook for Southern Africa. A Knowledge Base for Decision-Makers*. James, T. (Ed). 2001. Published by the IDRC, Ottawa, Canada; p 43

⁷ James T, Gillwald A and Van Audenhove L, in: *An Information Policy Handbook for Southern Africa. A Knowledge Base for Decision-Makers*. James, T. (Ed). 2001. Published by the IDRC, Ottawa, Canada; p 54

The potential of the information technologies for education was discussed at a conference in November 1995. A commission was constituted to produce a report on technology-enhanced education. A report, "Technology Enhanced Learning Investigation (TELI) in South Africa" was completed in July 1996. The report resulted in the establishment of the National Centre for Educational Technology and Distance Education in 1997. A second TELI-Commission under this structure developed a more comprehensive action plan in May 1997.

Between 1997 and 2001 a period of implementation followed in the sector during which new institutions were set up and new policy processes introduced to refine existing frameworks. These initiatives are many and varied; the following are given as illustration of some of the key initiatives:

Telecommunications: The South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (SATRA) was established in 1997 under the Telecommunications Act. By this time the Internet industry in South Africa was booming. All the services had to be secured from Telkom, whose exclusivity period and entrance into the Internet market led to tension and disputes, among others with the Internet Service Providers Association (ISPA).

Broadcasting: The IBA had been operating since 1994, but suitable policies were lacking, failing among others to provide for satellite broadcasting. In 1999 new broadcasting legislation was developed, which acknowledged the role of multimedia technologies and broadband services. This created the need for a merged broadcasting and communications regulator. SATRA and the IBA were thus combined to form the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) through the ICASA Act in 2000.

Universal Service: The Universal Services Agency (USA) was established as a statutory body through the 1996 Telecommunications Act. It had the responsibility to ensure universal access to telecommunications services (including voice, fax, the Internet, etc.).

It had to promote universal service and monitor and research its impact on economic growth and social benefit, the extent to which universal service has been achieved and the universal service obligations of the license holders Telkom, Vodacom and MTN. The USA was also to manage the Universal Service Fund, established to bring telecommunications to the people – in particular through telecenters.

The Department of Communications (DoC): The role of DoC has focused on broad policy making and policy review. It oversees organizations such as Telkom, the SABC, the signal distributor Sentech and the South African Post Office (SAPOS). It has launched a number of innovative projects such as the piloting of Public Information Terminals, the Houwteq-centre, which provides degreed students with one-year ICT courses, and the Info.com 2024 framework, through which various ICT-related pilot projects could be undertaken.

Government Communication and Information System (GCIS): The GCIS was launched in 1998 with a Communication Service Agency, a Media Liaison Section, a Policy Research and Strategy Section, and a Provincial and Local Liaison Section. The GCIS has assumed responsibility for *South Africa Online* and, since 2000, for implementing some MPCCs aimed at government services.

IT for the Public Service: The new government inherited a fragmented and ineffective IT system. An IT for Government Policy process was started, led by the Department of Public Services and Administration (DPSA). Another draft of an IT Policy for Government was prepared titled *Electronic Government – the Digital Future: A Public Service IT Policy Framework*, defining concepts such as e-government, e-governance, e-services, e-business, etc. In January 1999 the State Information Technology Agency (Pty) Ltd was registered as a state-owned company expected to provide IT, Information Systems and related services to the government.

Foresight: During 1998-1999 DACST conducted foresight studies in 12 sectors, including information technology. The IT Working Group concluded that an aggressive national IT vision was needed to counteract problems of obstructive policies, uncoordinated efforts, lack of funding, inadequate skills training, and the absence of a culture that fostered the development and effective use of IT.

The South African IT International Strategy Project (SAITIS): SAITIS was a three-year project in the DTI which led in November 2000 to the ICT Sector Development Framework. This framework will form the basis of future implementation plans to stimulate the growth of the ICT industry, develop ICT human resources and enhance ICT R & D and innovation.

The Promotion of Access to Information Act: This Act was passed in January 2001 and among others gave effect to the constitutional right of access to any information held by the State. It also applies to information that is held or communicated electronically.

Electronic Commerce Policy: A Discussion Paper on e-Commerce Policy was released by DoC in July 1999. It was compiled by a consultant in conjunction with the Government e-Commerce Task Group from different departments and agencies, as well as Task Teams drawn from various stakeholders.

Nearly all these documents (the White Paper on Telecommunications, the White Paper on Science and Technology, the COMTASK report and the TELI) called for the integration of policy initiatives on ICTs. The South African Position Paper presented at the ISAD Conference and the White Paper on Science and Technology both called for a consultative policy process on the Information Society. Several initiatives proposed coordination at Cabinet level. In spite of this, the fragmentation of ICT related initiatives remains, although several initiatives towards integration have been undertaken. ICTs were identified in the 2001 State of the Nation speech as a priority area. Among others President Mbeki recently appointed an IT Advisory Council consisting of local and international IT business leaders.

In 2000 Information Industries South Africa (IISA) was formed as an umbrella body consisting of ten separate IT organizations in order to create a stronger industry platform for negotiations.

II.3 THE POLICY WINDOW

Taking cognizance of the history and national context given in Sections II.1 and II.2, the following are some of the most important influences in the wider environment that helped to open the opportunity for the IDRC to contribute to policy influence in the telecommunications and later to the ICT sectors in South Africa during the period under review:

- ❑ *The transformation of the country from an apartheid state to a democratic dispensation.* This required a review and redesign of nearly all government policy frameworks, as well as the creation of new policies.
- ❑ *The need to bring order to the chaotic situation that existed in the early nineties when activities opposing the existing regime sprang up before relevant policies were in place.*
- ❑ *The prioritization of ICTs as an area for development by the ANC in exile and again in its role as leading party in the GNU.* By 1995, the theme of the “Information Society” had regularly appeared in political discourse and policy documents. At the G7 Conference on the Information Society, then Deputy President Mbeki invited Western countries to engage the developing world on the issue of the Information Society. At the opening of the ITU’s Telecom 1995 Conference President Nelson Mandela stressed the potential of ICTs for development, but warned of the widening duality between those with access to the global Information Society and those without.
- ❑ *The urgent need to transform rigid state controlled institutions into instruments that could serve a democratic country.* This was particularly pertinent in the case of the broadcasting environment due to its important role before and during the elections. Urgent parastatal reform was also essential in view of the lack of cost-effectiveness and productivity in many of these institutions and the need to neutralize efforts by the old regime to ensconce white interests in a different guise within the new system – in several cases not even within a given legislative framework.
- ❑ *The liberalization of the telecommunications sector through privatization.*
- ❑ *The parallel needs for policies to focus on the development and aspirations of the previously disadvantaged and thus universal access and service, and the requirements and proposals of the business and industry sectors.* This balance was important, especially because of the enormous disparities caused by apartheid and the fact that the South African private sector and economic drivers are much stronger than elsewhere in Africa. South Africa had to be a global ICT player, yet focus on universal access and services.
- ❑ *The shift from authoritarian to transparent, participatory and consultative processes.* Civil society activism established during the struggle years, coupled to the ANC’s commitment to the political rights of individuals and to transparent, participatory and democratic processes, meant that policy formulation processes had to be designed to differ fundamentally from the authoritarian approaches used by the apartheid state. Stakeholder forums were the ideal vehicle for this purpose. It provided opportunities for consensus building and for the recognition of different viewpoints – important values in building a democracy. The Green/White Paper processes also enabled the new government to test this mechanism for policy formulation in South Africa.

- ❑ *The change in the macroeconomic policies of the government during the nineties, from the RDP to GEAR. This required some fundamental changes in policy approaches, necessitating the need to review existing or draft policies towards the latter part of the 1990s.*
- ❑ *Policy gaps identified in the early rounds of telecommunications and broadcasting policies, partly due to developments in technology and partly due to oversights during the earlier policy formulation processes.*
- ❑ *The emergence of new areas requiring coherent policy formulation during the late nineties, for example in e-Government and e-Commerce.*
- ❑ The need to ensure that South Africa, with its well-developed institutional frameworks and ICT infrastructure would not be left behind during the period of rapid expansion and developments in the global ICT environment. The new government had to position the country within a very active global and regional arena after decades of political, social and economic isolation. The 1980s-1990s were characterized by a strong movement towards a global economic structure in which the new technologies played a key role. Governments worldwide recognized the significance of ICTs and their application for development. Deregulation and liberalization of the telecommunications sector became de rigueur. Countries were under pressure, for example by the World Trade Organization (WTO), to change policies to accommodate global trading and commerce activities; telecommunications are often at the centre of such activities. Markets forces shifted from closed domestic markets to open competition, among others through privatization and liberalization. Many countries created independent and transparent regulators and regimes to manage transitions to a competitive market. This led to increased competition between companies and countries in international services, and to increased foreign investment, strategic alliances and joint ventures⁸.

II.4 THE POLICY ROLE PLAYERS⁹

The ICT policy role players – those who are well positioned to grapple with issues in the ICT policy arena – are noted and mapped below using one of the categorizations in the literature proposed by Lindquist¹⁰. They are given in order to indicate the complexity of role players within which the IDRC had to position itself in order to exert some policy influence. Many of the categories are the same as for Uganda and Mozambique, but the number of role players in nearly every category is significantly higher in South Africa.

⁸ James, T (Ed) (2001). *An Information Policy Handbook for Southern Africa*. Published by the International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, Canada; p 7.

⁹ Guided in this list by James, T (Ed) (2001). *An Information Policy Handbook for Southern Africa*. Published by the International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, Canada; p 173.

¹⁰ Evert A Lindquist .2001. *Discerning Policy Influence: Framework for a Strategic Evaluation of IDRC Supported Research*. Document prepared for the IDRC; p 7.

“Sub-government” role players*i) The President / Office of the President:*

Both Presidents Mandela and Mbeki made impassionate pleas from important public platforms for the development of an Information Society in Africa and for the development of the new information and communication technologies on the continent. The Office of the President is now responsible for policy coordination and management in certain fields; an IT Advisory Council and local ICT Commission have recently been appointed by President Mbeki.

ii) The Cabinet and Parliament:

These bodies, which include Portfolio Committees, the National Assembly and Senate, provide forums for debate and the eventual approval of policies and legislation.

iii) National Government Departments:

A substantial number of departments have some form of involvement in ICT policy aspects.

The most significant of these are: DoC (responsible for the telecommunications policies; e-Commerce policy; Information Society issues and the USA); DACST, now the Department of Science and Technology (Foresight Project; oversees National Council on Innovation, administers Innovation Fund) ; the Department of Labor, the DTI (industrial policy and economic growth; hosts SAITIS project; uses Trade and Industry Policy Secretariat for research programs); DoE (introduction of ICTs into schools; integration into teaching curricula; curriculum development); and the DPSA (responsible for developing IT policy for government; coordination of all government IT initiatives).

iv) (Semi) Government Organs:

A significant number of government organs exert an influence over policy in the sector: Examples are the GCIS (which has been rolling out MPCCs in rural areas since 2000); the Information Systems, Electronics and Telecommunications Technologies Sector Education and Training Authority (responsible for human resources development promotion); the National Advisory Committee on Innovation (responsible for the coordination and stimulation of the National System of Innovation); and the State IT Agency (responsible for implementation of policy set by DPSA).

Semi-government research institutions which provide high-level skills in this field include the CSIR, HSRC and MRC.

The “Attentive Public”*i) Academic and research institutions:*

Academic institutions offering educational and/or research opportunities in ICTs are the University of the Witwatersrand Centre for Applied Legal Studies and the LINK Centre, which also offers courses for SADC in telecommunications policy, regulation and management and publishes the South African Journal of Information and Communication; the University of Cape Town's Development Policy Research Unit (DPRU); the University of Pretoria School for Public Management and Administration, and the University of South Africa, which offers courses in telecommunications policy.

