

**Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme**

**Final report incorporating all deliverables (1-9) and a final section entitled:  
observations, conclusions and recommendations**

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20060521

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## **INTRODUCTION AND PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT**

The report is presented in sections that correspond to the deliverables noted in the terms of reference for this project. The terms of reference are to be found in Appendix 1.

### **DELIVERABLES 1,2, 4 AND 6 ARE PRESENTED BELOW**

Deliverable 1: Undertake a review of the past evaluation reports of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme

Deliverable 2: Obtain successful grant incumbents' feedback on the process and value of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme

Deliverable 4: Analyze a sample of different project attributes (according to thematic focus and geographic area under study), main ICT issues being investigated by the projects, and methodology of research of the projects approved through the Programme within the period stated above.

Deliverable 6: Undertake travel (maximum 14 days) during the period of December 1, 2005 to January 31, 2006 to perform the following task:

a. visit selected projects in Asia (maximum 1 round trip) to interview project personnel and inspect work accomplished - the selection of the project sites shall be made in consultation with IDRC and UNDP-APDIP.

### **Introduction to section on deliverables 1,2 4 and 6**

- For a list of the project visited, please see Appendix 2

### **The types of grant recipient organizations visited**

14 organizations were visited in three countries and five cities: Manila in the Philippines, Bandung in Indonesia and Chennai, Bangalore and Delhi in India.

Several types of organizations were visited.

- A small NGO with a local impact and with limited staff and capacity. Receiving funds from an international source is a new experience for this organization. However, this organization has very focused and deep expertise in the areas it is working in locally. This organization has a limited network of collaborators and is one of the only ones that does not have high speed access to the Internet:
  - (Centre for Women's Development and Research in Chennai)
- Small to medium sized and/or more established NGOs with experience dealing with international partners and with good capacity to conceive and deliver projects:
  - the Foundation for Media Alternatives, Galing Pook and the Center for Research and Communication (CRC) in Manila; SAATHI in Chennai; Janastu and ItforChange in Bangalore;
- A private sector start up testing ICT applications: n-Logue, Chennai
- Organizations that are part of government (ASTI) and/or an institution of higher education and that focus on applied research:

- the Faculty of Medicine, University of the Philippines and the Advanced Science and Technology Institute (ASTI), Manila; Institut Teknologi Bandung; the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi.

### **Types of projects reviewed**

- Applied research on ICT applications and related issues with a pro-development outcome
- ICT policy research to support decision makers
- Building capacity of a particular target group to use and apply ICTs to specific development related issues in health, women in development, local government

### **Ultimate beneficiaries of the projects**

- Local and community groups
- Civil society
- Local government
- Women

## **PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS**

This is a preliminary report of feedback received from Pan recipients as a result of a two-week mission to meet with 14 projects of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme as well as AMIC and IDRC officers in Asia.

Preliminary meetings with IDRC also took place in Ottawa in December 2005. A more detailed review of issues on a grantee-by-grantee basis will be presented in the definite report of the visit with grantees.

Main issues as raised by the grantees or by AMIC or recorded by the consultant as a result of meetings with IDRC, grantees and/or AMIC are as follows:

### **Issues that apply to the grantees**

For grant recipients, the following issues were noteworthy, either because they were raised directly by the grant recipients or because they appeared to be an issue from the perspective of the reviewer as per the terms of reference:

#### Commitment of the grantees to the projects

- All grant recipients were very serious about the project and went out of their way to meet with the reviewer, even when appointments were made at very short notice – clearly grantees were happy to receive information from the Pan program. All appeared to be very open and forthcoming in their comments with the reviewer and went out of their way to accommodate the reviewer and assist him in meeting with them

#### Development impact of the projects visited

- From the perspective of the reviewer, each project visited clearly had the potential to have a significant development impact. In a few cases, it was possible to see first hand what this impact was because the reviewer interacted directly with the beneficiaries
- In some cases, the capacity of the grant recipients and project managers to ensure the long-term success and replicability of the project was an issue - for example, the community health project of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of the Philippines. Undertaking research is different from scaling up an application and ensuring its commercial success for example. Clearly, there is a need in some of these cases for linking the projects with investors and other sources of funding and expertise. We believe that this could be a case for seeking more involvement of private sector partners in the funding of Pan. It could also be a case for greater support to the grantees during project implementation
- All project visited appeared to meet the objectives of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme and the projects visited presented a good range of project types based on the focus of the research, the type of beneficiary organization and the impact sought. Smaller organizations as well as larger more established organizations benefited.

#### Communication and awareness issues

This is a summary list of the main communication issues. Communication is clearly one of the main issues affecting the success of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme

- The quantity of communication: in general, AMIC appeared to maintain significant and ongoing communication with most of the grantees on issues of administrative concern. However, not all communication was received, and in some cases, there were no replies to the communications from AMIC and vice versa
- Specific communication problems included:
  - Perceived inability to communicate project proposals to AMIC because of apparent server reception problems
  - Problems related to the rejection of zipped files by the IDRC server<sup>1</sup>
  - Most Pan projects visited were connected to the Internet by a high speed connection. Only 1 project, was using a dial-up connection and experienced connectivity problems, the others used high speed connections to the Internet
- The quality of communication: administrative issues were predominantly the focus of communications with AMIC, and it appears that there could have been more communication on issues related to the conduct of the research to be undertaken as well as the long term sustainability of the outcomes of the projects supported
- In some cases, project managers want or may need more than just administrative support. Several projects managers could have benefited greatly from advice on research or project management. For example, nearly all projects could have benefited from more networking and from being directed to existing networks or projects of like-minded individuals and/or institutions. Some needed help to start up. The F root server measurement and analysis project at the

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<sup>1</sup> Actually, even though the sender may receive a reject notice, the files are nevertheless received and can be forwarded by the IT staff. Similarly, it is also possible to send proposals directly to Nanditha Raman

Institut Teknologi Bandung in Indonesia did not move forward because of an issue that AMIC and Pan partners could have possibly helped to overcome or at least advise on. This is the issue of gaining authorization to use data available from the Internet Service Consortium in California in order to undertake the research proposed. As it is, this project has not started for this reason

- Use of the Pan Web page and related resources: an informative Web page, but it is underutilized by grant recipients. There is a need for more push communication technologies in order to reach grant recipients on an ongoing basis. Recipients do not go to the Pan site to obtain information. They have to have a reason to go to the site. One way of dealing with this is to have an auto update email service that informs recipients of changes on the Web site and/or a mailing list which transmits the information directly to the recipients.
- Understanding the grant process: grantees were not always aware of the grant process and it appears that many grantees do not follow the instructions in the contract or take advantage of the information available on the Pan Web site. This is more likely to be the case with new grantees and those from smaller organizations
- Pan awareness or marketing issues
  - It appears that some of the administrative issues could have been dealt with by the grantees if they had taken the time to access and read the information on the Pan Web site
  - Grantees were unaware of the Pan newsletter
  - Grantees were unsure of what constituted a successful project. What are the criteria for success? Some projects felt that being mentioned in the Pan Newsletter was a measure of success in the absence of any other acknowledgement to this effect.

Other specific communication issues:

- Communication with AMIC on contractual and payment issues: this was an issue with some, but not most of the projects. Most grantees were happy with the administrative communications with AMIC and had no problems
- The usefulness of the Pan Web site to grantees: most do not use the Pan Web site on an ongoing basis if at all
- Learning about Pan Asia: some projects learned about Pan through word of mouth or as a result of working with one of the Pan partners, i.e. APDIP, IDRC or APNIC. Few appeared to learn about Pan as a result of searching the Web, although this appeared to have been the case for a few grantees
- Networking grantees on a local and regional level – grantees are not aware of one another. For example, in Chennai the three grantees visited were not aware of each other or of other grantees and projects funded, either past or present. In Chennai, SAATHII, a well-established NGO could have and would have been happy to assist the project from the Centre for Women's Development and Research (CWDR). Had the link been established, it would have been of great assistance to CWDR, which is one of the grantees in greatest need of assistance among those visited by this reviewer
- E-mail as well as telephone communication was used in most cases between AMIC and the project grantees, especially if the latter were not meeting their reporting requirements

- No onsite visits with grant recipients were undertaken by AMIC, consistent with present arrangements. On site visits were extremely useful in understanding the needs and circumstances of grantees
- Regular communications were related to the administrative requirements of the contracts and dealt mostly with reporting and other contractual obligations including of course payment.

#### Issues related to payment

- The level of funding received appeared in nearly all cases to be sufficient to meet the immediate needs of the projects funded. None of the grantees complained about insufficient funding. More likely, they would have complained about delays in receiving funds
- Delays in receiving funding – this was an issue in a few cases. For some projects in India, permission is required in order to be able to receive funds from international agencies. The paperwork associated with this process has delayed payment in one case.
- Some projects of a more technical nature, having completed substantive reporting did not complete the final financial report resulting in non-closure of the projects and non-disbursement of some residual funds in some cases. AMIC had issue with at least two projects that did not close their books because they did not submit a terminal financial report. This appeared to be more likely with IT projects and grantees working with larger organizations.

#### Issues related to longer-term project impact

- Sustaining the projects after Pan Asia support: most ongoing projects or projects that were completed had concerns about sustaining funding and about the capacity of the beneficiaries of their research projects to apply project outcomes in the longer term. In one case, it was clear that the project could not build enough local support to justify some of its ambitions
- Perceived effectiveness of the projects to achieve the objectives and outcomes intended: this requires in situ visits and interviews with project personnel. In some cases, it appears to us that it is very difficult to identify all issues that can influence success based on online applications alone. This is especially so for smaller grantees with limited capacity

#### Research support issues

- Punctual support on issues other than those related to contract management – i.e. research management, help in networking with like-minded grantees and other research groups or organizations and finding support for the longer term and for other projects and ideas. Grantees wanted more of this type of support.