Semi-government agencies can also be included in this group. The CSIR Manufacturing Policy Centre provides technology policy support and futures research for the CSIR; while Incomtek, is closely linked to DTI regarding industrial policy and involved in the NACI process of developing roadmaps based on Foresight outcomes. The National Research Foundation (NRF), a national council which funds research, has recently added ICTs to its focus areas. The Development Bank of Southern Africa: Development Information Business Unit (DIBU) provides information analysis and advice as well as a public information centre. It also works with the SAAAC, MPCCS and the NITF and has seconded staff to the DPSA IT Policy for Government initiative.

ii) *The South African Acacia Advisory Committee (SAAAC) and similar initiatives:*

Several donor funded programs have local committees to design and manage ICT initiatives. They are usually represented in forums and think-tanks and can be seen as representing either national or donor interests, depending on the manner and format in which they had been established.

iii) *Labor unions:*

COSATU emphasizes job creation and job enhancement and are usually represented in ICT forums. It also has representation on national projects such as SAITIS.

iv) *Civil, professional and private sector associations:*

These consist of umbrella bodies for individuals, organizations and companies. These include the Black IT Forum (BITF), which supports black IT professionals and black-owned IT firms; and the Computer Society of South Africa (CSSA), which represents around 4000 ICT professionals, offering conferences, seminars, etc. and focuses on building bridges between ICT professionals in academia, government or business; the e-Commerce Association of South Africa (ECASA), which represents the interests of companies involved in e-Commerce; the Electronics Industry Federation (EIF), which represents the interests of a small number of large electronics firms; the Electrotechnical Export Council (EEC), which was created to stimulate the export market for South African companies; Information Industries South Africa (IISA), an umbrella body which coordinates the activities of the representative bodies in the ICT sector; provides a channel of communication between the industry and government; represents South Africa's interests in world bodies; the SA Value Added Network Services Association (SAVA); the Communications Users Association of South Africa (CUASA); and others.

v) *The private sector:*

The private sector's strategic position in the government's efforts towards economic growth provides them with a strong voice during policy making processes; agendas different from those of government and labor often lead to conflict. Parts of the private sector have organized themselves into associations (noted in iv) that can form a unified front and stronger pressure groups during negotiations.

vi) The media:

The South African print and voice media are able to play active roles in promoting ICT use and creating an awareness of ICTs among the general public. They can therefore play an important role in keeping the public and pressure groups informed of developments in the field.

vii) Consultants:

Local consultants are extensively used in research studies and surveys to inform policy and to help design implementation strategies.

viii) Stakeholder forums and task groups:

Policy processes in South Africa have in many cases been driven by ad hoc or formal consultative forums, often with representation from many different sectors. These include the NITF and the NTF (which became the SA Communication Forum in 2001 focusing on policy and black empowerment). Various types of task groups are often part of these processes. This type of interaction also includes conferences or workshops focusing on policy.

International Interests

i) Foreign governments:

Foreign governments have the potential to exert influence over policy information processes through their development/aid agencies in South Africa. After the end of apartheid in South Africa, it became an immensely popular destination for international development support, often channeled through government departments. As these agencies often fund policy formulation processes or projects that can demonstrate policy principles, provide consultants and participate in stakeholder forums, they are in a position where they can and do influence policy. It may be argued that in South Africa their impact has been less than in other developing countries, as many South African decision-makers are particularly sensitive to a situation where national agendas are driven by external agencies.

ii) Private donor agencies:

Their situation is similar to that of foreign governments.

iii) International organizations:

Similar to foreign governments and private donors, international agencies such as the World Bank, the UN and others can and do exert their influence in South Africa. Organizations focusing on ICTs in particular and whose activities can have a direct influence over South African policies in this regard include the ITU, the African Telecommunications Union (ATU), the WTO, the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN).

iv) Regional structures and initiatives:

There are several structures in SADC with the potential to influence policy. These include the Southern African Transport and Telecommunications Commission (SATCC) based in Maputo; the SADC Human Resources Development Sector; the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Southern Africa (TRASA); the Southern African Telecommunications Association (SATA) and several SADC Sector Coordinating Units. Other key bodies and initiatives in the region include the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI) Initiatives established in response to the African Information Society Initiative (AISI). Within the new spirit of an African Renaissance there is a strong focus on efforts to stimulate cooperation and partnerships for development within Africa within the context of the African Union (AU). The New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) has ICTs as one of its priorities, for example.

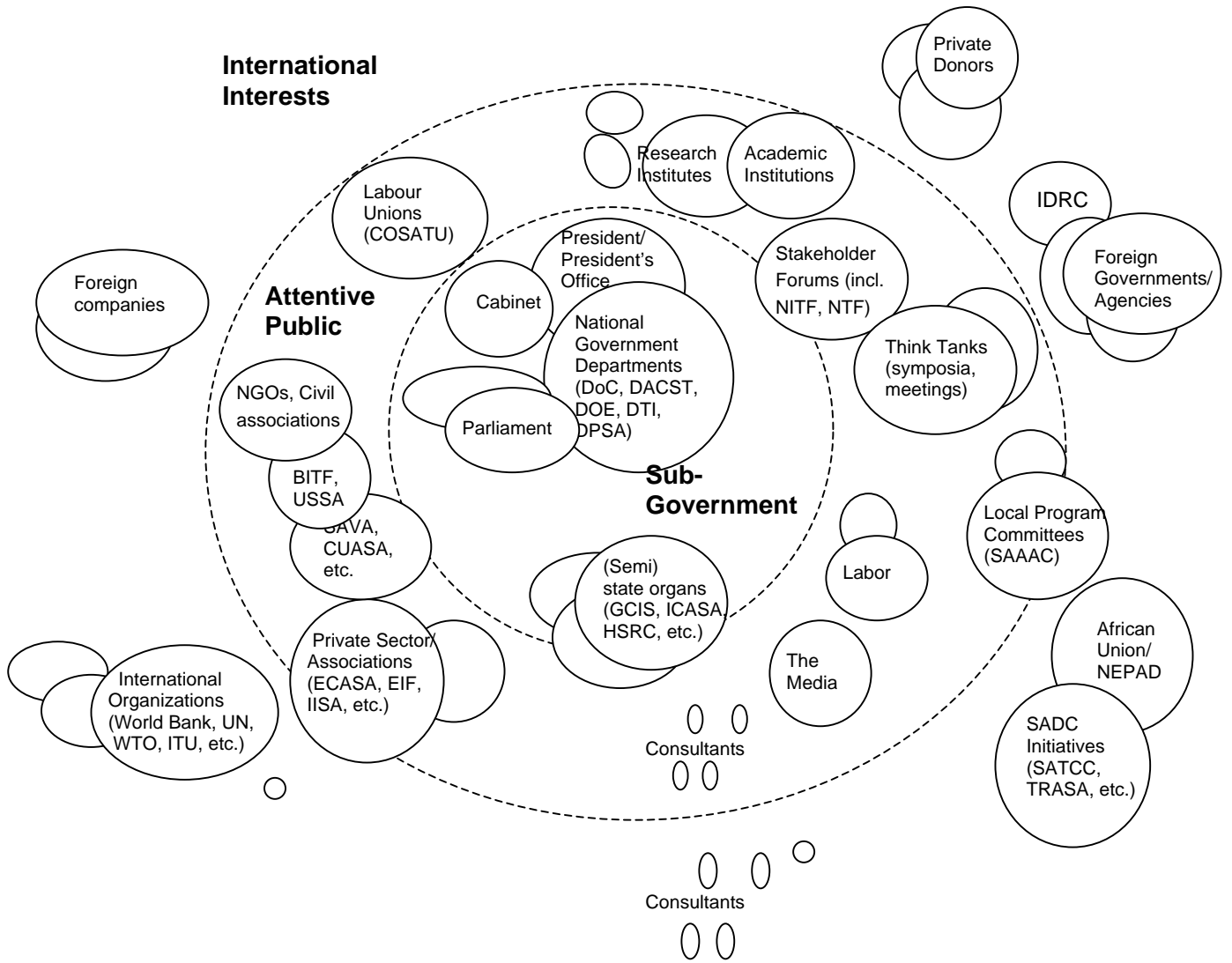
v) Foreign consultants:

Foreign consultants can be a major force in policy formulation and South African policy initiatives have often made use of their services. However, as South Africa has significant local expertise, departments often prefer to use local consultants for background studies and policy drafts.

vi) Foreign private companies:

Foreign private companies, usually in partnership with or as shareholders in local ventures, can contribute to the major pressure groups of the private sector.

Fig II.1 THE SOUTH AFRICAN ICT POLICY COMMUNITY



Chapter III

NATIONAL INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION PROGRAM (NICP)

III.1 THE IDRC IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Canadian government, through CIDA and the IDRC, was very active in supporting South Africa's transition to democracy during the 1990s. Even before this transition period the IDRC had been funding the activities of South African exiles in neighboring countries. Between 1988 and 1994, when the imminent demise of apartheid was becoming apparent, it changed its approach by funding projects in South Africa, mainly in the fields of policy research capacity building and institutional transformation. A number of key areas were selected for support. These included trade and industrial policy development; science and technology institutional restructuring; and information sector reform.

In 1992 an IDRC Regional Office for Southern Africa was established in Johannesburg. It worked with universities, local NGOs and the country's emerging leadership - many of whom became key figures in the new Government of National Unity as well as in the ANC government during later years (According to an IDRC report, more than half of the Cabinet Ministers in the GNU had participated in IDRC projects).

After the democratic elections in 1994 the IDRC involvement in South Africa continued with a new strategy which focused in four broad themes on the SADC region. One of these was on access to information and information technologies. South Africa received a major part of the regional IDRC funding for this period; during the next few years the IDRC supported several policy reform processes, each resulting in government Green and White Papers and new legislation passed by the South African Parliament. It also funded a number of local and regional projects in the key areas selected for development. The IDRC support consisted of funding of projects; the provision of technical assistance from Canada and elsewhere; and training visits and study tours to Canada by South Africans.

After 1997 most of the IDRC ICT related projects were conducted under the Acacia program (refer to Chapter IV). In 2001 the Regional Office in Johannesburg was closed after a comprehensive review of the IDRC; the responsibility for Southern Africa was shifted to the Regional Office in Nairobi.

III.2 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NICP

The decision to develop a *National Information and Communication Program* (NICP) for South Africa should be seen in the context of the transition of the country to a democratic government in 1994. Between 1994 and 1996 the ANC's election manifesto, the Reconstruction and Development Plan base document, was used as the foundation for the new government's vision for the country. As described in Chapter II, it focused strongly on the social and economic development of especially the previously disenfranchised, and promised among others "access for all to affordable health care and telecommunications". The transition from an authoritarian apartheid to a democratic government committed to all South Africans instead of a privileged minority thus meant that the vast majority of governance systems and policies in the country had to change – and in many cases had to change urgently in order to ensure a smooth transition as well as a fast impact on the high expectations of black South Africans. One of the most urgent priorities was the transformation of the public sector decision-making environment and with the implementation of the RDP it was necessary for effective information systems to back up the government's planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation activities. Fundamental changes also had to be made to systems of communication and information sharing and management, especially within government but also in other sectors.

As noted in Section II.1, the IDRC already had information sector reform as one of its priorities. It was therefore an obvious area for their involvement after the change in government. The NICP was developed after two missions to South Africa. In late 1993 the IDRC's Information Science and Systems Division (ISSD) undertook the first Exploratory Mission to determine in consultation with key players the role that the IDRC could play in this field. A Preparatory Mission consisting of Nabil Harfoush and Kate Wild followed in May 1994. It had the task to develop a broad framework for the development of a national information policy responsive to public sector and needs and priorities. The Mission recommended several actions to address immediate short-term needs. In November 1994 another mission was conducted to review the progress made and to examine some of the technical dimensions. Shahid Akhtar from the IDRC also conducted a mission that led to the IDRC telecommunications reform proposal.

The recommendations of at least two of these missions informed the subsequent establishment of the NICP. Some of their key findings were¹¹:

- The information and telecommunications issues are highly interrelated and interdependent in the current South African environment, and will become more so as the information and communication services continue to converge.
- In telecommunications the apartheid regime provided a telecommunication infrastructure to serve its own interests and devised communications and information exchange opportunities to black communities. Very substantial expansion of the telecommunications network as well as modern data and information service capabilities was therefore seen as crucial for the RDP implementation as well as the implementation of the mission report recommendations.

¹¹ Summary in the IDRC Project Identification Memorandum of the NICP-SA 02294 (94-0611)

- ❑ There was a clear need for the development of a framework of national telecommunications policy linked to the other sectors with which telecommunications policy was converging. It was felt that the development of a broad-based policy framework should also help to facilitate policy development in other policies and programs.
- ❑ The government now required the formulation of a detailed policy and legislative program for successful implementation of the broad policy and strategic framework provided by the RDP.
- ❑ There would be a need to examine the implications of the ICTs for the South African information economy in general.

NICP Goal: To advise and assist the GNU in conceptualizing, designing and implementing information programs, systems and policies in support of its development goals.

NICP Objectives

According to the IDRC Project Approval Document, the NICP would:

- ❑ Advise and assist in the formulation of sector-specific information and communication policies to constitute a National Information Policy.
- ❑ Design and develop a Management Information System/Decision Support System for Government and for the RDP Office to monitor and assess its "lead" projects.
- ❑ Advise and assist the government in coordinating donor support in the ICT sectors.

The NICP was to support a number of different initiatives and activities that together would constitute a national information and communications program. A Senior Technical Advisor was to be appointed to assist with the implementation of specific activities, programs, networks and policies, and to form funding partnerships with the government and other interested parties. Focus for action was to be identified mainly by the RDP Office together with other line Ministries and provincial and local authorities.

III.3 THE NICP: POLICY INTENT

From the NICP objectives it is clear that the NICP was set up from the beginning to have as one of its major thrusts the support of the new government's efforts to establish an enabling policy environment in South Africa. It was envisaged that the Senior Technical Advisor seconded by the IDRC would

- ❑ advise on and facilitate the formulation of an Information and Telecommunications Policy framework for South Africa, and ensure that the stakeholders were involved in the formulation process;

- ❑ assist with the establishment of any structures for advice or policy coordination;
- ❑ advise on, and assist with the formulation of the Freedom of Information/Access to Information Bill for South Africa; and
- ❑ lead and manage information gathering activities that would provide input into the policy formulation process.

The program planners envisaged that initiatives would be undertaken to “harness and harmonize all existing national information programs, institutions and services into an integrated system” – not necessarily into a single, common policy, but a “conglomerate of sectoral policies and systems which would be well coordinated and harmonized” to form a national ICT policy. This was to govern resource allocation among different groups and sectors and guide the activities of the government that dealt with the generation, processing and dissemination of all types of information. It was to lead to more intensive use of information for development and encourage training in the use of information and its application to problem-solving.

Some of the policy initiatives identified as potential projects for IDRC involvement were:

- ❑ The development of a National Telecommunications Policy. This was a request for support by the then Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and Broadcasting, backed up by the urgent need for an expanded telecommunications network to allow for the implementation of ICT assisted development activities.
- ❑ The “Transforming our Library and Information Services Coalition” had requested IDRC assistance to develop a national library and information policy on which reconstruction and development could be based.
- ❑ The development of an SMME information policy that could build information systems and databases for industry, Local Services Centres and different institutions providing services to small, medium and micro-enterprises (SMMEs).
- ❑ Assistance with the development of an Access to Information Act focusing on the freedom of expression and the right to information. A process for this purpose had been initiated by the Office of the then Vice President Thabo Mbeki.
- ❑ Assistance by the Senior Technical Advisor with efforts to bring synergy to donor activities aimed at policy development at national or sectoral level.

All of the above serve as indication of the strong policy focus of the NICP at its inception. It was to allocate direct (seed) funding for policy formulation processes, provide technical assistance and advice to such efforts, and assist with the coordination of donor initiatives in this regard.

III.4 THE NICP: POLICY INFLUENCE

With few exceptions the key informants in this study were of the opinion that the most significant IDRC contribution in the policy arena in the field of information and telecommunications in South Africa came about through the organization's activities in the period before the existence of Acacia. The key informants remember in particular the early missions that led to the development of the NICP; the studies done to inform various initiatives; and the support of the National Telecommunications Policy Project (NTPP).

Two of the key factors that enabled the high profile of the IDRC during this period were (i) the long-standing relationship between the IDRC and the Democratic Movement, and (ii) the close relationship between key IDRC officials and key government decision-makers, such as Bernie Fanaroff, then Director-General in the RDP Office, Andile Ngcaba, Post Master General and later Director General of the Department of Communication, and Pallo Jordan, first Minister of Posts, Telecommunications and Broadcasting. Apart from their obvious role in the allocation of funding, the IDRC officials were respected and acknowledged for their expertise in the ICT field. They were thus invited to serve on high-level committees, participate in important events and provide advice.

This period was also seen by key informants as an exciting and significant time in terms of both policy formulation processes and content development. The IDRC focus on the support of such initiatives provided scope for pioneering interventions that could set the tone for policy formulation processes during the crucial first years of the democratic government.

The NICP was set up as a program that, within the broad framework noted in III.3, would be responsive to the policy needs of various sectors or government departments involved in ICTs. It was therefore likely that the initiatives supported by the program would not necessarily be those envisaged during its planning phase. Several proposed projects did in fact not come to fruition or were absorbed over time by other initiatives (for example the development of a national library and information policy – which was eventually supported by DACST - and an SMME information policy).

This study focused only on those NICP initiatives pointed out by key informants as the most significant in terms of policy influence during this period. It might be useful to follow up on some of the less prominent projects to determine the extent to which they could have influenced policy, and even to do case studies on some of the projects which are outside the NICP, yet in synergy with some of the NICP foci (People outside the IDRC seldom knew which program was funding a particular activity).

Most key informants' perceptions around the policy influence role of the IDRC were shaped by impressions of the IDRC's role in a number of policy related activities which are seen to have accumulated in policy influence. While in these case studies they could not refer to particular clauses in policy documents that might have been the direct result of IDRC activities, they believe that the strong focus on universal service in the Telecommunications Green and White Papers and the establishment of the USA was a result of the IDRC's studies and advocacy in this regard – not exclusively, but as one of the agencies that were promoting these concepts the most strongly from a variety of platforms.

At the same time it must be remembered that apart from the emphasis on universal service and the formation of an “information community”, the NICP did not focus on promoting a particular agenda as far as policy *content* was concerned.

The NICP mechanisms through which perceptions of successful policy influence were created were:

- i. Technical expertise of IDRC staff members in raising policy issues for consideration.
- ii. Support and facilitation of, and participation in, policy formulation processes.
- iii. Support and facilitation of meetings and forums where policy makers and representatives from other sectors meet to discuss policy issues.
- iv. Support of technical/research studies to raise policy issues and inform policy.

i. Utilization of IDRC technical expertise

IDRC NICP officials were often invited to participate in conferences and other events related to policy initiatives. This recognized their expertise and the technical contributions they could make to policy debates. In particular, the most prominent example – the one most often quoted by key informants - is given here.

During the *G7 Ministerial Conference on the Information Society* held in Brussels in 1995, Deputy President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa challenged Western countries to discuss the issue of the Information Society and development with developing countries. As a result, the *Information Society and Development (ISAD) Conference* was held in Johannesburg, South Africa in May 1996. At this event, developing countries for the first time had an opportunity to discuss with developed countries the issues around the Information Society as they applied to developing countries.

According to anecdote the Conference stimulated debate on these issues within South Africa months before the time. A key player in the South African participation in the Conference was to be the National Information Technology Forum (NITF), a forum comprising representatives from government, business, academia, labor and civil society. Founded in November 1995, it saw as its main goal the fostering of debate and the preparation of an integrated policy on the Information Society (it later on became a primary driver of this initiative). Its first main task was the preparation of the South African Position Paper for the ISAD Conference. A consultative process was used for this purpose. The Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST) was given the task to finalize the paper; it created three committees to review the draft prepared by the NITF - a review committee, an editorial committee; and a stakeholders committee.

A new version of the Position Paper was prepared, but found to be unsatisfactory. The COSATU representative was asked to coordinate the finalization of the document. IDRC staff had been participating in the NITF and Kate Wild in particular was drawn into the process to develop the Position Paper. Bernie Fanaroff, then Director General of the RDP Office, asked her to represent him on the DACST committees that were to refine the presentation after the consultative process. She participated as a member of the review committee and became one of two persons who assisted with the final editing of the document.

The Position Paper was a critical reflection on the Information Society. It pointed out the challenges within developing countries compared to those of developed countries. Its key argument was that an “Information Community” should be created that would focus on local needs and participation, and that instead of focusing on individual benefits and competition between parties, an effort should be made to explore the potential of countries to cooperate, to overcome their differences and to work towards a more equitable society by redressing social imbalances. In other words, it promoted a *development-centered* and *people-centered* approach.

The Position Paper was also the first official document in which the concept of the Multipurpose Community Centre (MPCC) was developed in greater detail. The concept had been mooted before, but the Position Paper explored its possible nature and role and placed it within the context of community access to information and communication technologies. The Position Paper also tried to systematize the various components of an Information Society Policy for South Africa.

According to key informants the debates created through the ISAD Conference and the contributions of the Position Paper helped to gather momentum towards the formulation of policies in the telecommunications and information environment. Amongst others it suggested a Green and White Paper process on information policy. It also focused debates in South Africa on issues of rural access to ICTs.

The contribution to the ISAD Conference was one clear example where IDRC expertise assisted in informing debates around policy issues. During the past decade Marc van Ameringen, Kate Wild, Tina James, Shafika Isaacs and others were involved in a number of different initiatives where their technical input fed into policy debates (albeit not all under the aegis of the NICP). The IDRC approach of appointing in key managerial positions people who were knowledgeable in the ICT field certainly assisted in giving the organization a high profile in the ICT community. In particular, Van Ameringen and especially Wild were mentioned frequently by key informants as key figures in during this period. Wild was also involved in the NITF Community Access Task Team and the Technical Task Team that assisted with the review of inputs on the Green Paper on Telecommunication, which was developed as part of the process towards a Telecommunications Policy for South Africa.

One of the most important key informants noted: *“The IDRC was a value-adding partner... (IDRC staff member) had great respect for people and fed us with new ideas and guided processes. We wanted to leapfrog development and they had the expertise to assist. (IDRC staff member) was very passionate, a committed team with flexible ideas. They interacted at a high level, yet was grassroots orientated. They transferred ideas and developed local capacity. They intended to support the ideas in the country and acknowledged that there were capabilities in the country.”* He added that some of the great advantages of the key IDRC staff were their “personal linkages outside the boardroom”, their ability to establish networks, bridge cultural gaps and build trust through their expertise. “if the IDRC gave us a paper to read, we did so”, he noted.

ii. Facilitating and supporting policy processes

The National Telecommunications Policy Project (NTPP)

In December 1994 the Office of the then Minister of Posts, Telecommunications and Broadcasting, Pallo Jordan, approached the IDRC to assist with the structuring and development of a process of formulation of a national telecommunications policy.

The need for a new telecommunications policy was recognized by all parties in 1994¹². The GNU did not support the reform process and lack of appropriate legislation introduced by the apartheid government. The NTF, set up towards the end of 1993, did not have the time to make decisive impact on policy before the elections. The provision of telecommunications services remained highly skewed due to the legacy of the policies of the previous government. Penetration rates for disadvantaged groups remained unacceptably low, even though the mobile licenses included commitments to provide subsidized access in disenfranchised and rural areas. Telkom was already burdened with debt and could not meet these requirements. Business and industry were in favor of the introduction of competition. They believed that it would lead to services and prices in line with international competitors.

After several consultations, the IDRC was formally requested by the Minister in March 1995 to support the policy process. In addition to funding, the IDRC was asked to “provide assistance with the drafting of the Green and White Papers and to provide the Ministry with additional research support and advice”. CIDA was to co-fund the project. An independent structure was established within the IDRC in order to manage and guide the process, named the National Telecommunications Policy Project. This meant that although the project was still under the authority of the Minister, it was administered by a structure outside the existing government administration led by Willie Curry, Advisor to the Minister. According to Horwitz, this was designed to help ensure the independence of the process from the old government bureaucracy, from IMF/World Bank structures and from powerful South African interest groups¹³. Jordan also convened a “Technical Task Team” of local knowledgeable individuals, representative of the main players in the sector occasionally assisted by a small international group.