#### **Role of grants in the work of the recipients**

- All grant recipients took the grants seriously. For a few organizations visited, these grants were the first they had ever received from an international agency
- For the smaller organizations, grants are opportunities to fund activities that would not otherwise be funded

## Program administration: role of AMIC

- In discussions with Nandhtia Raman at AMIC in Singapore, the following was stated:
  - Two staff provide regular inputs to Pan, Nanditha and Mr. Goh the Financial Officer
  - Other inputs come from the information technology specialist (George) and Stephen on publications
  - AMIC also provides counterpart contributions in the form of research and publications expertise and human expertise. Our estimation is that the research support comes from Indrajit Banerjee
- This program requires a significant level of administrative effort to manage and implement.
  - The level of effort involved in managing 212 applications a year and the time crunch this imposes in order to meet deadlines vs the funds available to AMIC to manage the project
- For the grantees, AMIC is the only interface they have with Pan. While some projects are in touch with APDIP, in most cases, project managers deal exclusively with AMIC
- AMIC is concerned about the significant level of effort required to ensure that the administrative requirements for publicity and marketing, for selection of the grants and for ensuring the communication, project and financial management requirements in relation to resource, organization, human resource and time constraints. This program requires lots of administrative support to make it work well administratively
- The AMIC project coordinator has the capacity to deal with most of the administrative requirements, but is clearly run off her feet at certain times in the grant and project cycle, such as when undertaking activities related to advertising, corresponding with candidates and potential grantees as well as the grantees themselves and selecting and approving grants, organizing Steering Committee meetings, etc. Clearly, there is a significant workload when this takes place at the time of the twice-yearly grant competitions. Other staff working on the project include the AMIC accountant who provides financial services and oversees the contracts and budgets and other AMIC staff who produce publications including the monitoring and evaluation reports and books
- AMIC has capacity to provide some research and management support in principle, as a result of input from the AMIC Exec Director, Dr. Indrajit Banerjee. The level of effort currently required needs to be looked at more closely and more closely matched with the budget and more so, with the requirements of the grantees. It is our opinion that more research support is needed, but that Dr. Banerjee may not be the best person to ensure this because of his workload and other commitments. There is also an issue of cost that we are still considering in relation to the present budget
- AMIC has a research officer on staff. We have no indication that this research officer has made any contribution to Pan
- According to AMIC, the agreement with IDRC does not mention anything about AMIC mentoring the grantees
- AMIC markets Pan through a variety of publications and initiatives, including the AMIC annual conference. AMIC has published a special issue of its journal *Media Asia* on the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme and will also publish

- articles in the Asian Media Communications Bulletin. A book ICT4D that includes cases studies will be ready in February and a draft sent to the consultant for further consideration
- It may be more realistic to enlist the help of a dedicated research manager to strengthen this aspect of the program, an aspect that several grantees pointed out they could readily benefit from and would welcome. This was also clear to the reviewer. It is our impression that this program can greatly benefit from more research and substantive support that what is presently available, but there is the issue of balancing this support with funding currently available and/or required. The question is whether this can be done under the present arrangements with AMIC?
  - The projects currently funded were reviewed with Nanditha. All projects funded in 2004 were considered successful.

#### Financial management services provided by AMIC (Mr. Goh)

- Mr. Goh is responsible for ensuring that payment schedules are adhered to according to milestones. He has no direct contact with the grantees, as this is Nanditha's responsibility
- Every year, two financial reports are prepared by Mr. Goh for IDRC
- Mr. Goh spends 25% of his time of the Pan project

#### Other administrative issues from AMIC's perspective

- Production of the Pan Booklet (also available as electronic brochure in PDF)
  - IDRC had concerns about the effort required to ensure that this publication was of sufficient quality to meet its standards. IDRC invested much time in working with Nanditha on this. AMIC should have taken full responsibility
  - While all partners agreed to the booklet, APDIP was concerned because it did not see the contents and have an opportunity to proof the report before it went to publication. APDIP should have been consulted and indeed, the draft publication should have been vetted by all partners before final approval and publication
- Dealing with non-performing projects (Jhai Remote IT Village, Lao PDR; Wireless e-commerce in agriculture, Kyrgyzstan and other projects) while meeting contractual obligations with Pan Partners – if and when can a project be written off formally?
- When should a project start for contractual, administrative and financial purposes? Implications for year on year accounting, progress reports and for making best use of available funding, i.e. trying to ensure that as much of the funds committed are being used to their maximum purpose and not languishing in accounts waiting for bureaucracy or approvals
- Overheads and funding: what is appropriate – an ongoing discussion
- Communication with and between Pan partners and AMIC: establishing lines of communication and relationships and responsibilities. There is a need for direct communication between the partners here in order to overcome misconceptions and maintain clarity. The roles and responsibilities of individual staff need to be clearly established so AMIC know who it should be dealing with at IDRC for example.

## Meeting with Dr. Peng Hwa, Dean, School of Communication and Information

- The School sees the project going forward as an opportunity for the School to undertake on research in applied communications in various countries of the region
- The School is keen to include corporate sponsors as partners in Pan
- The School is keen to increase funding and agrees that Pan should have great ambitions
- Dr. Hwa will continue to support AMIC.

## Research and other non administrative support

Advice and support for research, project management, resource identification and mobilization, volunteering from AMIC

- Some grantees want more than administrative support from AMIC, they want help with research management issues, and especially help with pre and post project implementation
- This help can take the form of support in the form of:
  - Advice on the substantive issues they are dealing with
  - Information about like minded projects and networks they should be aware of and can tap into
  - Information about follow-up support and sources of funding.

## Other considerations

- Applied vs development research: what if any balance?
- Partnerships with the private sector: what can the experience to date tell us and what are the parameters and modalities going forward?
  - The only concern that grantees had about involving the private sector was that mechanisms should be in place to ensure that private sector contributors make funds available without any strings attached and that a mechanism be in place that ensures that this is the case. Grantees with whom this issue was raised, especially grantees working on IT related issues, felt that the present modalities seemed to respect this concern
- How to enhance the Pan experience for grantees and their ultimate beneficiaries?
- How to enhance and streamline communications and marketing; administration as well as research support? – More direct communication with grantees, i.e. mailing lists, regular telephone calls and on site visits.
- Is it possible to maintain current overheads while striving for increased operational efficiency, greater impact? There is a real issue here concerning overheads.
- Success indicators: what are they and how can they be used?
- Other sources of small grants funding?
- Other potential partners or collaborators?
- Growing Pan Asia: how big, how fast and with which partners?
  - Funding Pan Asia ICT Small Grants: More?
  - How ambitious should Pan be in seeking projects and more support?

## **Issues for IDRC and the Pan partners**

- Has the partnership worked well and how if at all this partnership can be strengthened? Comments to come after further consultation with Steering Committee, partners and others
- What role of private sector partners? Comments to come after further consultation with Steering Committee, partners and others
- Should the Pan programme grow in size and funding? Comments to come after further consultation with Steering Committee, partners and others

## **Issues for the Steering Committee**

To be determined

## **Success factors and/or indicators**

These are some of the factors perceived as influencing the ability of the grant receiving organization to achieve the objectives and outcomes sought in the grant:

- Management, technical and research capacity and skills of those responsible for project implementation
- Degree of computer literacy of the grantees
- Degree of understanding of and focus on the needs and circumstances of the intended beneficiaries by the grant recipient
- Absorption capacity of the intended beneficiaries of the research to be undertaken under the grant. Intended beneficiaries could include, for example local government officials or local entrepreneurs, local health officials, local and community groups and villagers, etc.
- Importance that the grantees attach to the research and its outcomes
- Level of networking and interaction with like minded organizations

## **Preliminary conclusions and recommendations**

- With some minor modifications, the level of administrative support provided by AMIC is sufficient to meet the needs of the grantees on the administration side given the present number of grantees
- Grantees need more substantive support on an ongoing basis to deal with issues related to research management and project implementation and follow-up
- There is a need for more efficient and direct communications with the grantees past and present
- Ideally, on site visits by the project manager to all grantees should take place every two years
- Present funding levels are insufficient to both meet the present administrative and research support needs of Pan grantees.

## **DELIVERABLE 3 : FEEDBACK FROM PAN COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

### **Terms of reference**

Obtain the Programme committee's feedback on the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme, particularly focusing on the following:

- a. the administrative element of the program
- b. the partnership element of the program
- c. the existing program modality and structure

### **Composition of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme Committee**

The Pan Committee members for the period of this review are:

**Mr. Laurent Elder**, Team Leader, PanAsia Networking (PAN)

**Mr. Renald Lafond**, Senior Program Specialist, PanAsia Networking (PAN);

**Mr. Frank Tulus** Senior Program Officer, PanAsia Networking (PAN);

**Mr. Shahid Akhtar** Regional Co-ordinator, Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme, UNDP;

**Mr. Phet Sayo**, Programme Specialist, Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme, UNDP;

**Mr. Paul Wilson** Director-General, Asia Pacific Network Information Center (APNIC);

**Mr. Gerard Ross** Documentation Manager, Asia Pacific Network Information Center (APNIC);

**Dr. Indrajit Banerjee** Secretary-General & Deputy Secretary-General, Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC);

**Dr. Esther Williams** Acting Director, Planning and Development, The University of the South Pacific;

**Madanmohan Rao**, Research Director AMIC;

**Mr. Salman Ansari** Advisor Ministry of Science & Technology, IT & Telecom Division Government of Pakistan;

**Prof. Ma Yan** Professor Computer Center Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications.

Some past Steering Committee members were also interviewed, including Maria Ng of IDRC Singapore as well as Gabe Rijpma, Government Solutions Director, Microsoft, Asia Pacific Region Also in Singapore.

In order to obtain the feedback of the Steering Committee, two approaches were taken. In the first instance, the consultant took advantage of proximity to past or present Steering Committee members, either while in Ottawa in briefings with IDRC or more likely during the two week long mission to the region that took place between Jan. 7 and Jan. 26, 2006.