One of the key players in the policy process was the National Telecommunications Forum (NTF), established in November 1993 to bring together all stakeholders in the telecommunications sector. Their main aim was to formulate recommendations on telecommunications policy and issues for the new dispensation. The NTF was thus also responsible, together with the Minister, for appointing experts to the Technical Task Team for the NTPP.

The IDRC (through the NICP) provided the funding for the NTPP. Despite initial concerns that there should not be too close a working relationship between an IDRC staff member and the NTPP, Kate Wild became part of the international experts assisting the Technical Task Team responsible for the analysis of the Green Paper submissions and the drafting of the report. In particular, she helped to draft the chapters of the analysis dealing with development and international and regional relations, as well as the inputs on the same topics for the subsequent colloquium that was held to present the report to all stakeholders for discussion.

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▪ ¹³ Horwitz, RB (2001). *Communication and Democratic Reform in South Africa*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-79166-9. p 211

The NTPP followed a lengthy process of consultations with stakeholders, trying to align major differences between them. During the Green Paper process, 131 submissions were obtained, amounting to 3989 pages of commentary – most of these from the telecommunications sector. The NTPP organized an extensive information campaign to attract as much input as possible, publicizing the document much wider than the obvious stakeholders. It also used for the first time in government, email addresses to facilitate electronic feedback. The Green Paper was distributed in the official languages, advertised on radio and television, and promotional material developed and distributed. After consolidation of the inputs by the Technical Task Team and a Local Advisory Panel, a National Colloquium on National Telecommunications Policy was held in November 1995 in order to further the discussion and arrive at a consensus position on key issues. Subsequently an Eminent Persons Group was appointed from the colloquium to iron out unresolved issues and to oversee the drafting of the White Paper and subsequent legislation. A second White Paper draft was discussed at an NTF Conference in February 1996 before a third draft was finally tabled before the Minister and Cabinet for approval - in spite of several unresolved issues including market structure and privatization.

One of the main issues put forward by the South African Position Paper at the ISAD Conference was encapsulated in the White Paper through the emphasis on the provision of affordable and accessible universal service to disadvantaged rural areas. The establishment of a Universal Service Agency and a Universal Service was proposed to promote universal service in telecommunications especially among previously disadvantaged communities. The role played by the NICP through the support of the Seán Ó Siuchrú study and subsequent publication of a book on universal service policy and regulation was significant. It helped to keep the issue on the agenda during debates leading up to the formulation of the White Paper. Kate Wild was thus together with the trade unions and SANCO seen as one of the key drivers of the concept to the universal service. One of the key informants noted: *“If it was not for Kate Wild, there would not have been the emphasis on universal service in the White Paper”*. These are perceptions, but they mean that although the IDRC was not the only voice in the policy process, it was certainly recognized as a significant one.

The White Paper was developed within the RDP framework under then Minister Jordan. By the time that the Act had to be passed, GEAR was slowly replacing the RDP and Jay Naidoo had taken over as Minister. In the process several changes were made to some of the key White Paper concepts. This caused dismay among external stakeholders, but in spite of disappointment with the Telecommunications Act (which was eventually promulgated in November 1996), the *process* which led to it was widely applauded for its innovation. In many respects it became a model for reform in other sectors. Horwitz notes¹⁴: *“In marked contrast to the fenced-off, elite-driven restructurings in most countries, the South African telecommunications Green Paper/White Paper process constructed a genuine public sphere in which all relevant parties had access and the ability to participate in ongoing discussions and negotiations is substantive, rather than merely symbolic ways. Telecommunications reform in South Africa was conducted with a democratizing context and was itself a process of unique participatory and deliberative kind”*. And further: *“...the principle of universal service, enshrined in the telecommunications reform process, embodied a commitment to equalizing social access to information and communication, thus placing equitable access to communication resources at the heart of the democratization process”*.

¹⁴ Horwitz, RB (2001). *Communication and Democratic Reform in South Africa*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-79166-9. pp 211 and 256.

The telecommunications reform also stimulated an informed debate over the proposed privatization of state ownership.

As noted before in this section, most key informants in this study indicated that one of the most significant contributions of the IDRC to policy in South Africa was its support of the NTPP. It provided material resources (joint funding of the NTPP with the Ministry), brought intellectual resources and engaged government officials strategically. Moreover, several of the key informants believe that the IDRC had played a direct and important role in the design of the process, which has been held up as a model for policy formulation processes in a democratic South Africa. "*It forced government to make policies in the right way*", noted one respondent. Several of the informants were also of the opinion that the innovative process had greatly enhanced the quality of the policy.

Other initiatives

Among others the NICP supported the second round of broadcasting policy development, initial research on the development of an Internet policy, followed by support for an e-commerce policy formulation process which was completed in 2002. Although these initiatives were not included in this study, they confirm the IDRC's credibility and active role in the ICT policy arena in South Africa over the past decade.

iii. Research

Wild notes that the NICP was established without an explicit focus on research, but rather as an initiative aimed at the facilitation of processes and the support of projects as required within its broad objectives. However, research was always conceived as one instrument for achieving project objectives. The NICP therefore initiated and supported a number of research studies aimed in particular at informing policy initiatives. These were highly regarded by informants who felt that these studies had contributed significantly to policy and to policy implementation debates.

Examples are:

- One of the first influential studies supported by IDRC (pre-NICP) was conducted by Nabil Harfoush and Kate Wild in November 1994 (refer to Section III.2). It helped to initiate the establishment of the National Information Project in the RDP Office in 1995¹⁵, which was aimed at refocusing government information systems and bringing them in line with the RDP's emphasis on service delivery. Kate Wild was later asked to help manage the NIP. While this Program initially aimed to refocus government information systems to bring them in line with the RDP emphasis on service delivery; it later shifted somewhat towards a more community-based approach. Efforts were made to link it to a national information policy initiative. Due to several internal obstacles and the closure of the RDP Office, the initiative did not come to fruition.
- An Irish consultant, Seán Ó Siochrú of Nexus Research Cooperative, conducted a study between January and April 1996 on "*Universal Service, Policy and Regulation: A Selective Review of Experience Internationally*", which was later published as a book by the IDRC¹⁶. The study was initiated in 1995 to inform and later on to follow up on the Green

¹⁵ Wild, K. 1996. NICP and NTPP Second Progress Report: Dec 1995 – Mar 1996.

¹⁶ Ó Siochrú, S. 1996. *Universal Service, Policy and Regulation: A Selective Review of Experience Internationally*. Published by IDRC, Ottawa, Canada. ISBN 0-88936-8090.

Paper/White Paper NTPP process. In particular it was aimed at informing the work of the Universal Service Agency. As noted in Section III.4, the IDRC was particularly interested in the universal service delivery challenge facing South Africa – the need to address both the sophisticated first world business sector and the neglected black population in both urban and rural areas, often without access even to a basic telephone service. Telecenters and MPCCs were at the time the key instruments for promoting the concept of universal access. According to the key informants the book contributed significantly to the debate on universal service during the telecommunications reform process.

- A number of IDRC studies focused on telecenters and Multi-Purpose Community Centres (MPCCs) in South Africa. Together with the NITF, the IDRC focused much of its efforts on ensuring a better understanding of the nature and possible role that MPCCs (or similar instruments) could play in (South) Africa. One of the significant studies in this field was the compilation of an inventory of MPCCs conducted by the NITF during 1997-1998, with project leaders Peter Benjamin and Al Karaki, and with funding from the NICP. The survey found over 250 MPCCs existing in South Africa. In order to share experiences, agree on a way forward for MPCCs and create partnerships that could offer services to MPCCs, the MPCC'98 Conference was held in Alexandra. Resolutions adapted led among others to a national secretariat for MPCC, facilitated by the Universal Service Agency. According to Wild the information flowing regularly from this study increased the knowledge and understanding of what MPCCs were and contributed to an eventual decision by IDRC to fund the USA's experimental telecenter program.

This particular study informed policy implementation rather than policy formulation. However, key informants noted that the active role played by the IDRC in stimulating debate on universal service since 1994 through studies, reports and presentations from public platforms, contributed to policy debates and the focus on universal service in policy documents, which eventually led to the establishment of the USA (Although a recent evaluation of the USA's MPCC initiative was not favorable, several informants were of the opinion that most problems arose as a result of management weaknesses rather than as a result of weak policies and unsound concepts).

The last activity of the NICP was the support of a study which led to the publication of the *Information Policy Handbook for Southern Africa*.¹⁷

- The book contains valuable and comprehensive information on important information policy initiatives in southern Africa, with specific reference to the many initiatives in South Africa during the last decade. It reflects on the lessons learned from a variety of policy interventions and discusses their relevance for African countries. The book has been widely distributed, also on CD-ROM; its marketing is done by word of mouth. Although it could not yet be determined with certainty whether the book is widely used by current policy makers, among nearly all the key informants it is regarded as a valuable source of information and lessons. Examples of its influence exist. Both at the University of the Witwatersrand and at Stellenbosch University in South Africa it is used in a Masters course on Information Policy, Law and Ethics. The Tanzanian Task Force of the Minister of Communications and Transport has been mandated to draft a national ICT policy proposal.

¹⁷ James, T (Ed) (2001). *An Information Policy Handbook for Southern Africa*. Published by the International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, Canada

They used the book as a reference during retreats and the drafting of the proposal and also recommend it to others.

The research studies were usually conducted by local and/or international consultants or academic experts. Especially during the early years international consultants / academic experts often formed part of studies or task groups involved in policy related processes. The IDRC was instrumental in mobilizing high-level international expertise. They were given credit for not just harnessing expertise from Canada or from the North, but also from the South. Experts from India, Canada, Ireland and UNECA were brought to assist with studies and advice related to ICT policy development and implementation.

The local consultants and academic experts used for the research were in general experienced in the ICT field; however several acknowledged that the involvement with the policy projects and studies had developed their insights and understanding of the policy issues.

The use of individual consultants in research projects limited the policy research capacity building opportunities. According to several key informants this approach presents a major problem: a lack of continuity in the research informing policy. All the studies (with the exception later of the monitoring and evaluation initiatives through ELSA) were in essence once-off initiatives conducted for a specific, usually immediate purpose. This limited opportunities for capacity building in systematic, long-term sustained policy research. An IDRC study has in fact indicated that such capacity is limited in South Africa¹⁸. Poor, superficial policies might result from second or third rounds which are not based on research information and analyses of earlier policy implementation activities.

A need remains to develop a sustained base of policy research expertise in South Africa, for example through the provision of a long-term, secure funding base to relevant academic or research centers rather than to individuals. This will help such centers to obtain sector results for policy implementation strategies through longitudinal, comparative long-term research studies that can assess whether models have failed or succeeded.

iv. Creating opportunities for interaction

The final mechanism through which the NICP created opportunities for policy influence was the support or organization of forums (including workshops, conferences, consultative meetings) where all stakeholders in a particular policy initiative meet, or where people across sectors and interests can share information and ideas on policy-related issues. The various policy development processes facilitated by the IDRC are examples of this, as all included consultative meetings. Funding was also provided to other bodies for this purpose, for example to the NITF to further their ideas on an information policy and MPCCs.

These events are opportunities for policy influence, but a clear line between such an event or series of events and a particular change in mindset or behavior has not yet been traced. One event noted by several key informants as an important NICP contribution to stimulating policy debate was the three-day Helderfontein workshop “*Empowering Communities in the Information Society*” held concurrently with the *ISAD Conference* on 15-17 May 1996.

¹⁸ Miller J and James T. *Assessing the Need for and Potential Nature of a Regional Policy Secretariat for Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) in Southern Africa*, IDRC Study, Aug 2000.

The workshop was sponsored by the NICP, CSIR and DBSA and brought together a range of ICT stakeholders from the region. Civil society in particular was very well represented. The workshop aimed to discuss various perspectives regarding information and communication policy in developing countries. It was also an opportunity to increase pressure towards an information policy framework in South Africa and to ensure that community needs were put on the forefront of information policy discussions. The issue of MPCCs in its broadest sense as a vehicle for access of the community to ICTs was central to many discussions.