A short questionnaire was created and circulated to all Steering Committee members. The questionnaire appears in Appendix 3. All present Steering Committee members save two answered the questionnaire. None of the previous Steering Committee members answered the questionnaire, but they nevertheless provided very useful insights into the program.

Answers to specific questions are presented and discussed below. For each question, the answer given by a Programme Committee member is presented.

Original copies of some of the completed questionnaires are to be found in Appendix 4.

### **Question 1:**

Are you satisfied with the present modality and structure of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme?

A: What aspects are you satisfied with?

Frank Tulus

- Satisfied
- With funds given to AMIC by IDRC, want AMIC to add some value added thinking, want them to make suggestions to improve the programme, in all of its aspects
- Unfortunately, AMIC has not done enough on this score, with exception of dissemination aspects and promotional aspects.

Esther Williams

- Program is very well known
- Researchers can apply and be considered
- Applicants receive feedback
- Allows for small group to discuss projects in areas of mutual interest

APDIP

- We are satisfied with the structure in place – i.e. the selection committee and steering committee structures and modality.
- The selection process – although invariably tight – has evolved into a good one. The processes here can be used for future grant programmes. Having external nominees for the selection process has greatly added value to the evaluation of project proposals.

Ma Yan

- Participations was already coming from countries in our Asia and Pacific region

Salman Ansari

- Excellent program and very well administered
- This is wide ranging and does attract a wide base. However, the publicity in different countries is not sufficient

APNIC

- We are satisfied with the general level of funding for projects and the broad range of project proposals that are received (although as an Internet

organisation, we would always like to find ways of encouraging more research related to Internet infrastructure, standards, technologies and protocols).

- We are satisfied with the frequency of grant rounds.
- We are satisfied with the dynamics of the selection committee process and the productive way that projects are considered and debated.

#### AMIC

- Providing seed funding to innovative research projects that can be replicated and eventually upscaled.
- Small grants with visible results in a short time frame.

#### B: Which areas do you feel need to be enhanced or strengthened and why?

##### Esther Williams

- Process is somewhat bureaucratic
- Use teleconferencing instead of always face to face meetings

##### APDIP

- However, while the structures in place are clear, we have been unsatisfied with the follow-up process, especially when it comes to the policy decisions or agreements made by the steering committee. Agreements to survey the projects and build a virtual community are two examples of non-action after agreements made by the steering committee.
- While internal structures were in place – there is little to indicate that a structure was in place to ensure a connection with the proponents. More could have been done to provide proponent guidance, and to do so, structures/mechanisms (such as a virtual facility) could have been in place to keep partners connected with the projects.
- There could be better facilitation and leadership from AMIC to follow-up on the agreements made each steering committee meeting and decisions taken virtually by the group. Clearly action plans could have been provided to all partners so that collective action and assigned responsibilities could have been in place. For example, the recent grants booklet could have been a collaboration or at least it could have benefited from inputs from all partners.

##### Ma Yan

- It could be promoted more in applied technology and application-oriented area.

##### Salman Ansari

- The scope is too narrow,
- There is no follow up to see if there was really a successful conclusion of the projects, which have been funded. This is important for scalability and for replication across countries
- There is no mechanism to use the 'lessons learnt' by other countries or people

- Well written proposals usually get funding, even though these may not end being useful
- There is not sufficient time for validating the costs given as line items. I find this critical since it appears that once the funds are given the recipients can get away with misuse.
- There should be linkages between projects so that these are not stand alone and repeated.
- Some core areas should be defined so that there is a framework where complete vertical areas can be addressed. Thrust areas like VAS on Cellular, IP Radio, for applications in developing countries can be defined
- The time given for reviewing projects is too short and this gives way to sloppy work by the committee.

#### APNIC

- Evaluation of the programme outcomes remains an issue. We believe it is desirable that the majority of funds go directly to the research projects and we do not believe that it makes sense to spend substantial amounts of money on detailed evaluations of individual projects. Nevertheless, it would be very helpful to have access to research and recommendations about the effectiveness of broad projects types. For example, there are many proposals for telecentres, mobile health applications, software localizations etc. It would be great to have concise summary reports available on the partners' web site explaining the relative effectiveness of such projects and noting the common elements in the success or failure of such projects in the past.
- Another approach, which can be adopted, is to ensure that the public project reporting includes explicit and comprehensive self-evaluation, which could be done in a pro-forma or questionnaire mode. Such approaches would not rule out the need for overall evaluation of the grants programme, at which time a sample of individual projects may also be evaluated.

#### AMIC

- Consolidation of the lessons learnt
- Dissemination of results to the various stakeholders
- Monitoring & Evaluation of results

#### C: Are you satisfied with Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme management and governance mechanisms and arrangements?

Esther Williams

- Management is good and no difficulty with governance

#### APDIP

- Perhaps due to arrangements between IDRC and AMIC, there has been unilateral decisions with regards to outputs outside of the administration of the grants – producing publications and promotion materials, updating of websites, etc. We understand that IDRC is the larger donor, however, it may have been appropriate that for every new year, a collective proposal or action plan could

have been developed so that all partners are aware of what is expected of AMIC and what the intended outputs and opportunities for promotion were exactly, and when, so that the partners could provide input.

Ma Yan

- ok by now.

Salman Ansari

- AMIC does a good job of the Administration. There should however be a couple of people to follow up and coordinate throughout the year.
- It appears that some people have more than necessary influence on the process. These are representatives of the donors. Sometimes this detracts from fair results

APNIC

- In general, we are satisfied with the management of the programme, although we feel there is a need for more coordinated communication mechanisms between partners and formalised documentation of decisions and programme directions.

AMIC

- Yes, there is a need for closer interaction and sharing among the partners regarding the projects apart from the partners meetings twice a year
- Partners can get more involved for monitoring on going projects during their travel
- Greater involvement of partners for dissemination

## **Question 2:**

Please provide your impressions concerning the administration of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme

A: Overall, are you satisfied with present management arrangements?

Frank Tulus

- Overall, admin can be improved, but not horrible
- Logistical aspects of arranging meetings is quite good
- But other admin details such as payments and notification of grants, coming up with the minutes of the meeting and other follow-up could be improved upon.

Esther Williams

- Could be improved, need for more communication between meetings
- This applies even if there is a Web site

APDIP

- Overall administrative of the grants is satisfactory; however, issues regarding contracts and problematic grantees should have been made known to the partners as soon as possible and not wait for face-to-face committee meetings. This applies to all issues requiring discussions by the partners.
- AMIC may not have allocated enough staff to handle administration. From a partner's point of view, it appeared as though Nanditha was to carry almost all the administrative load (except for financial reporting). It may have been too much to ask for one person to handle the selection process (including logistical arrangements) to issuing the contracts, to managing the websites, etc. Perhaps AMIC should have allocated more staff to share the burden and concentrate on substantive matters. It is our understanding that there were funds provided from IDRC to cover additional staff costs, other than that for Nanditha.
- In the end, the result is that we do not do justice to extracting the lessons learned and research outputs/outcomes from the project. This is the main point of the programme and the result falls short of expectations.

Ma Yan

- Need to enhance the project quality inspection to ensure the funding be used more effectively. But this will occupy more resource to do the job.

Salman Ansari

- With Logistics and Management is OK
- However this needs strengthening as pointed out below

APNIC

- We are satisfied with the general nature of the project administration, but believe that there is a very strong need to improve all aspects of communication within the programme (as detailed below).

AMIC

- As administrative partner we feel AMIC can be more involved. Our earlier arrangements and budget allowed us only to administer the grants not qualitatively contribute to monitoring, evaluation etc

B: In your opinion, is there a need to strengthen the administration of this PAN programme and if so, in what areas?

Esther Williams

- Under present funding levels, there is no need to strengthen the administration of Pan

APDID

- As mentioned, there is need to strengthen the leadership in the administration of the programme – decisions made by the committee, such as building a virtual community for the grantees, surveying, monitoring, etc., are not acted on.
- And again, more staff could have been allocated to ensure quality of administration and proper/timely follow-up on all matters. All this with an aim to free time to concentrate on building a network of the proponents and providing them with support and guidance and monitoring their progress.

Ma Yan

- As the response to question a., Communication to project undertaker during the project lifespan is needed.

APNIC

- As noted above, we believe that communication issues need to be improved. This applies to both internal and external communication.
- Currently, important programme information is scattered across several different web sites. There is no single, simple URL that can give potential applicants access to complete programme details including application procedures. We would like to see a new, dedicated web site established with clear, simple guidance on the programme and application procedures.
- Under the current arrangements, there is a relatively short period between the announcement of each funding round and the deadline for applications. We would like to encourage all partners to give greater support to the administrators to help set key dates further in advance. We believe that improving the predictability of the rounds would be of significant benefit to both the applicants and the partners.
- There is a need to provide support for more structured communications between the programme administrators and partners. An improved partners' web site would be a good starting point. It would also be very desirable to establish an archived mailing list to discuss programme administration.
- We feel that the programme could feasibly adopt online conferencing for 50% of meetings, to help reduce the cost of partner and committee meetings. Although such techniques were tried unsuccessfully in the past, conferencing technology has improved in quality and decreased in cost since then and is worth trying again.
- We suggest that the partners should give clear instructions to the grant administrators about the expectations for programme communications and archival practices and offer appropriate technical assistance and expertise to achieve these goals.
- We believe there is also a need for a clearer set of procedures to guide the administrators in how they should make payments to proponents, track the progress of projects, grant extensions for completion of work, and document results. Currently, some of the practices appear to rely on arbitrary case-by-case decisions made in committee meetings.

AMIC

- There is a need to strengthen the administration in areas of consolidations of lessons learnt, more interaction with other partners on the project ongoing, monitoring and constant evaluation.
- As mentioned earlier the previous contract until 2004 did not have the above scope.

### **Question 3:**

Concerning the partnership element of the programme:

A: Please provide comments on the partnership elements of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme

Frank Tulus

- Partnership between 3 main partners is strong and can overcome the differences because of strong collegial approach
- AMIC does not like being criticized and this is an issue, and there is room for improvement here
- IDRC would prefer continuous monitoring of the programme in terms of smoothing out the partnership issues. AMIC needs to do more here. Look at partnership in a bilateral way, not as a multilateral issue
- AMIC needs to do more about managing the partnership
- Role of the private sector: there are different approaches here. Some feel different approach in terms of funding from the private sector participants and partners especially. From IDRC side, we see this as an equitable issue
  - IDRC welcomes the further involvement of the private sector
- IDRC assumes the administration, and as such are allowed to undertake activities such as the evaluation and some publications, which are done according to IDRC's mandate and way of doing this. IDRC feels that this is its prerogative because of its role funding administration.

Esther Williams

- It is good
- More partners should be found
- But there is competition between partners for more projects close to their priorities: this can limit some decisions and progress overall

APNIC

- Relationships among core partners are amicable and professional; however, the agreement modality is fragmented and should have been streamlined.
- By necessity and individual organization's rules and procedure, AMIC enters into separate agreements, but a common proposal/work plan developed collectively would have greatly clarified what could be expected above the administration of the grants (e.g. the publications, and monitoring activities).

Salman Ansari

- This should be expanded in order to:
  - Have more funds so that categories can be expanded (e.g. US\$ 50K and 100K projects)
  - Have more funds for follow up and administration personnel and their travel. This can be done in a decentralized manner in each country and ad hoc payments can be made
  - Increase the number of donors so that the policymaking and bias is moved to a broader base. Get critical industry funding – Major IT and Telecom companies involved. This will help bring in more critical focus, know how, follow up and scalability, and usefulness of the IP created.

#### APNIC

- The partnership relationship is generally satisfactory but could be improved by more transparent formalizing of the relationships, roles, and expectations of the partners. As noted above in other areas, better management of partner communications and documentation of partnership decisions would help.
- Currently, there are ongoing discussions about the potential role for commercial partners. Although there have been many attempts to determine a firm policy on the issue, the discussion does re-emerge regularly. Perhaps formal, accessible documentation of partnership policies and decisions could help to resolve uncertainty in this and other areas.

#### AMIC

- Need for strengthening the Monitoring and evaluation aspects of the program – There should be a joint effort by all the partners involved

B: If you represent a Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme partner, have the specific objectives you or your organization had at the onset been met through this Pan programme?

- a. If so how?

#### APDIP

- Yes and no – yes, in that we had intended i) pilot some development projects, ii) develop capacities for the proponents; and no, in that we do not have comprehensive knowledge of the outcomes and impacts of the projects.

- b. If not, why not in your opinion?

#### APDIP

- As stated above, unless we know the outcomes, we cannot even begin to answer the question of whether or not we have met our objectives.

#### APNIC

- As noted above, APNIC is particularly interested in encouraging projects dealing with Internet infrastructure and related issues. Perhaps it is necessary to refine the stated goals of the programme to make it clear to proponents why this type of work is considered important to regional development.

**Question 4:**

A: Has the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme lived up to its own expectations?

a - Generally as per its mandate?

Frank Tulus

- Yes PAN has met the basic expectations in the mix of projects, the size and diversity of the projects and by making available research funds that would otherwise not be available.
- But only a few projects have been up scaled, but this is not a specific requirement or outcome of the project, although this is welcome when it does happen. This has not been as successful as would have been expected.
- Otherwise, Pan has achieved all of the objectives that originally were set out at the onset
- Pan has become an important granting mechanism in many countries in Asia.

Esther Williams

- It is meeting the needs of some communities in specific areas

APDIP

- In general, the programme has lived up to its mandate. Even though there are different partners and institutional mandates, the committee is able to generally agree on the awards. Perhaps the programme could have done more to build the capacities of the proponents, in terms of project execution/management and networking.

Ma Yan

- Yes.

Salman Ansari

- This is an excellent program but it performing below par, due to the reasons mentioned above

APNIC

- Our feeling is that the programme does generally live up to its expectations. However, the problem of how to balance the cost of evaluation with the relatively low project amounts makes it hard to be firm in this conclusion.

## AMIC

- Yes, it has provided seed funding for several initiatives across the region and has resulted in innovative projects like localization of fonts which grew as project by itself
- It has fulfilled the objectives of a small grants project showing visible results
- It has also provided the list of huge database of prospective ICT4D projects across the region
- It has been able to attract high number of proposals every year

b - In terms of the mix of projects, i.e. types of projects and types of beneficiaries, etc.?

## Esther Williams

- I do not think so. While we try and have a balance, I think there has been some politics played and some areas getting more support than others – maybe more out of quality of applications than anything else.
- Some members have clear interests and we tend to go along with these people who tend to be strong on the committee and in their views. Gender for instance is an area that has not been covered well – projects that cover for women on women and by women. We tend to get so critical and judgmental about some of the proposals that we miss what the main benefits are and whom they are for.

## APDIP

- There is a good mix of projects – at first, there were many similar projects that were being funded, community-centric projects with some ICT component (portal, telecentre). Overall there is a good mix of technology centred projects and projects based on social causes, while policy oriented research have also been awarded.

## Ma Yan

- When the projects be selected finally, the type/theme/Country/Gender etc. factors be considered.

## APNIC

- In general the mix of projects and beneficiaries has been very diverse. While this demonstrates the wide range of interest in the programme, we feel that the unclear scope of the programme has also allowed some inappropriate projects to be approved. The lack of documentation of committee policies and guidelines has also resulted in some inconsistency in terms of project approvals and rejections over time.
- The level of awareness of the programme seems to vary greatly from country to country, although in recent rounds, the geographical diversity of applications appears to have improved.

## AMIC

- Wide varieties of projects spread across the region including LDCs and also across different spectrum of beneficiaries

c - Otherwise?

**Question 5:**

Have you participated in recent Steering Committee meetings?

Frank Tulus

- Yes, the last one in Bangkok

Esther Williams

- It has been difficult for me to attend the recent screening committees in the past 2 years as our university was undergoing major leadership difficulties.
- I tried to participate virtually and felt that this was a good way to handle these proposals at the first stage but was told that this is not possible. I understand the value in getting to meetings and evaluate face to face with others each proposal and suggest that this continue if possible.

APDIP

- Yes, APDIP has attended all Steering committee meetings since entering into partnership.

Ma Yan

- Yes, in Manila/Philippines, and in Colombo/Sri Lanka.

Salman Ansari

- I had to miss the recent one due to my preoccupation with the Earthquake rescue and Relief efforts in Pakistan

AMIC

- Yes, I have participated in every one of the steering committee meetings since AMIC took over the administration of the programme.

**Question 6:**

Are you satisfied with the Steering Committee meetings or mechanism as a tool for obtaining feedback on the programme and as a way of helping the Programme manage expectations and deliver results?

Frank Tulus

- Yes and no. The Steering Committee itself has a good mix of people, qualified that would be available to evaluate and appraise all of the projects received. When other expertise required, someone on the Steering Committee will know someone who can add expertise, so composition is quite good
- Size: was some concern because of increasing size, but with the departure of ISOC and Microsoft, this no longer an issue
- Management & coordination of the Steering Committee: room for improvement. Discussions about the programmatic issues. Sometimes all day is required to discuss the programmatic issues, but each time AMIC organizes the meeting; this issue is only allocated a half day. Feel that this is a requirement that requires more time and detail
- AMIC needs to prepare an agenda for these programmatic meetings. In preparation for these meetings, AMIC should have reviewed previous meeting minutes to carry on from one meeting to another and to ensure efficiency and continuity on some of the programmatic issues. AMIC has not done this enough
- Unfortunately, many issues remain unresolved from meeting to meeting. Let unresolved issues stagnate. There is not enough follow-up, not enough e-mail traffic to continue discussing and to resolve outstanding issues: need a mailing list for example?
- For example, level contribution for private sector partners. Discussed in Manila but unresolved. At next meeting in Colombo, there was consensus achieved, in compromise, but nothing final resolved, so should have been discussed at the next Steering Committee meeting and it was not. Agreed at the Manila meeting, that Microsoft becomes part of the Pan program, they should perhaps not be part of the committee deciding the grantees. This was not followed up and the Microsoft partner was in the committee selection meeting... Appears that this not taken seriously by AMIC
- So management of the program is an issue.

Esther Williams

- Yes and No. For the meetings I have attended I have been impressed with the feedback for some of the projects visited. It would be good if reports on the projects were provided as well on a continuous basis.

APDIP

- Steering committee meetings do cover a lot but because they only happen twice a year, there needs to be mechanisms to prepare for discussions so that we are not just covering issues but are ready to make decisions and not have to wait for the next meeting to table issues again. More virtually discussing is required to discuss project, case by case, as problems or issues arise.

Ma Yan

- Yes

Salman Ansari

- The feedback elements is not comprehensive since there is a shortage of time and no objective data to work from

- An independent review meeting cycle is needed
- I expect that since most of us are very preoccupied with our work and to spare the time to travel and stay is difficult, a lot of work can be done via e-mails if the process can be followed up by an expanded Logistics and Program Administration.

APNIC

- Yes we are generally satisfied, however

AMIC

- The steering committee meetings are the best possible means we have at our disposal to manage the program and allocate the grants. The discussions are open and democratic and every member's opinions are taken into consideration before the grants are awarded.

### **Question 7:**

What other issues are you concerned with?

Frank Tulus

- Main issue is gathering key lessons from the different projects: what have we learned from ICT and health for example. There is a need for more in depth analysis on a variety of these issues and about the way forward as a result of these lessons learned, for example, which the lessons learned can help improve women's participation in the information economy. Partners are keenly interested in this, but AMIC appears to be less so. AMIC has a research coordinator so we are let down that AMIC has not taken this on.