The mix of people and resulting debates at the Helderfontein Conference thus brought together the many strands of community development needs and helped to sharpen perspectives on universal service and community access to ICTs – a process which continued with the establishment of the USA and the more intense focus on MPCCs (also by Acacia) during the late nineties. Again the IDRC influence was noted not only because of its support for the event, but also for its intellectual contribution. *“It was driven by Kate Wild; she was everywhere”*, noted a key informant.

According to another key informant, these activities also assisted greatly in building the capacity of participants. *“They generated new issues and made us understand that the field was much broader. In IDRC sponsored activities there was always a vision of a future world.”*

Refer to Table III-1 for a summary of the IDRC’s policy influence intent and activities, the type of policy influence and the factors that facilitated the policy influence in the NICP.

INTERVENTION	INTENDED POLICY INFLUENCE	POLICY INFLUENCE ACTIVITIES	TYPE OF POLICY INFLUENCE	FACILITATED BY
<p>The National Information and Communication Program (NICP)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Affecting the national ICT policy regime in South Africa <p><i>Main instruments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitation of policy processes <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance as required with policy initiatives 	<p>i) Participation in, and input into, conference and task team activities related to policy issues and processes</p>	<p><i>Broadening policy horizons:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Introducing new concepts to frame debates, putting ideas on the agenda, and stimulating debate. 	<p>International focus on ICTS.</p> <p>Close relationship of IDRC with ANC and Democratic Movement since the eighties, and trust that flowed from this relationship between key decision-makers from both organizations.</p> <p>Initial RDP focus.</p> <p>Initial need for government to work outside existing bureaucracy.</p> <p>IDRC and ANC Alliance/GNU interest in wide participation in consultative processes, transparency and universal service for ICTs.</p> <p>Need for drastic change in the various sectors related to ICTs, due to transition to a democratic dispensation.</p> <p>Respect for, and acknowledgement of expertise of IDRC staff.</p> <p>Need for urgent reform in the ICT arena, as a field underpinning many democratic systems and processes.</p> <p>IDRC's early entry into the ICT arena, both regionally and in South Africa - before many other donors.</p> <p>Focus on contracting high-level consultants to deliver authoritative studies.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">KEY CONSTRAINTS</p> <p>Change in leadership and transition from RDP to GEAR, necessitating new policy directions.</p> <p>Turf war between various government departments, and a hesitation to integrate ICT policy across sectors</p> <p>Change in Acacia leadership</p> <p>Need to balance strong private sector lobby, labor and society and government interests</p>
		<p>ii) Facilitation and support of policy development processes</p>	<p><i>Broadening policy horizons:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Providing opportunities for networking and learning between policy makers and other stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/> Stimulating quiet dialogue among decision makers <p><i>Affecting policy regimes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Assisting with fundamental re-design of policies and programs 	
		<p>iii) Research studies</p>	<p><i>Expanding policy capacities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Improving the knowledge of participants in policy processes <p><i>Broadening policy horizons:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Introducing new concepts to frame debates, putting ideas on the agenda 	
		<p>iv) Creating opportunities for interaction</p>	<p><i>Broadening policy horizons:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Providing opportunities for networking and learning between policy makers and stakeholders 	

Chapter IV

THE SOUTH AFRICAN ACACIA ADVISORY COMMITTEE

IV.1 THE ACACIA PROGRAM IN AFRICA¹⁹

The Program Design

ACACIA I IN AFRICA: OBJECTIVES

- Demonstrate how access to information and communication technologies can most effectively contribute to enabling communities to solve development problems in ways that build upon local goals, cultures, strengths and processes;
- Build a body of knowledge identifying the policies, technologies and methodologies that are most instrumental to promoting affordable and effective use of ICTs by poor disadvantaged communities; and
- Create a growing momentum in support of expanded rural access.

The Program Design

According to anecdote, the idea of Acacia emerged at the 1996 ISAD Conference and perhaps more strongly at the “sister” conference for civil society held at Helderfontein in Johannesburg. These conferences were the first of their kind held in a developing country and they were thus from the outset closely aligned with efforts by developing countries, particularly in Africa, “to ensure that their voices would help shape the Global Information Society”.

Acacia I (the first five year phase) was one of the first major donor-supported initiatives in Africa to focus on breaking new ground in the comprehensive understanding of the role ICTs can play in community development, especially among poor, disadvantaged communities. At the time precedents in Africa did not exist and the focus was to be on lessons learned from project experiences.

As there were few ICT projects on the ground in most African countries, this meant that Acacia also had to initiate projects that were outside its normal research focus. It was therefore somewhat of an anomaly in the IDRC portfolio of programs.

In March 1997, the Board of Governors of the IDRC approved Acacia as a program aimed at establishing the potential of ICTs to empower poor African communities.

Acacia was to focus its actions on four fronts, including policy. In the conceptualization of Acacia the importance was recognized of policy frameworks linked to research, as well as the need for demonstration models that could inform public policy initiatives in the countries participating in Acacia. Issues such as affordability, sustainability and the easy use of technologies came to the fore as priorities for study (and not only ICT access which often dominated debates).

The need for an enabling policy environment and thus sound ICT policies in the participating countries became important issues in the Acacia approach.

In its approval of Acacia the IDRC also recognized that social and policy research would be critical in assisting with the possible replication of those Acacia pilot projects considered to be successful.

The Evaluation and Learning System of Acacia (ELSA)

Apart from these aspects of the Acacia program design, in each of the participating countries common issues quickly arose out of the national strategies, leading to a recognition of the need to address a broad spectrum of ICT policy issues – across countries. This led to a decision that Acacia should focus on projects that addressed policy issues which required a sub-regional or regional perspective.

This approach meant that in the emerging ICT policy arena Acacia had the potential to contribute significantly to the total knowledge base on ICTs for development in Africa, especially around issues of universal access and community development.

ELSA was conceptualized as a “learning, evaluation and management tool”, the main instrument through which Acacia aimed to contribute to policy development. ELSA was to test the core Acacia hypothesis and stimulate learning in the communities where development was to take place. It had to balance the management needs of Acacia, the learning needs of donor organizations and, “most importantly, the learning needs of those responsible for policy and implementation in Africa”.

One of the target groups for ELSA activities was therefore policy makers who would require a more solid basis for decision-making than was currently available.

The initial ELSA strategy focused on establishing the mechanisms through which community learning and impact assessment could take place in the context of telecenter development. The telecenters as a major Acacia thrust were seen as points where many of the critical issues converged – policy, infrastructure, technology and applications. It was envisaged that new knowledge would be generated through studies and monitoring and evaluation activities across the participating countries, facilitating opportunities for comparative studies on the continent.

¹⁹ Information quoted from various Acacia project documents

It was furthermore envisaged that apart from ELSA, discrete research activities would be undertaken, particularly to contribute to the tools available to support decision-making on the extension of ICTs to rural areas. Promising research would also be investigated for incorporation into ELSA, thus retaining a flexible research agenda.

IV.2 ACACIA IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to project documents²⁰ of the first National Acacia Strategy (Acacia I) for South Africa, its goal was community empowerment aimed at

- ❑ stronger community voices in political dialogue;
- ❑ increased capacity to solve community problems and reduce community tensions;
- ❑ extended access to basic services including education and health; and
- ❑ promotion of income generating opportunities.

The key areas for Acacia South Africa were identified as (i) the development of multi-purpose telecenters that can “support the growth and concentration of community markets through the provision of a wide variety of public and private goods and services”; and (ii) the extension of the telecenter concept to address specific development problems, “particularly but not only in the field of education”.

Projects were eventually implemented in four main areas:

- i) Policy* (Examples of projects: SA Government Internet Policy; Broadcasting Policy; The Cybercity Project)
- ii) Education/Schools* (Examples of projects: National survey of ICT Education in South African Schools; Regional School Networking Project; Empowering People’s Organizations with Internet Access; School Networks)
- iii) Gender* (Examples of projects: Support for the Women’s Net Information Strategy Team Workshop)
- iv) Telecenters* (Examples of projects: SA Telecenter Development Project - through the USA; Pilot Telecenter Monitoring, Impact Assessment and Learning System – through the USA; Msundusi River Catchment Community Information and Communication Network; Workshop on Harnessing ICTs for Tourism – Local Economic Development)

Cross-cutting issues in Acacia reflected in the South African projects are gender, human resource development, technology research, social policy research, youth and ELSA. The aims of the research component are to encourage research on the linkages between access to, and use of, ICTs at the community level and the capacities of communities to define and address their own development problems; and to promote ICTs as an appropriate means of linking research organizations working on development issues, particularly in the NGO sector.

²⁰ <http://www.idrc.ca/acacia/outputs/op-sastr.htm>

IV.3 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN ACACIA ADVISORY COMMITTEE

As noted in Chapter III, the National Information Technology Forum (NITF) was established in 1995 with representation from key sectors, which include government, public sector, private sector, organized labor, academia, NGOs, CBOs and other civil society organizations. It saw its role as advocacy and developing clear policy positions to build the South African information community. Its objectives were in alignment with those of Acacia and it was involved in several projects related to the interests of Acacia, such as the Presidential Review Commission on the public service and the South African Information Technology Industry Strategy Project (SAITIS). It was involved in a study on MPCCs and led the conceptualization of a broad consultative process on the Information Society.

In 1998 the IDRC in conjunction with the NITF initiated the establishment of a South African Acacia Advisory Committee (SAAAC) and a SAAAC secretariat that would administer and coordinate all the Acacia activities. The SAAAC was to be based at the Development Bank of Southern Africa.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN ACACIA ADVISORY COMMITTEE²¹

Goal:

To assist Acacia in defining and reviewing its direction in South Africa

Objectives:

- ❑ To review and make recommendations with regard to areas and priorities of Acacia program focus, in light of both Acacia Initiatives and evolving broader ICT development goals
- ❑ To assess whether programmatic areas of focus are consistent with evolving national development priorities
- ❑ To build linkages and establish communication structures with the wider information community
- ❑ To review the learning and evaluation strategy at project and program level
- ❑ To ensure that outcomes and lessons are learned and disseminated to leaders and institutions with regard to ICT development
- ❑ To support/facilitate national coordination of ICT related development activities and outcomes
- ❑ To make recommendations to leverage co-funding for Acacia projects
- ❑ To make recommendations to ensure long-term sustainability of the Acacia Initiative
- ❑ To identify and promote opportunities for linkages with and coordination of regional activities, including with regard to other areas of Acacia activity.

²¹ Project Approval Document, IDRC

The SAAAC was to consist of one representative from each of the five stakeholder sectors represented on the NITF, namely government and the public sector, the private sector, organized labor, academia, research and educational institutions; and NGOs, CBOs and civil society organizations. The committee would further extend its membership to include four representatives from gender structures, MPCCs, schools and libraries, rural development communities and youth structures. It was envisaged that all Committee members would be “persons of standing, representing credible constituencies or organizations with regard to ICTs and the information community”. The Secretariat would be staffed by one technical coordinator and one administrative officer.

In order to constitute the Committee, the NITF followed a transparent and consultative process. Nominations were publicly sought and a set of criteria was used to make the final recommendations to the IDRC. The Committee included members from various NGOs, COSATU, the USA, Telkom and three education institutions, including two universities. Two of the ten members were women and four were white. Another 33 nominees were recommended as an extended resource for the SAAAC.

The SAAAC “outputs” were to include:

- ❑ Two meetings per year.
- ❑ Over two years, four stakeholder discussion workshops or forums where the Acacia program can be assessed in terms of relevance and appropriateness for the South African context
- ❑ An annual report which outlines the outcomes from a South African perspective.
- ❑ An information dissemination program which will include appropriate communication channels, information awareness campaigns, circulation of relevant information to the media and the Internet, etc.
- ❑ Focus meetings, if required, to deal with specific issues related to Acacia in South Africa.
- ❑ The establishment of a SAAAC Secretariat.

The SAAAC was launched on 10 March 1999. Steven Mncube of the Development Bank of Southern Africa and then Chairperson of the NITF was appointed as to lead the Committee, with Gordon Coburne as Secretariat.

IV.4 THE SAAAC: POLICY INTENT

(Note: This chapter focuses only on the policy influence of the Advisory Committee activities – analyzing other Acacia projects lies outside the scope of this report).

According to its objectives, the SAAAC was in a position to influence policy through the following mechanisms:

- ❑ The dissemination of lessons learned in Acacia to appropriate audiences.