Esther Williams

- I only have one concern – and that is my own not being able to find the time to participate in discussions and meetings more often. I had suggested more virtual meetings, which are very possible now, and can be beneficial and effective, but this has not been taken up.

Salman Ansari

- Follow up and lack of replication across the member countries
- Assessment of the impact of funds given

APNIC

- When delegates are selected, it is important to consider not just their credentials, but also their capacity to make the necessary time commitment to the programme.
- In the current structure, the number of proposals received is beginning to stretch the ability of the committee to deal with them all in an efficient manner. There may be a need to consider a more streamlined short listing process.

AMIC

- Administration requirements and budget
- Monitoring, evaluation and consolidation of results learnt
- Expectations of partners

### **Question 8:**

What priority recommendations would you care to make?

Frank Tulus

1. To take stock and learn from the different projects, this is a first, especially the macro issues and the key lessons learned. This really the only way of learning if and how the program has been successful or not
2. Knowing which aspects of the program can be improved
3. Monitoring and evaluating projects. There is a need for improved monitoring of projects and to flag problem projects and related issues

Esther Williams

- For the Pan project to continue.
  - There is a need for more publicity, more funding and a change of focus.
  - We could be working more with the private sector.
    - Support incubator centre projects that are researching into new products and services.
  - More applied research taking into consideration that this could also serve as capacity building in research for many institutions and expect that for some projects we cannot expect the very best top quality proposals.
  - We could be assisting in proposal writing and improvement as well if we note promising proposals that could be developed.
  - The management of meetings can take different formats
- 
- Steering committee meetings do cover a lot but because they only happen twice a year, there needs to be mechanisms to prepare for discussions so that we are not just covering issues but are ready to make decisions and not have to wait for the next meeting to table issues again. More virtually discussing is required to discuss project, case by case, as problems or issues arise.
  - Most are made above

AMIC

- I have no specific priority recommendations to make. I think the partners should show more commitment to the programme.

## Question 9:

### Any other comments?

Frank Tulus

- IDRC values this program highly and wishes to continue and it would appear that APDIP and APNIC share this commitment and would like to look forward to addressing these issues once and for all. IDRC will not continue with the status quo. Many of these issues have been raised for some time now, and we must act on these concerns once and for all.

Esther Williams

- This project has allowed me to develop my interest in a number of areas and has enabled me to provide advice in specific related areas.
- It has also developed links between our regions and the different institutions.

## **Comments from past Pan Committee members:**

### Comments from Maria Ng, IDRC, Singapore

- May be better to focus the efforts of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme on countries and not on regions. This could be done by working with local and national committees. They are closer to the end user and would have a better understanding of local needs and circumstances.
- Not sure if this approach would work for everyone, for all partners.

### Gabe Rijpma, Microsoft, Singapore

Microsoft focus in supporting the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme

- Support for Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme is consistent with Microsoft work in promoting the development of the ICT ecosystem worldwide.
- Already Microsoft is doing this with the Microsoft *Partners in Learning* programme and the *Unlimited Potential* programme
- Microsoft must be able to measure the impact that these programmes have. Microsoft has a problem with the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme because it is difficult to measure impact of the investments made either by Microsoft and/or the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme partners
- Microsoft would like to see more metrics related to performance of the investments made, specifically, there is a need for an annual communication plan that is geared up before the next grant round or request. This will help to build the business case for the project. This is needed in advance so that Microsoft can input these figures into advance programming and funding cycles

- Microsoft needs reports with visual documentation of achievements, progress along with concrete metrics, including retrospective metrics for evaluation purposes
- Need to restructure grants according to a template, this would make it easier for grantees and grant evaluators
- Need to give researchers a broader forum so that they can gain more credit for their work
- Rijpma sees three key areas:
  - Metrics,
  - A communication strategy to share the results and building institutional capacity, i.e. how to help researchers develop their research ideas further and especially
  - How to help researchers interact with business
- Microsoft is perceived as a destructive force by some because from the private sector, etc.
- However, Microsoft could also be useful in bringing in more private sector involvement with the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme. Would be prepared to do that but first need to get over some of the bad feelings around the table concerning Microsoft's involvement in Pan. Microsoft wants to be a full partner in Pan, not a second tier partner
- Pan has to be more realistic in terms of expectations of financial commitments from the private sector
- Microsoft supports the idea of Pan developing a big and bold programme of action and extending its ambitions.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **Question 1: Are you satisfied with the present modality and structure of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme?**

While respondents are satisfied with the administrative structure in place, the process is a problem for many. IDRC feels that AMIC has not contributed enough to the development of the Pan concept. APDIP has a problem with the follow-up process, especially when it comes to the policy decisions or agreements made by the steering committee. Agreements to survey the projects and build a virtual community are two examples of non-action after agreements made by the steering committee. More could have been done to keep beneficiaries connected with the programme. AMIC could have provided more facilitation and more leadership.

There is a need for more follow up. There is a great need for more follow up in order to learn from the projects. The projects need to be linked together so that they are not just stand-alone endeavours.

APNIC feels that the evaluation of programme outcomes is an issue that has not been addressed.

### **Question 2: Please provide your impressions concerning the administration of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme**

While respondents were satisfied with the administration of the programme, many voiced concern about a lack of communication from the programme administrator, AMIC. Some were concerned about the lack of action on decisions made by the Steering Committee. Currently, important programme information is scattered across several different web sites. There is no single, simple URL that can give potential applicants access to complete programme details including application procedures. We would like to see a new, dedicated web site established with clear, simple guidance on the programme and application procedures.

APNIC feels there is need to strengthen the leadership in the administration of the programme.

### **Question 3: Concerning the partnership element of the programme:**

All partners and Steering Committee members who answered this question felt that the partnership was congenial and was working. There are issues, but these can be resolved. Some respondents felt that the programme should be expanded by seeking more partners and also by opening up to the private sector as partners. One respondent felt that this would help expand the programme and increase the size of grants.

### **Question 4: Has the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme lived up to its own expectations?**

All respondents felt that the programme has met its expectations. Most felt that the mix of projects was adequate, but one felt that there was a need for more diversity in the projects.

**Question 5: Have you participated in recent Steering Committee meetings?**

Most respondents participated in the recent Steering Committee meetings.

**Question 6: Are you satisfied with the Steering Committee meetings or mechanism as a tool for obtaining feedback on the programme and as a way of helping the Programme manage expectations and deliver results**

The respondents felt the Steering Committee mechanism could be much more efficient and workable if there was more and ongoing communication and follow-up on the decisions taken from one meeting to the next. Because time and distance limitations, some respondents felt that greater use of distance conferencing and like technologies should be taken advantage of.

**Question 7: What other issues are you concerned with?**

Some respondents felt that not enough follow up was being done. There is not enough analysis of the results achieved. There is not enough attention paid to lessons learned.

**Question 8: What priority recommendations would you care to make?**

Some respondents felt that there is a need to take stock and learn from the different projects. There is a need for much more analysis. Monitoring and evaluation need also to be taken into consideration in the future. While the administrative arrangements have been dealt with, it is clear that some respondents feel there is much more that needs to be done to this programme for it to work as well as it can.

**Question 9: Any other comments?**

IDRC wants the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme to continue, but not under the present arrangements.

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE ITEM NUMBER 5: REVIEW OF THE CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF ALL PAN ASIA ICT R&D GRANTS COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

### **Objective**

The objective of this review follows:

5. Conduct a review of the conclusions and recommendations of all Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants committee meetings (both meetings for selecting the proposals and to discuss programmatic issues), and assess the subsequent actions to be followed based on the conclusions and recommendations of the meetings.

### **Methodology**

This report presents passages from the minutes of all of the Grants and associated Partners committee meetings since 2002, i.e. since the time AMIC began as the official partner of Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme with responsibility for secretariat services. These passages were selected because of their direct relevance to the review and assessment of actions taken as a result of these meetings. By and large, these passages are notices of decisions that are to be taken or comments in decisions that have been taken or not.

It was at this meeting in January 2002 that it was agreed that AMIC would take charge of administering the grants, monitoring the progress of the projects and ensuring objectives and deadlines are met. It was pointed out that AMIC should participate more actively in deciding problematic issues that may arise at that time and that AMIC had final authority to resolve this issues. It was also recommended that AMIC actively participate in deciding problematic issues as they may arise. It was also agreed that AMIC had full responsibility for project monitoring.

### **Key points raised during the meetings**

#### 1st ICT R&D Grants Committee Meeting - January 14-15, 2002, Singapore

The following decisions were taken at the RnD meeting following the grants committee meeting:

- It was noted that AMIC should perform the role of a secretariat, taking charge of administering the grants, monitoring the progress of the projects and ensuring objectives and deadlines are met.
- It was pointed out that AMIC should participate more actively in deciding problematic issues that may arise.
- It was pointed out that AMIC could solicit advice and suggestions from committee members who have had experiences in dealing with problems related to project implementation. AMIC has final authority to resolve these issues.
- It was agreed that AMIC will maintain and enhance the public and internal PanAsia RnD grant Programme web site.
- AMIC will actively participate in deciding problematic issues that may arise.
- It was agreed to appoint a networker for each of the six newly approved applications. He will assist in monitoring the research projects by visiting the

project sites (at their own expense) and discuss project status with the proponents. He will prepare a status report for presentation in the next program committee meeting and copy furnish AMIC.

- It was pointed out that the pool of networkers does not absolve AMIC of taking full responsibility over the project monitoring function. Proponents must direct all inquiries and concerns regarding their projects to AMIC and not to the networkers.

#### Denpasar, Indonesia, 23 – 24 September 2002.

Beyond the decisions regarding the proposals vetted and those that did not make the grade, there were no actionable discussions in this meeting that dealt with issues directly relevant to this review.

#### Luang Parabang, Laos March 10-11, 2003

At the 3<sup>rd</sup> ICT R&D Grants Committee Meeting in Luang Parabang, Laos March 10-11, 2003, the following issues relevant to this review were discussed.

1. There should be more focus in the application regarding the sustainability of projects and the need for increased monitoring was felt.
2. Donor agencies and committee members were committed to work towards information dissemination, monitoring and evaluation and review of projects.

#### Chennai, India on 10 October 2003 & meeting in Manila on 23 April 2004

At the PAN ASIA ICT R&D PARTNER'S MEETING held in Chennai, India on 10 October 2003 as well as the PAN ASIA ICT R&D PARTNER'S MEETING in Manila on 23 April 2004, there were no pertinent points raised related to the matter at hand.

#### Mt. Lavinia, Sri Lanka from November 26-28, 2004

At the ICT R&D Grants Committee Meeting held in Mt. Lavinia, Sri Lanka from November 26-28, 2004, the following points were made:

Once again, IDRC specifically mentioned the issue of evaluation of the projects as a concern. APDIP specifically mentioned the need for more aggressive marketing need in the research sectors of relevance to the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme.

All the partners felt the need of enhanced monitoring and dissemination.

In order to better promote the programme, it was agreed that Nanditha is to coordinate with all the partners. It was agreed that targeted mailing lists as well as listings of international conferences would be undertaken. Some other suggestions were personalized mailing list for next round as well as creating an automated alerting system for the internal website etc.

It was also agreed that now that the Pan programme has matured, there was a need for capturing the lessons learnt during the last 3 years was stressed. It was also agreed that it was time to think about evaluating the programme.

The evaluation of both the projects and processes was discussed - the grants, program evaluations (benefits/achievement of objectives/analyzing the objectives by types of programs funded), existing system, evaluating the funding amount, dissemination processes, modality and relevance of the program etc.

It was agreed that AMIC would publish a catalogue of the completed projects with lessons learnt, interviews etc., along with a dissemination program.

On the administrative side, it was agreed that tools there was a need for tools for reviewing progress were needed.

More information sharing was also required for: tools for review, more information sharing regarding projects and collaborations, automated alerts for changes and additions etc, keeping the communication between the partners alive through out the year, APDIP, APNIC and Microsoft to help to contribute to website.

It was requested that AMIC become more involved in monitoring of all of the projects.

#### Private Sector Partnership

During this meeting, AMIC was requested to finalize the proposal for private sector partnership that was discussed at this meeting. The details of the discussion are not reproduced here.

#### Hanoi, Vietnam, May 6-8, 2005

The following decisions were taken of relevance to this review.

In regard to Microsoft's terms of participation in Pan, it was agreed among the committee that Microsoft be requested to contribute at a higher level than it has so far. It was proposed that Microsoft would then inform AMIC of the outcome and that AMIC would then inform the Board of Directors. Microsoft would have the status of Supporting Organization with no decision making power at the Board of Directors level

On the dissemination side, AMIC also explained the proposed Booklet and Book based on ICT 4D series.

It was agreed that the Pan Website should be more up to date in reflecting the outcome of the projects. There is therefore more need to inform about project outcomes.

It was agreed that learning from the projects would be disseminated using CD ROMs. The format will be presented to the partners.

IDRC Panel at the AMIC annual conference at Beijing was also discussed along with it in Radio Asia Conference in Singapore and at World conference on communication development held by World Bank and Italy Government. Indrajit of AMIC will send more details to the partners.

The possibility of virtual meetings was also discussed.

#### Bangkok, Thailand, Nov 5-7, 2005

The following decisions were taken at this meeting that are relevant to this review. AMIC also outlined the measures taken for promoting the program. The committee felt the need for the improvement of the proposals written. Frank suggested the website to be linked with the guidelines for proposal writing (Linkage to the CD developed by IDRC)

- The question of the need to undertake a systematic analysis of the project output in order to capture lesson learned was raised.
- It was observed that there was a difference between the date in which the grants were allocated and the date in which the projects were actually started due to various legal, physical constraints. The need for the projects to adhere to their time lines was seen as crucial.
- Nanditha to produce a report on problematic projects and circulate amongst the partners. All the issues, suggested solutions should be documented to keep a tab on non-performing projects. AMIC is to monitor projects in India this year-end. Shahid suggested monitoring the problematic projects.

## **Detailed notes from the meetings relevant to the objective**

### 1st ICT R&D Grants Committee Meeting - January 14-15, 2002, Singapore

95 proposals were received for this meeting

Decisions taken at the RnD meeting following the grants committee meeting:

- It was noted that AMIC should perform the role of a secretariat, taking charge of administering the grants, monitoring the progress of the projects and ensuring objectives and deadlines are met.
- It was pointed out that AMIC should participate more actively in deciding problematic issues that may arise.
- It was pointed out that AMIC could solicit advice and suggestions from committee members who have had experiences in dealing with problems related to project implementation. AMIC has final authority to resolve these issues.
- It was agreed that AMIC will maintain and enhance the public and internal PanAsia RnD grant Programme web site.
- AMIC will actively participate in deciding problematic issues that may arise.
  
- It was agreed to appoint a networker for each of the six newly approved applications. He will assist in monitoring the research projects by visiting the project sites (at their own expense) and discuss project status with the proponents. He will prepare a status report for presentation in the next program committee meeting and copy furnish AMIC.
- It was pointed out that the pool of networkers does not absolve AMIC of taking full responsibility over the project monitoring function. Proponents must direct all inquiries and concerns regarding their projects to AMIC and not to the networkers.

### 2nd ICT R&D COMMITTEE MEETING, 23 – 24 September 2002, Denpasar, Indonesia

2.1) Number of Proposals Received: 103

2.2) Number of Shortlisted Proposals: 39

Beyond the decisions regarding the proposals vetted and those that did not make the grade, there were no actionable discussions in this meeting that dealt with issues directly relevant to this review.

### 3rd ICT R&D Grants Committee Meeting – Luang Parabang, Laos March 10-11, 2003

Forty-five proposals were received- forty proposals for the large grants and five for the small grants. Twenty-five proposals were short listed for the meeting - twenty-three large grants and 3 small grants

A general discussion was held during the proposal review,

1. There should be more focus in the application regarding the sustainability of projects and the need for increased monitoring was felt.
2. Donor agencies and committee members were committed to work towards information dissemination, monitoring and evaluation and review of projects

3. The members agreed to share the project visit reports.
4. The committee members agreed to review the outreach strategy together, and to consolidate on this and other aspects, such as monitoring and evaluation for outreach, promotion and funding of ICT R&D grants
5. Interim technical reports to be circulated to the partners
6. There was a concern among the members regarding the issue of small NGO's and Agencies who do not have the competence to write proposals and it was decided that the committee would look into such proposals

PAN ASIA ICT R&D PARTNER'S MEETING, Chennai, India, 10 October 2003

Fifty-six proposals were received- forty-six proposals for the large grants and ten for the small grants. Thirty-eight proposals were short listed for the meeting: thirty large grants and eight small grants.

1. The contract issues with proponents were discussed during the meeting and the committee agreed on the following things
  - a. The project outputs (software, survey results) etc should be mentioned in the contract
  - b. Clear specific ownership of equipment/ capital items etc should be defined
  - c. Change of Staff- advance notification regarding the requisition of change of project staff should be given, change of project lead must be approved, transfer of project to new research institutions should be specifically approved
  - d. In the program website specify that overhead expenses are normally not covered by the grant
  - e. Regarding the Monitoring issues Nancy Smyth will revert back
  - f. The need was felt for Risk assessment of the projects broadly under the categories Low, Medium and High risk
  - g. Monitoring and updating of project risk assessment will be uploaded in the internal site.
  - h. Project status report from AMIC will also be uploaded in the website
  - i. Regarding monitoring provision for grantee to accept "study Visit" from the students selected from the program
2. The evaluation template has been discussed and finalized. AMIC to circulate the final draft.
3. The committee decided that there would be a formal sign off of final evaluation by 1 to 2 committee members.
4. Template will be applied for the projects and AMIC will do the template evaluation. This template will be included in the contract

PAN ASIA ICT R&D PARTNER'S MEETING, Manila, Philippines, 23 April 2004

Number of Proposals Received: 103; number of proposals short-listed: 39.

There were no comments pertinent to the review made during this meeting.

ICT R&D Grants Committee Meeting November 2004 – Mt. Lavinia, Sri Lanka, November 26-28, 2004

Eighty-Two proposals were received- Sixty-five proposals for the large grants and seventeen for the small grants. Fifty-one proposals were short listed for the meeting.

Partners meeting

- IDRC confirmed that Frank Tulus would be their nominee for the grants programme
- The partners discussed regarding the need for capturing and disseminating the lessons learnt, changes etc
- IDRC specifically mentioned
  - With the upcoming extension of the project they would need the approximate expenses from AMIC for the next year and also stressed the need for AMIC to resubmit the proposal based on their feedback
  - Evaluation of the projects
  - Membership of the committee
  - Administrative and dissemination cost clarification from the other partners
- APNIC is currently satisfied with the way the program is run and will be involved in future and raised the issue of practicality of number of applications
- APDIP specifically mentioned
  - Criteria and scope of the program whether thematic or general. It mentioned not all the projects fully satisfy the criteria and requested a revisit of the criteria of the program
  - To ensure the success of thematic round of competition their needs to more aggressive marketing need in sectors concerned
- All the partners felt the need of enhanced monitoring and dissemination
- Nanditha to coordinate with all the partners to seek to promote the programme. Targeted mailing list, listing of international conferences, Some other suggestions were personalized mailing list for next round, creating an automated alerting system for the internal website etc. Nanditha to work with Phet and Gerard for this, AMIC to send brochures to APNIC for it to distribute during its training
- The programme has matured and the need for capturing the lessons learnt during the last 3 years was stressed. Necessity for evaluation of the program was mentioned
- Evaluation of both the projects and processes was discussed—the grants, program evaluations (benefits/achievement of objectives/analyzing the objectives by types of programs funded), existing system, evaluating the funding amount, dissemination processes, modality and relevance of the program etc
- AMIC would publish a catalogue of the completed projects with lessons learnt, interviews etc with dissemination program
- Administration - Tools for review, more information sharing regarding projects and collaborations, automated alerts for changes and additions

etc, keeping the communication between the partners through out the year, APDIP, APNIC and Microsoft to help to contribute to website

- AMIC to involve more in monitoring all the projects
- UNDP said it needed an agreement and concrete plan before accepting the percentage of dissemination costs

### **Private Sector Partnership**

The PAN ICT R&D programme is owned and run by the Partners. Other entities including corporations may join as supporters. All decisions are made by Board of Directors (BoD), appointed by the programme partners.