- ❑ The facilitation and coordination of national ICT related development activities.
- ❑ Participation in national and regional policy related activities.

However, early in its deliberations - at its second meeting in October 1999 - the SAAAC decided not to pursue the issue of an overarching information society policy and rather to play a role in reviewing policy and implementation activities. Among others this was in response to a call by President Mbeki for the country to focus on policy implementation rather than on more policy formulation. It was felt that the IDRC was well positioned with the government and was regularly pulled into policy initiatives. SAAAC therefore in its subsequent activities did not have a specific focus on exerting policy influence through participation in policy formulation.

IV.5 THE SAAAC: POLICY INFLUENCE

During the inaugural meeting of the SAAAC the issue of obtaining government buy-in into the SAAAC activities was discussed. At the time this was considered to be crucial for the positioning of the committee if it was to play a significant role in policy influence. The Committee also sought (unsuccessfully) to obtain appropriate government representation on the SAAAC. As noted in Section IV.4, during its second meeting the Committee decided to focus on the review of policy and relevant implementation activities rather than on policy formulation processes.

In spite of this, the SAAAC participated in the following activities which provided it with an opportunity to influence policy:

i) Participation in policy initiatives

- ❑ SAAAC was represented on the Task Team of the Government Communications and Information Services (GCIS), the body responsible among others for promoting development through the creation of MPCCs.
- ❑ SAAAC members participated in the e-Commerce policy processes.
- ❑ SAAAC was represented on the project Steering Committee of the South African Information Technology Industry Strategy Projects (SAITIS), which has a strong emphasis on job creation and social upliftment. It has a significant focus on rural and under-served communities and on the historically disadvantaged. The extent of policy influence would depend on the level of active participation.
- ❑ According to reports SAAAC was investigating ways through which to provide research support to these initiatives.

ii) Selection of Acacia Projects

In April and October 1999 SAAAC was involved in two rounds of project submissions within the Acacia framework. The support of either policy processes or demonstration projects for policy purposes might eventually lead to policy impact. During these two rounds several projects were selected that had the potential to be part of a research initiative that could inform policy - for example through ELSA. This was not investigated any further.

iii) Participation in policy-related forums

SAAAC members participated in the *First Acacia Ministerial Meeting* in Maputo on 22-23 September 1999 and ensured that the South African Minister attended and was fully informed and sensitized to the discussions and decisions that needed to be taken. Members also attended the *African Development Forum Focus on Globalization and the Information Age* in October 1999 in Addis Ababa, and the *School Networking in Africa Workshop* in Namibia in July 2000.

iv) Dissemination

The SAAAC did not hold any workshops to aid in the dissemination of information on Acacia. Its main instruments for dissemination of information on lessons learnt through Acacia were to be the ELSA studies and a project called *Acacia: Disseminating the Fruits*. The policy influence of the ELSA studies still need to be determined, as it is still too early to consider their possible impact. The *Disseminating the Fruits* project is in process and consists of five videos that will examine how Acacia has empowered communities, schools, women, rural development and workers. The product will be disseminated on video and CD-ROM, in short documents and on a Website with streaming video and stills.

SAAAC had planned various activities that had to be put on hold pending the IDRC's strategic review of Acacia during the course of 2000. Some of these activities were the convening of a donor summit to leverage funding for ICTs in development, strengthening of regional cooperation and the development of a SAAAC Website for the dissemination of information.

Among the vast majority of the key informants there was consensus that the SAAAC during the 27 months of its operation had not played a significant role in influencing ICT policy initiatives in South Africa - contrary to the situation with respect to the NICP, where perceptions were that it had exerted substantial policy influence especially during its early years. It is important to note the contextual factors given by key informants in explaining why the SAAAC did not influence policy; these can mainly be attributed to the changing national context in South Africa:

- During recent years (especially after the implementation of GEAR) the consultation and participatory nature of policy formulation processes in South Africa changed compared to the first few years of the democratic dispensation. Policies are often written by consultants, with fewer and less systematic mechanisms (than for example in the NTPP) for participation by, and wide consultation with, stakeholders across all sectors of society.
- The embracing of a somewhat more autocratic approach to policy formulation by (parts of) the ANC government was accompanied by suspicion among certain stakeholders, especially in

the private sector, that their voices would not be heard at open forums. In the ICT sector this was particularly apparent after the NTPP process. As a result, there is less interest among stakeholders in lengthy, extended processes and forums where policy issues are discussed.

Compared to Mozambique and even Uganda with relatively few players in the ICT policy arena, the South African ICT environment is complex with many different types of role players. It was estimated that during 1999/2000 around 80 ICT policy related processes requiring multi-stakeholder involvement were taking place²². Among others a third cellular license was being allocated, a second fixed line operator was being mooted, ICASA was establishing following a merger between the broadcasting and telecommunications regulators, the DPSA was developing an IT policy for government, a state IT agency (SITA) was being created, SAITIS was formulated, the Broadcasting Act was being reformulated and an e-Commerce policy was being developed. With the strong private, organized labor and civil society sectors, many agendas have to be considered and balanced.

- Furthermore, government departments often did not cooperate towards integrated policymaking, or actively disagreed about “turf”.

It is therefore now far more difficult than in the early years for one party to play a leading role on policy formulation activities in the ICT sectors. Many more platforms and umbrella organizations exist in the private and NGO sectors, for example. Alliances are formed and pressure on processes exerted from many different quarters. The relevant government departments are usually the drivers of policy processes and do not any more make use of external agencies, as was the case with the NTPP.

- Several key informants noted that the SAAAC had been set up to reflect representation by the key sectors and a focus on community interests and universal service. To some extent this had to be done at the cost of appointing high profile individuals in their own right. The Committee was thus seen, as one of the key informants noted, “as just another committee linked to a donor initiative”.
- Another factor noted by a key informant pointed to tensions caused by different IDRC officials envisaging different roles for the SAAAC, causing confusion and a lack of guidance of the Committee.

According to relevant documents the following factors related to the IDRC itself could also have affected the SAAAC activities:

- The Committee felt strongly that it was hamstrung by the strategic review of the thrust and impact of Acacia and of the IDRC Regional Office for Southern Africa (ROSA); activities had to be put on hold while clarity on the way forward was awaited from the IDRC.
- As noted above, according to several key informants at least one key official in the IDRC wanted the SAAAC to operate at a high level where they could play an advocacy role among Ministers and key government officials, helping them to define the vision around ICTs. On the other hand they had established themselves with a different focus in mind. With the

²² Progress Report of the SAAAC. Sept 2000.

subsequent review of both Acacia and the ROSA, the SAAAC felt itself unable to determine what its role was to be; it also felt that it lacked guidance from the IDRC on its position.

- According to key informants, another factor that negatively affected the operation of SAAAC was the lack of time or commitment that prevented a number of members from participating fully in the activities of the Committee.

Key informants' views were that if the SAAAC was to influence policy within this context, it would have had to have very strong leadership, a clear vision of their possible role in policy initiatives and a strategy to fulfill that role. Members would also have had to be well-positioned, vocal and respected among policy makers for their (policy) expertise. The key informants were of the opinion that to a lesser or greater extent these elements were missing from the work of the SAAAC.

Refer to Table IV.1 for a summary of the policy intent, activities, type of influence and factors that influenced the work of the Committee.

Table IV.1

Intervention	Intended Policy Influence	Policy Influence Activities	Type of Policy Influence	Factors affecting possible Policy Influence
<p>The South African Acacia Advisory Committee (SAAAC)</p>	<p>Committee decided to focus on policy review and implementation rather than on processes related to policy formulation.</p> <p>According to objectives still in a position to influence policy through the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination of lessons learned in Acacia • Facilitation and coordination of national ICT development activities • Participation in national and regional policy related activities 	<p>According to anecdote these were limited in scope</p> <p>i) Participation in policy processes and forums related to policy</p> <p>ii) Dissemination activities (too early to determine impact)</p>	<p>Extent of influence unclear; perception is that it was limited, if at all.</p> <p><i>Broadcasting policy horizons:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing new concepts to frame debates, putting ideas on the agenda and stimulating debate 	<p>Changing nature of policy formulation processes with shift from GNU to ANC government and from RDP to GEAR - less transparency and participation</p> <p>Complexity of the South African ICT environment, with many players and many agendas.</p> <p>Lack of interest by government departments in cooperation and integration of policies, resulting in some cases even in a “turf war”.</p> <p>SAAAC members not all regarded as ICT experts; thus Committee viewed as similar to those of other stakeholders.</p> <p>Lack of SAAAC image of strong leadership, expertise and vision - as organization and as individuals.</p> <p>Decision by SAAAC not to focus on policy processes as primary activity.</p> <p>Uncertainty brought about by Acacia review and IDRC restructuring.</p> <p>Perceived lack of guidance by IDRC staff.</p>

Chapter V

POLICY AND GENDER IN THE NICP AND THE SAAAC

V.1 THE CONTEXT

V.1.1 Developments in Africa

A focus on gender and ICTs in developing countries, and particularly in Africa, started to emerge in 1995 when commentators (including the IDRC's Gender and Information Working Group²³), noted that the information revolution was bypassing women and that information-society literature had been conspicuously silent on gender issues. Little research had been done to address the circumstances of women in developing countries and the gender and information dimension of science and technology for development had been absent from discussions at international forums. It was found that governments and development agencies tended to ignore women's relationships to technology. They treated technologies as value-free tools and assumed that the adoption of these technologies would naturally lead to development²⁴.

Gradually organizations and forums started to emphasize the link between ICTs and gender. The 1997 GK I Conference in Toronto gave women a platform to advocate an increase in their share in the benefits of the information-technology revolution and to argue for "connectivity for all". In Africa women also began to articulate issues for the region. They started to realize that the information age offered opportunities to African women to leapfrog over other developments they had missed and that if African women did not participate in it, they would find themselves further marginalized²⁵.

According to Hafkin and Jorge²⁶, gender and ICT began to appear on the donor and international development agenda only around 1998, notably with papers presented to the ITU World Communications Development Conference in Vallarta, and the IDRC's sponsorship of the track on Women and ICT for the United Nations ECA Fortieth anniversary conference on *African Women and Economic Development: Investing in our Future*.

²³ IDRC GIWG. 1995. Information as a transformative tool: the gender dimension. In United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development Working Group, ed. Missing links: gender equity in science and technology for development. IDRC, Ottawa, ON, Canada, pp 268.

²⁴ Stamp, P. 1989. Technology, gender and power in Africa. IDRC, Ottawa, ON Canada. *Reference in Gender and the Information Revolution in Africa*, Eds. EM Rathgeber and EO Adera, IDRC, Ottawa, ON Canada. 2000, p 4

²⁵ Knight, P, et al. 1995. Increasing Internet connectivity in sub-Saharan Africa – issues, options and World Bank Group role. World Bank, Washington DC, USA. *Reference in Gender and the Information Revolution in Africa*, Eds. Rathgeber EM and Adera EO, IDRC, Ottawa, ON Canada. 2000, p 10

²⁶ Hafkin NJ and Jorge S, Get in and Get in Early: Ensuring Women's Access to and Participation in ICT Projects. Paper prepared for submission to ISIS International-Manila, Women in Action No. 2-2002, "Women and Communications".

Attended by 2 600 people, the ECA conference sought to develop strategic actions to speed up the socio-economic development of Africa by integrating gender issues into development policies, plans and programs. In the opinion of the authors it is only in 2002 that important development players, such as the World Bank, the EU and USAID started to take seriously the integration of gender in ICT projects.

Some of the key issues related to gender and ICTs in Africa have been identified as²⁷:

- ❑ Women and other members of civil society need to join forums to convince policy makers of the importance of an enabling environment in which communication and communication technologies can flourish.
- ❑ ICTs must be part of the curriculums for girls and boys everywhere in Africa from an early age.
- ❑ Men and women should be encouraged to develop content relevant to their interests and needs.
- ❑ Owing to the growing complexity of the technology, information facilitators are needed to interface with communities to help them meet their information needs.
- ❑ As a vital partner in extending connectivity in Africa, the private sector needs to realize the importance of access to ICTs for all groups in society, including women.