#### Partners

- Currently AMIC, APDIP, APNIC, IDRC, ISOC;
- Others can join as partners on approval of existing BoD;
- Contribution currently US \$100,000 per year (except administrating partner);
- Partner with responsibility for administration of the programme makes no annual contribution.

#### Supporters

- Admission of each Supporter is subject to approval and review by BoD;
- Corporate Supporter contribution is US \$250,000 per year;
- Other contribution levels may be negotiated with BoD;
- Supporters receive acknowledgement and benefits to be determined by BoD.
- No voting rights for supporters

#### Board of Directors (BoD)

- Comprises 1 member from each Partner;
- Responsible for all programme direction and management;
- Responsible for formal approval of recommendations from grants committee
- Decisions are made by consensus, or if necessary by formal vote of BoD members.

- AMIC needs to finalize the proposal with APDIP this December
- The voting rights were reconfirmed as one vote for partner and one for their nominee during the grants meetings

- The partners decided that the administration and dissemination are separate costs
- Regarding the Microsoft contract Nanditha to send to all the partners the legal binding clause for their advice

### ICT R&D Grants Committee Meeting April 2005 – Hanoi, Vietnam, May 6-8, 2005

Eighty-four proposals were received- Sixty-five proposals for the large grants and eighteen for the small grants. Forty-four proposals were short listed for the meeting.

Partners meeting:

Decisions taken:

#### **Corporate for profit members**

With the Microsoft partnership ending in June 2005, its partnership terms were discussed. It was agreed among the committee that

- Microsoft to go back to its management for continuing to contribute at a higher level. It will inform AMIC of this outcome and AMIC will circulate to the Board of Directors
- Microsoft will have the status of Supporting Organization with no decision making power at the Board of Directors level

#### **Dissemination**

- Coordination between partners for dissemination especially prior to the grants announcement periods.
- AMIC also explained the proposed Booklet and Book based on ICT 4D series
- Website needs to be more updated reflecting the outcome of the projects
- Learning from the projects are to be disseminated through CD ROMs. The format will be run through the partners
- Dedicated website for the Pan Grants program in IDRC website. Nanditha to check with Maria and Phyllis for this
- IDRC Panel at the AMIC annual conference at Beijing was also discussed along with it in Radio Asia Conference in Singapore and at World conference on communication development held by World Bank and Italy Government. More details will be sent by Indrajit to partners

1. Possibility of virtual meetings was also discussed

### ICT R&D Grants Committee Meeting November 2005 – Bangkok, Thailand Nov 5-7, 2005

128 projects were received in total and 68 were short-listed from the pre screening round and were considered accordingly.

Decision taken:

- AMIC also outlined the measures taken for promoting the program. The committee felt the need for the improvement of the proposals written. Frank suggested the website to be linked with the guidelines for proposal writing (Linkage to the CD developed by IDRC)

- The update of the previous grants was circulated to the partners. The Committee noted the status of the previous proposals. The need for systematic analysis of the project output was necessary for capturing the overall lesson.
- It was observed that there was a difference between the date in which the grants were allocated and the date in which the projects were actually started due to various legal, physical constraints. The need for the projects to adhere to their time lines was seen as crucial.
- Nanditha to produce a report on problematic projects and circulate amongst the partners. All the issues, suggested solutions should be documented to keep a tab on non-performing projects. AMIC is to monitor projects in India this year-end. Shahid suggested monitoring the problematic projects.

## Observations and conclusions

The objective of conducting a review of the conclusions and recommendations of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants committee meetings and the assessment of follow-up actions is to determine what is being done right, what needs to be done in a different way and what needs to be improved upon.

After reviewing all of the documentation from the Web site as well as information obtained during the mission to the region as well as extensive discussions with various Committee members and partners, the following observations have been made:

Several action items and issues have repeatedly been mentioned in the minutes of successive Grants and/or especially in the associated partner meetings of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme.

### On Pan administration matters

Generally speaking, on matters related to the administration of the programme, AMIC appears to have done a good job according to Committee members. The effort involved in advertising each grant round and in receiving and preparing the proposals for the Grant Committee's review is considerable. On this score, there do not appear to be any significant concerns in the most recent rounds.

### Other issues

The following issues were also raised during these meetings and they are recorded here because it is unclear if any follow up occurred and because, in discussions with partners and Steering Committee members, these were really important issues that needed attention and which were felt to have not been adequately dealt with by AMIC.

Some of these are as follows:

AMIC should perform role of secretariat

- It was noted that AMIC should perform the role of a secretariat, taking charge of administering the grants, monitoring the progress of the projects and ensuring objectives and deadlines are met. This request seems to have been met as discussed above. The secretariat function has been interpreted by AMIC as an administrative function.

More active participation by AMIC

- It was pointed out that AMIC should participate more actively in deciding problematic issues that may arise. On this issue, there has been much expressed by various persons interviewed by the consultant. The general feeling is that AMIC has not been proactive on issues other than the administration of the program and in publicizing the programme. Indeed, AMIC has taken the initiative to publish some of the results of the Pan programme in some of its publications.

- It was pointed out that AMIC could solicit advice and suggestions from committee members who have had experiences in dealing with problems related to project implementation. AMIC has final authority to resolve these issues.

#### More aggressive marketing

- More aggressive marketing by AMIC: while AMIC has used its good offices and its publications and conferences to publicize and market the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme, Committee members felt there was more to be done here to market the Pan programme more widely in the region

#### Documenting lessons learned

- AMIC has contributed to this by documenting some of the work of the Pan in its publications as mentioned previously, however a more systematic effort from AMIC would have been welcomed by the Committee as this point was mentioned on several occasions in different meetings.
- However, the information brochure entitled “Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme – Brief review of research projects funded by the programme” published in 2005 by AMIC does a good of documenting the lessons learned using the example of selected projects funded by PAN. The documentation of the projects achievements and experience in general is a very useful tool in helping to understand what Pan is doing. In discussions with Frank Tulus of IDRC however, it was mentioned that the publication of this document required much time and effort from IDRC in the form of editing support and that this had not been expected by IDRC
- In the meeting that took place in Bangkok, Thailand from Nov 5-7, 2005, the question of the need to undertake a systematic analysis of the project output in order to capture lesson learned was raised. Apart from the publication mentioned above, there is no indication that this was accomplished.

#### Project monitoring and project sustainability

- The projects have been monitored from an administration and finance perspective. There has not been any monitoring of projects from the point of view of their scientific merit. There has not been any scientific mentoring to our knowledge. The long term durability and longer-term impact of the projects has not been addressed either. AMIC’s contributions to evaluating the impact and scientific merit of projects after they have been initiated is lacking. While it is true that Nanditha has helped and provided some mentoring on issues related to the administration side and helping respondents prepare their proposals, etc., there is little or no evidence that AMIC has contributed any research or other more substantive support to Pan grant recipients once the projects have been initiated. It is clear from the field visits that the reviewer has undertaken in the region that this kind of input would not only have been greatly appreciated by the recipients, it would have also contributed to the greater success of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme.
- While it was requested during the Committee meeting of November 26-28, 2004 in Mt. Lavinia in Sri Lanka that AMIC would publish a catalogue of the completed

projects with lessons learnt, interviews etc., along with a dissemination program, there is no evidence that this catalogue was produced and this type of information included.

## **ITEM 7 OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE: ANALYZE AND REVIEW THE MANNER BY WHICH THE LESSONS HAVE BEEN CONSOLIDATED, ANALYZED, AND DISSEMINATED**

### **Objectives**

7. Analyze and review the manner by which the lessons from the funded project have been consolidated, analyzed, and disseminated, including a review of the mechanisms in place for monitoring and capturing learning from the different projects, as well as the methods of analysis, documentation and dissemination.

### **Review of the mechanisms in place for monitoring and capturing learning**

Review of the mechanisms in place for monitoring and capturing learning from the different projects, as well as the methods of analysis, documentation and dissemination.

The main mechanisms in place for monitoring and capturing learning from the projects are:

1. Regular exchanges with AMIC, usually Nanditha Raman on administrative issues
2. Exchanges between Pan partners who are in touch with grantees by email and/or the telephone and/or who visit grantees
3. Participation at conferences that Pan and AMIC invites some grantees to attend. Here the learning is between grantees and it is not clear that Pan learns much about these exchanges between grantees
4. Pan Steering Committee and Grants Committee meetings as well as ongoing exchanges between Pan partners
5. The Pan web site
6. Pan publications such as the recent newsletter which documents the stories of some grants
7. Project reports
8. Pan evaluations.

1. Regular exchanges with AMIC

The focus of these exchanges is mostly on the administrative issues relative to the management of the disbursement of grants. Nanditha does not provide research support, which is not her role nor is she the right person for this. Unfortunately, no one else is available at AMIC on a regular basis to provide mentoring and substantive support to the grantees in an ongoing fashion.