Although the telecommunications policies adopted by many African governments are typically intended to promote the spread of ICTs to less advantaged parts of the country, they make no distinction between the attitudes and needs of male and female users. Instead, it is assumed that such policies will provide equal benefits to all. Rathgeber points out that it has been shown that “gender-neutral” policies tend to favor men, as they usually have more resources and better education than women. For this reason

“highly targeted efforts are needed to involve women and thereby ensure that their needs are integrated into ICT policies. Women themselves must become involved in ICT policy formulation”.

Rathgeber²⁸ writes that if women are to participate fully in all aspects of ICT development, ICT policies themselves will also have to include a gender dimension. As the field of ICTs is a relatively new area for policy research in Africa, it provides an opportunity for gender concerns to be integrated from the beginning into policy formulation.

Rathgeber further notes that the starting point for encouraging women to participate in ICT policy-making is to create an awareness in them of the importance of the information revolution and to help them to see the opportunities it holds for women.

²⁷ Hafkin NJ, Convergence of Concepts: Gender and ICTs in Africa. /n Gender and the Information Revolution in Africa, Eds. Rathgeber EM and Adera EO, IDRC, Ottawa, ON Canada. 2000, p 12

²⁸ Rathgeber, EM, Women, Men and ICTs in Africa: Why Gender is an Issue. /n Gender and the Information Revolution in Africa, Eds. Rathgeber EM and Adera EO, IDRC, Ottawa, ON Canada. 2000, p 22

Women have to understand their own information needs and develop sufficient technical knowledge to be credible advocates of their views in policy debates. Strategies therefore have to be developed to deliberately involve women in adopting new technologies. Rathgeber argues that these strategies should focus on how to integrate women into ongoing processes while exploring and analyzing the extent to which these processes meet the needs of African women and take account of their perspectives.

V.1.2 Gender in South Africa

South Africa's history of colonialism and apartheid has had a great impact on social systems, fracturing society along racial, class and gender lines and institutionalizing gender and racial inequalities. The inequality of women within society was exacerbated by systems such as migrant labor which made black women more vulnerable and dependent on their own productivity and resourcefulness; land allocation by chiefs in rural areas which discriminated against women; customary law which in essence declared women inferior to men; and restrictions on the movement of women into cities and job reservation, which meant that their only recourse was the informal sector or casual (usually highly exploitative) work.

In response to their situation, black women (i) developed survival strategies to increase household income and create networks of social support, and (ii) organized themselves politically - independently of, or alongside men²⁹.

The ANC Women's League was established in the early 1950's. Together with other organizations they played a significant role in the struggle against apartheid, especially during the 1980's when women became a powerful force in community-level resistance. During the 1980s a range of NGOs focusing on women emerged. Together with the political movements they provided fertile ground for the development of women leaders that could play key roles during the period of transformation to democracy. Similarly, women activists in exile were also aware of the need for a focus on gender issues and upon their return helped raise awareness of the need for women to be represented during negotiations towards a new democratically elected government. In 1992 the Women's National Coalition (WNC) was formed. It brought together women's structures from political as well as community-based organizations and brought gender equality into the mainstream of public debate.

Gender issues were thus on the agenda during the multi-party negotiations which led to the first democratic elections in 1994. The ANC government committed itself to greater equity and established a 30% quota on its party list for representation to Parliament. The Constitution guarantees the equality of women and a number of regulations have been put in place to ensure that gender issues are addressed by government and by the private sector.

²⁹ Baden S, Hasim S and Meintjies S. 1998. *Country gender profile: Report prepared for SIDA*. ISSN: 1359-1398. p 10. <http://www.ids.ac.uk/bridge>

A statutory Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) is funded by, but independent from government. Among others it monitors the implementation of government policy as it relates to gender. Human rights are protected in the Bill of Rights, while the government's commitment to transformation recognizes that gender and race inequality requires affirmative action. This has provided opportunities to many women who previously would have been excluded.

In spite of the progress made since 1994 there are still major disparities. The most disadvantaged women are living in rural areas; more than 40% of African households are headed by women; African women constitute 75% of workers in the informal sector, often doing the most menial work; and there are extremely high levels of violence and abuse against women. Men remain the primary decision-makers in society, while women are still the most negatively affected by unemployment, land rights issues and access to finance.

The government has encouraged the integration of gender concerns into the policies of all departments, rather than setting up a separate Ministry for "women's issues". A major concern is the lack of capacity to design and facilitate implementation of gender-focused and gender-sensitive programs and action plans. Gender analysis and research are not well developed in women's organizations and in government many officials still need to understand how to integrate gender into government systems and activities. Broad policy commitments are often not reflected in programming, while others' gender concerns are brought into the process of strategy development at a late stage as a secondary priority.

Against this background it is important to ensure that policies take cognizance of the disparities that still exist in terms of gender and state clearly how these should be addressed within the context of the specific policy and accompanying strategies. This is of particular importance in the ICT field, which has traditionally been the domain of (white) men in South Africa.

V.2 POLICY AND GENDER IN THE NICP

Gender has been an IDRC focus for many years and it is to be expected that its programs would be gender sensitive and encouraging an emphasis on gender issues. However, as noted in V.1, during the past decade in South Africa there has also been a strong focus on gender and ICTs for development. According to several key informants there was not a particular emphasis on gender during the execution of the NTPP process. On the other hand, as indicated in Section V.1, both the GNU and the ANC governments had expressed a desire and commitment to assist the previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa (These are nationally defined as black people, women and the disabled). This awareness helped to ensure that the NTPP consultative process included representatives from labor, the disabled and women in addition to the usual private sector stakeholders³⁰.

³⁰ Gillwald, A. *Telecommunications Policy and Regulation for Women and Development*. SA Journal of Information and Communication. Vol 1, No 1. p 20.

Even though the government representatives and various committees assisting in the drafting process of the Telecommunications White Paper were overwhelmingly male (except for the NTPP representatives), the national focus on the previously disadvantaged ensured that the policy reflected this priority quite strongly. Due to the dichotomy in the South African society, the White Paper and the Telecommunications Act of 1996 aimed to balance the provision of the basic universal service in telecommunications to disadvantaged rural and urban communities with the delivery of advanced information services that can meet the needs of a growing economy. The redress of existing imbalances is a major theme of the document and is most strongly reflected in the establishment of the Universal Service Agency to facilitate and ensure delivery of universal service to the previously disadvantaged. While the policy does not refer specifically to women, focus on universal service at affordable rates could have a powerful impact on black women - traditionally the most poverty-stricken group, especially in rural areas.

In other words, although the policy is not engendered and does not clearly acknowledge and highlight gender disparities and concerns where appropriate, it does contain significant statements that, *if effectively implemented*, should help to deliver special benefits to women.

Among others, the USA in conjunction with other agencies, was to “*establish agreement on the parameters that would govern universal service priority setting: for example degrees of deprivation...*” (§ 1.22.2); “*...identifying indicators of the impact of access to telecommunications services in terms of creation of small businesses and employment opportunities and the economic empowerment of the economic empowerment of disadvantaged groups*” (§ 1.22.2); and with respect to the universal service obligations in licenses to be granted by the Regulator: “*..... proposing to the Minister and Regulator methods to address imbalances in the telecommunications sector and thereby promote the achievement of universal service goals*” (§ 1.22.3).

The policy states explicitly with regard to the beneficiaries of new policy decisions such as human resource development programs, and ownership and control: “*Thus, political power can bring stability and growth without addressing the issue of historical disparities within the economic power. Besides referring to those who were disadvantaged by the apartheid system in the past, the term ‘disadvantaged’ also applies to those South Africans who have been historically disadvantaged through discrimination on the grounds of gender and/or disability. In the context of telecommunications, the severe disadvantage experience experienced by members of rural communities should receive special attention*” (§ 4.1).

In terms of management and employment it states that “*Implementation of affirmative action programs in the sector will be required...*” (§4.8). In its efforts to promote entrepreneurship it states that “*The telecommunications industry can play an enabling role by providing entrepreneurial opportunities for South Africans from historically disadvantages communities in its own sector as well as in other sectors*” (§4.10).

According to the consultant, as the policy is not clear on the exact gender issues to be addressed, it will be critical to have engendered strategies for implementation as well as gender-focused research on the implementation of the policy.

(In a recent review of the USA organized by the DoC and led by Aki Stavrou³¹, it was proposed that the USA be retained – in spite of its failure to facilitate universal access – but that its role be changed from implementation of projects to research and advocacy. Gender interests should be a key research area in this initiative).

Over the past decade the IDRC has been a leading voice in gender and ICTs for development in Africa. It has initiated and participated extensively in regional and continent-wide initiatives to promote gender-sensitive approaches to policies and projects. It has supported a number of women's projects, mainly through Acacia (rather than the NICP) which has as one of its objectives to promote women's involvement in all aspects of ICTs in Africa. During the past ten years at least three of the key IDRC officials in ROSA were women, highly respected and thus excellent role models in the male-dominated ICT field in South Africa.

The IDRC agenda has therefore coincided well with the general approach to transformation and development in South Africa in terms of its priority foci on the disadvantaged (rural) communities through universal service, as well as on gender.

V.3 POLICY AND GENDER IN THE SAAAC

Acacia's original vision was to target disadvantaged and mainly rural communities isolated from ICTs, and in particular the marginalized groups within these communities - typically youth and women. Acacia I had as one of its main objectives to promote women's involvement in all aspects of ICTs in Africa. In 1997 an initial concept was developed for an Acacia gender strategy. An Acacia gender working group was established, consisting of 12 members from all over Africa. They were to help develop the strategy further and identify researchers and topics for research in preparation of the 40th anniversary conference of the ECA. Papers produced from this effort were to constitute one of the four conference strands under the theme *African Women and the Information Age*.

According to informants this was "ground-breaking work" which received significant attention from many policy-makers attending the conference. Subsequently a book on ICTs and gender³² based on these deliberations and contributions was produced. It was distributed to more than 200 key organizations and individuals in Africa. Acacia also supported the distribution of a "how to" book on incorporating gender into ICT projects.

These activities gave the IDRC a profile as a leader in the field of ICT and gender in Africa. In spite of this, an Acacia gender strategy was never completed. According to IDRC informants, Acacia Program Officers in general had a two-pronged approach to gender issues in their work which was also reflected in their work in Uganda:

- The development of projects focusing on women

³¹ Benjamin P. *Reviewing Universal Access in South Africa*. The Southern African Journal of Information and Communication, Vol 2, No 1, p 69

³² *Gender and the Information Revolution in Africa*, Eds. Rathgeber EM and Adera EO, IDRC, Ottawa, ON Canada. 2000

- The development of projects that would incorporate gender dimensions in them.

Perhaps because of the absence of a clear gender strategy, comments in Acacia “project identification memorandums” which need to analyze the nature of the gender dimensions of the project, indicate limited consideration of the nature of engendered projects that empower women, or strategies during project planning and implementation to ensure this. Project documents and progress reports also show little emphasis on systematic engagement with gender issues across projects such as the implementation of gender-sensitive strategies and research, the tracking of impacts on women (and men), and learning from experiences in this regard. It is understood that the recent implementation of ELSA should help to address this problem.

South African committees are normally constituted to be balanced in terms of gender and race. According to records and comments there were only two women on the SAAAC, one of whom represented women’s organizations in particular (It is accepted that the ICT arena in South Africa is still white male dominated; however, reasons for this imbalance were not determined).

According to SAAAC members, gender was not a specific item on the SAAAC agenda, but gender issues were frequently raised during discussions and there was a general awareness that gender had to feature in their planning. According to key informants, among many members there was a strong commitment to addressing gender issues in an effective manner, and this was supported by their contributions to discussions. However, due to a lack of time commitment and erratic attendance of committee meetings, these points of view did not always have an impact on the work of the Committee. Very few proactive and strategic efforts were made to focus on gender in the Committee activities. *“The Committee members were willing and aware, but no concrete action was taken,* noted one of the key informants.

In response to the Maputo Declaration’s statements on gender (the declaration signed by the Ministers from the four Acacia countries), SAAAC acknowledges in their September 2000 progress report that *“Greater consideration needs to be given to further concrete intervention in this important area.”* There are however no indications that was followed up.

SAAAC was, as noted earlier, not prominently placed in the ICT policy arena. One of SAAAC’s contributions to gender might come from the projects that they approved for support and the emphasis they place on gender-focused and gender-sensitive projects in their portfolio. Again there are no clear indications that special attention was given to the solicitation, development and/or approval of such projects. Women’sNet, a project supported by the IDRC and initiated in 1997 by the Commission on Gender Equality and SANGONET (a not-for-profit South African Internet Service Provider that provides Internet connectivity and value-added services to organizations working for environmental and social justice in Southern Africa), is one of the few projects in Acacia’s small portfolio of women-focused initiatives in South Africa.

According to one of the key informants, a national “e-Strategy Task Team” has just been launched. She noted that the issue of gender was strongly raised and addressed during this process – something which would not have happened five years ago.

It might be that the reason for the lack of a strong emphasis on gender issues in this male-dominated sector lies in the nature of the political and social transition in South Africa during the past decade. Gender has been a lesser issue than race in South Africa's development of democracy and a culture of human rights. In spite of statements of commitment to gender issues by government, in practice the focus on race has pushed gender as a focus for transformation into a back seat. Gender issues are thus usually handled in a rather precursory, superficial manner during policy formulation and strategic planning activities.

Women also do not necessarily bring the gender issues to the fore; many are concerned about a backlash should they do so. The capacity to argue gender issues in a well articulated manner often does not exist.

The gender aspect in relation to the (policy) activities of SAAAC should have been investigated in greater depth in this study, especially in terms of its research support. Many of the obstacles to gender equity are systemic within the social fabric of society and IDRC as one agency can do little to address these in a comprehensive manner. However, it can play an important role in creating awareness and in improving understanding of the gender dimensions of development policies and projects during their planning, implementation and learning phases.

ADDENDUM 1: EXTRACT FROM TERMS OF REFERENCE

Contract period: 45 days

A. Background

Many IDRC project and program objectives reflect the expectation that the research supported will influence public policy at the national and local levels. Within projects and programs, the Centre staff promote various means of linking research to public policy, and research supported is often reported to have enhanced decision-makers' awareness of policy options or to have been otherwise taken into account in policy processes. If the Centre is going to increase (and improve the performance of) its portfolio of projects with this mandate, the Centre needs to address what it means by "policy influence". Initial discussions with Centre staff, and reviews of the literature and other relevant Centre documents point to three key questions: (1) what constitutes public policy influence in IDRC's experience; (2) to what degrees, and in what ways, has IDRC-supported research influenced public policy; and (3) what factors and conditions have facilitated or inhibited the public policy influence potential of IDRC-supported research. This will serve two main purposes: first, it will provide learning at the program level which can enhance the design of projects and programs to address policy issues where that is a key objective; second, it will provide an opportunity for corporate level learning which will provide input to the strategic planning process, providing feedback on performance, and feeding the design of the next corporate program framework.

The cases studies will form one important set of data in improving the Centre's capacity to support research which "will foster and support the production, dissemination and application of research results leading to policies and technologies that enhance the lives of people in developing countries." (from *IDRC program directions 2000-2005*, p.16).

The focus of case studies will be on the development of rich case studies that explore not only the IDRC work undertaken but also the changing context in which the work was carried out and the processes that were used. It is anticipated that the study will cover a range of stories to include cases where policy outcomes may be perceived as either positive or negative (i.e., research leads to "good" policymaking or "bad" policymaking). The cases will present detailed stories of the policy influence process. The story will be developed through: (1) A review of documents including project design documents, monitoring documents (*inter alia*, technical reports, trip reports, correspondence) and project reports; and where they can be located; (2) Interviews with project leaders and project participants; (3) Interviews with those said to have been influenced; and (4) Interviews with relevant IDRC staff (e.g. responsible PO's).

B. TORs

As part of building a corporate response to the three key questions outlined above, the consultant will prepare the following case study(ies): The National Acacia Advisory Committee processes in South Africa, Mozambique and Uganda.

Pursuant to his contract the consultant shall:

1. Review project documents prior to any interviews and to know the role of the informant in the project; The consultant will work with the Centre to identify and locate the appropriate individuals to be interviewed. The consultant may also have to search out individuals who are no longer known to the Centre but who were central to the project.

Based on the TORs and reading the project file, the consultant will develop interview guides for interviews with project leaders and participants, program officers, beneficiaries and others reached in the implementation and follow up to the project. These interview guides will be shared with and approved by the Centre.

2. Travel to and in Mozambique (up to seven days), Uganda (up to seven days) and South Africa (local travel costs) to interview key informants for the cases specified. Interviews should normally move out from those most directly affiliated with the project to those purported to have been affected by or to have used the results in some way. Because there is inherent bias in informants to present findings

in the best possible light, triangulation of data sources is crucial. Every effort should be made to ensure that interviews are conducted with representatives of at least three of the main groups involved: project implementers, beneficiaries, POs, policy makers and where applicable related project participants (other funded or departmental studies which have been linked to the project). The consultant will normally have an opportunity for follow-up visits for data verification or further data collection where warranted;

3. Participate in a TORs workshop in Ottawa for 2 days the week of 15 April 2002; and
4. Prepare a draft report for each case.
5. Participate in a verification workshop in a location to be determined; The consultant will make a brief presentation, describing the case and indicating preliminary findings. The consultant may be asked to facilitate the data analysis or may be asked to be an active participant in the process.

Following the workshops, the team may determine that it is advantageous to follow up the findings with further data collection in the field, either for the introduction of new informants or to gather data in areas not yet addressed in the case.

6. Finalize the case reports based on the outcomes of the workshop. Upon completion of the case studies, and the development of a regional analysis, the Unit may invite the consultant to participate in a preliminary global analysis of the data. On the basis of these documents, the consultants will be reconvened with the evaluation team for further analysis of the findings.

The consultant will collect data in three key areas:

1. – about what led to the project

– How did you get involved in [area of exploration] in the first place?

This has to do with clarifying the role of the informant as a leader, a informant to an issue that was raised, as someone who has seen this field for a long time, as a policy maker, researcher, funder, etc. In the case of interviewing a PO, this might be expressed in terms of response to a proposal, in terms of project development with regards to how policy influence may or may not have been incorporated into the proposal, in terms of their leadership in a research field; in the case of a researcher, this might be raised in terms of a problematique in their country, in terms of fall-out of their previous research, in terms of a dialogue with a PO, in terms of a proposal they have been floating for a long time seeking funding, etc. In the case of a purported beneficiary, their involvement might be much later in hearing the results and connecting them with an issue in their Ministry, Department or Organization.

2. – about the project

– When it was started, what did [the project] intend to achieve? Here one knows the objectives already, it is a discussion starter with the informant; they can be prompted as appropriate with the project objectives. One should identify the nature of the project as characterized by the interview, in terms of capacity building objectives, the policy influence objectives if any, the overall intent of the activity. This should also include the researcher's understanding of policy influence in terms what that means, what that entails (assumptions, hypotheses re: influencing policy). If any areas of objectives are left out, they should be introduced by the interviewer.

– What happened?

What was accomplished (were project objectives met, changed, completely revised, not met, but good things happened, not met but bad things happened; nothing happened, etc.). Here the interviewer is expected to move the interview towards policy related influence, but without closing off areas of activity which might have led to policy influence later. Where there is policy influence identified (as there should be in all cases), the interviewer needs to probe who was influenced, including their positions at the time of influence and their current positions if known, and in what ways. This could include (but is not limited to) the following:

- People inside the policy process

policy workers (those in the front line of policy recommendation and development)

policy decision makers (those in charge of policy decisions: political and bureaucratic)

- People outside the policy process

those who directly influence policy makers

those who indirectly influence policy makers

The informant should give an indication of what indicators they are using to determine if there has been policy influence and how they define it. This will be a crucial data set in defining policy influence. Types of policy influence (after Lindquist) include (but are not limited to):

– Expanding policy capacities

Improving the knowledge / data of certain actors

Supporting recipients to develop innovative ideas

Improving capabilities to communicate ideas

Developing new talent for research and analysis

– Broadening of policy horizons

Providing opportunities for networking / learning within the jurisdiction or with colleagues elsewhere

Introducing new concepts to frame debates, putting ideas on the agenda, or stimulating public debate

Educating researchers and others who take up new positions with broader understanding of issues

Stimulating quiet dialogue among decision makers and among or with researchers

– Affecting policy regimes

Modification of existing programs or policies

Fundamental re-design of programs and policies

The consultant will identify behavioral change associated with these three types of influence and any additional types of influence which do not appear to fit this categorization will also be named.

Capacity building is a critical dimension of policy influence. By capacity building, we refer to the process by which individuals, groups, organizations and institutions strengthen their ability to carry out their functions and achieve the desired results over time (Peter Morgan 1997). This refers therefore to the capabilities of individuals, organizations, institutions and to the strengthening of relationships among them.

– Why did it happen?

This is crucial as it deals with the relationship between the context and the project. Type of governance regime in the country is a critical factor for consideration. Perceptions about why should vary among informants and the discussion will build from interview to interview on a project. What were the contextual factors and what were the capacity factors within the project team? What favored/inhibited progress? Who did what? Here, one should be identifying the key influences both within the project and in its enabling environment which caused the project to develop as it did. Dissemination strategies should also be explored.

3. – about what happened after the project

Depending on the age of the project, it is crucial here to explore what is perceived to have been influenced by the project, when that influence occurred and whether or not the policy change or change in mind set (if any type of change actually happened) endured.

Here it is important to come back to outcomes and outputs of the project which may have appeared to have no policy linkage during the time of the project, but which may have had some later.

External factors are key to consider here: what changed, what remained constant in the political, legislative, economic, technical and social environments related to the project's work?

Tracing organizations and individual project members is critical: where did they go? What did they go on to do?

Tracing beneficiaries is also key: what was their role in sustaining the change (if any); what was their role in introducing new changes? Where did they go and what did they go on to do? We are particularly interested in the role of the PO and IDRC generally in these processes: what is the perceived role (by project participants, by beneficiaries, by other related individuals and groups)?

Dissemination strategies should be reviewed.

Gender

Gender dimensions are discussed here, but relate to all stages of the activity - planning, implementation and post project. Gender should be considered with regards to tracing of project implementation team members as well as beneficiaries: were both men and women involved in the policy influence process and in what ways? How was this perceived by policy makers and by researchers (contributing inhibiting, neutral factor)? Was analysis gender sensitive or gender neutral at all stage of the policy influence process:

- problem definition

- definition of goals and beneficiaries

- definition of research agenda

- definition of research policy interface and linkages

- formulation of policy options

- choice of preferred options

- (Where applicable, implementation, M&E, policy revision processes)

Each area should cover the opening question first, followed by questions and discussions to elicit information related to the three main questions of the study.

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ADDENDUM 4: PROJECT TOMBSTONE INFORMATION

Project Name The National Information and Communication Project		Country: South Africa
Project Number 2294	CAD \$Value 1 158 045	CAP/RAP Values 1 158 045 CAP
Date approval: Commencement: 24 Mar 1995 Duration: 24 months Completion: 31 Jan 2002	Recipient Institution: IDRC managed	Recipient Type: -
Beneficiary Institution: N/A	Beneficiary Type: N/A	Intent of Policy Influence: To affect the national ICT policy regime in South Africa
Policy Target: Assistance with various policy processes; advice on policy and the support of policy processes as required by the democratic South African government.	Type: Affecting existing programs or policies	Policy Domain: ICT policies within a democratic South Africa
Source:	Use: Problem-solving Interactive	

Project Name National Acacia Advisory Committee Secretariat		Country: South Africa
Project Number 004381	\$Value 163 500	CAP/RAP Values CAD 163,500 RAP
Date approval: 20 Oct 1998 Commencement: 1 Oct 1998 Duration: 24 months Completion: 30 Jan 2002	Recipient Institution:	Recipient Type: -
Beneficiary Institution: N/A	Beneficiary Type: N/A	Intent of Policy Influence: No specified intent; directed focus towards policy implementation
Policy Target: None specified	Policy Type: N/A	Policy Domain:
Source: N/A	Use: N/A	