While the expectation has been that AMIC would provide some of this support, in fact, the only persons capable of doing so are Indrajit Banerjee and Dr. Madanmohan Rao, the AMIC research director. Contacts with the latter were very limited and there was no indication that Dr. Rao has been involved with the Pan program, apart from in his role as a member of the Pan Steering Committee. Dr. Banerjee is really not available as he has other pressing engagements. It is also unrealistic to expect Dr. Banerjee, the CE of AMIC, to devote much of his time to this endeavour.

With the help of IDRC, in 2005, AMIC has published a Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme magazine “Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme – Brief review of research projects funded by the programme”.

This publication is one of the most systematic accounts of lessons learned from the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme that has been published. The publication details the achievements of 9 projects that have been funded by the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme. The programmes listed received an honourable mention because they are innovative, but there is no definition of what being innovative really means.

The Pan newsletter needs to be published on a regular and ongoing basis and many more projects should be highlighted, including some failed projects and the reason why they were considered to be failures. The Pan newsletter should be available online for downloads as well as in print versions.

2. Exchanges between Pan partners who are in touch with grantees by email and/or the telephone and/or who visit grantees

Several grantees mentioned the benefits of having direct contact with some of the professionals from the Pan partners themselves, i.e. from staff of the IDRC, of APDIP and of APNIC. According to some of the grantees, this type of intervention and follow up from programme officers from the main partners of Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme are considered to be the most useful to them because they are substantive and because they deal with practical issues related to research management and research networking. Because of the substantive knowledge of the staff of the partners, the grantees benefit. These exchanges are highly valued both by the grantees and by the partners. Some programme officers clearly are in touch with certain grantees on an ongoing basis and inform their opinions of projects and of the programme on this basis. The difficulty is that not all projects benefit equally from the attention of the partners in this fashion. By being in touch with the grantees on an ongoing basis, some Pan partners have documented certain projects more than others.

While this is useful for the Pan programme, it clearly puts certain projects at a disadvantage if the grantees concerned have not raised the interest of individual programme partners sufficiently to attract their attention.

There is clearly a need for more of this type and quality of interaction. It also needs to be undertaken on a systematic basis. This is also one of the most useful ways for Steering Committee members and especially for the programme officers working for the main partners to learn about the projects. Programme officers working for IDRC, APDIP and APNIC have ongoing working contacts with many of the projects. Indeed, the partners themselves brought some of these projects to the attention of Pan.

The learning that accrues to the project as a result of this type of intervention is not systematically classified. However it is one of the main ways in which the programme remains informed about progress and the benefits to the grantees of the programme.

There is a need for these exchanges to become systematic and to document these exchanges so that the information and perceptions can be shared widely and so support can also be made available from a wider array of sources than at present. At present, there are very few sources of support for the grantees on substantive issues. Grantees are in fact left to their own devices on this score. There is a need to ensure that all

grantees have fair and equitable access to this type of support and interaction on an ongoing basis, on demand even. The advantages to the programme of this type of stewardship are likely to be many and significant. Grantees learn from this type of interaction and can be introduced to novel and innovative ways of doing things. They may also receive assistance in finding ongoing support and perhaps even financing. In some cases, this type of interaction could help projects become commercially viable, when and as appropriate.

The best way to ensure this support is to have staff that is dedicated to working with all grantees on substantive issues on an ongoing basis. Along with one or more dedicated staff members dealing with substantive issues such as research management and meeting technical requirements and requests for information for example, push technologies such as a mailing list, a newsgroup and/or targeted e-mailings should be used to keep the grantees informed and supported. A Web based source of information is simply too passive. In our experience with the grantees that the reviewer met with, very few actually went to the Pan site for ongoing information. One of the reasons for this of course is that the Pan site is geared to attracting interest and applications from potential grantees. Little information is available on technical issues and research management and related issues as detailed in the section above. It is true however that the broader Pan site itself is a good source of some of technical information. However, there was no indication as a result of the meetings with the grantees that this reviewer had than any of this useful information from the Pan site and even from the IDRC site in general was used to any significant extent by grantees.

A running dialogue on research management and technical support should be established. Other issues that should also be dealt with in this fashion include providing advice and information on sources of investment and financing, including angel and venture capital financing that may interest and/or be available to grantees.

Another issue of great interest is how to engage the private sector and especially assistance on how to go about commercializing a project. Ideally, a full time research support person should provide this type of service. However, because the skills required are quite different from those required by a researcher or technical specialist working in the ICT area for example, another support person with strong business and technology skills or other arrangements to provide this service should be considered. Possibly an arrangement with private sector partners could be considered here. Doing this would round out the support offerings that Pan makes available to grantees and greatly increase the reach and appeal of the programme.

Of course, these requirements and the cost of meeting the staff and other needs for such may go beyond present financial arrangements for supporting the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme. However, it is the opinion of the reviewer that Pan and its partners should actively consider this and more importantly, for this to happen, that Pan should adopt a much more aggressive plan for growing this programme and for seeking other partners and more funding. At present, we are left with the feeling that the programme is just too small and poorly funded to implement all of these suggestions. Given trends in ICT development and the growth of Asian economies, especially those of India and China, this type of support is greatly needed. This idea is dealt within the recommendations.

3. Participation at conferences that Pan and AMIC invites some grantees to attend. Here the learning is between grantees and it is not clear that Pan learns much about these exchanges between grantees

AMIC has annual conferences and publishes several journals. Pan organizes workshops and invites some of the grantees to participate. Not all grantees find the workshops useful; because they don't always find the technical advice or professional company they are looking for. But for some grantees, these workshops are valuable because they allow grantees to get to know one another and to find issues of common concern related to Pan and also to their research projects.

Researchers that are more likely to be the only ones representing their field of research are likely to be frustrated by these and other meetings because they are not in contact with like minded technicians and researchers.

As a learning mechanism, these meetings are useful to the grantees. For Pan, these meetings allow for structured face-to-face encounters with grantees. These meetings allow Pan to build a sense of community among grantees and hopefully, a feeling of loyalty towards the Pan programme.

The meetings undoubtedly contribute to the learning process. For grantees, they definitely learn something. Not all value this learning experience equally however. Some grantees, a very few, mentioned that the meetings were not that useful because they were not able to interact with others who share their research concerns. Others who were able to network with like-minded researchers we thought these meetings to be very useful.

4. Pan Steering Committee and Grants Committee meetings as well as ongoing exchanges between Pan partners

The meetings are well documented and focused on the selection of grantees. Unfortunately, there does not appear to be much discussion during these meetings on achievements and the ongoing projects. Because the selection process is now an onerous and very demanding and time consuming endeavour, and the administration of ongoing projects does not allow for much substantive interaction and because the capacity for AMIC to provide substantive input is not there, the Steering Committee meetings appear to focus on the selection process and not so much on achievements.

Pan partners and other Steering Committee members recognize this and in many meetings of the Steering Committee, including especially during the grant selection meetings, there are several references to evaluation of projects and a compilation of lessons learned. However, there are very few references in the minutes to successful evaluations having been undertaken. The information brochure that was published in 2005 documents some achievements and some lessons learned as a result. Otherwise, there do not appear to be many reports or other documents that we have seen documenting lessons learned.

On the administrative side of the Pan programme however, there is a good understanding of the operation and management of the programme and of what issues may affect getting funding into the hands of grantees for example. But there is very little knowledge about some of the more substantive issues related to the research being undertaken by grantees and to the challenges they face in meeting their research

objectives, disseminating research results and seeking other sources of support to take the project to the next stage.

In discussions with grantees, this was an important issue. On this score, it appears that Pan has some work to do.

The exchanges that partners have are an important way to collect and share information about achievements, about what works and what does not and about lessons learned as a result of operating the programme in general.

For the reasons mentioned previously above, that the programme officers of Pan partners have more substantive interactions with certain and selected grantees, this learning and the exchanges that take place between the programme or equivalent officers of IDRC, APDIP and APNIC is very important. Indeed, it is probably the most substantive source of learning and knowledge that exists in the Pan about the research and technical status and achievements of the projects that have been funded.

#### 5. The Pan web site

The publicly accessible Pan Web site was useful to some grantees that found the Pan programme as a result of searching the Web using the Google search engine for example. However, it was not very helpful in documenting lessons learned, as there does not appear to be any online feedback mechanism available for grantees.

As mentioned previously, the Pan Web site is far too static a communication and information sharing vehicle to be of any great significance in encouraging the creation and sharing of knowledge between the grantees and the partners.

The Pan Web site needs to be enhanced with information and services that are relevant to the research and other technical interests of the grantees, and especially to research management and related issues.

#### 6. Pan publications such as the recent newsletter which documents the stories of some grants

The newsletter was well received by some of the grantees, although they wanted to know what criteria were used for the selection of the projects.

This document is a useful way of documenting lessons learned and publicizing the achievements of certain projects. The newsletter should continue to be published, but a regular online publication and the use of some of the push technologies mentioned above should be encouraged as a way of getting the message out to the research community.

#### 7. Project reports

Project reports are the most substantive communications that grantees provide to AMIC. However, there is no sense that these reports are exploited to any significant extent by AMIC or by others in the programme. Issues that are not related to project management are not likely to be considered by AMIC for the reasons mentioned previously – AMIC is focused on administrative project management, not on substantive issues. These issues have therefore to be addressed elsewhere.

Steering Committee members have a very limited amount of time to dedicate to the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme. This limited time and energy is focused on grant selection.

#### 8. Pan evaluations.

Evaluations are a useful way of gathering information about the performance of the programme from the beneficiaries and from others as well. Evaluations and site visits as well as the organization of meetings that take place close to and/or in contact with grantees and their projects are to be encouraged. For these evaluations to be even more successful, it would be useful for the Pan partners to disseminate the evaluation reports and to open discussion on the findings and recommendations of these reports when Pan conferences and meetings take place.

## **TOR ITEM NUMBER 8: DOCUMENT SUCCESS STORIES OF SELECT PROJECTS**

### **Objective**

8. Document success stories of select projects that have been funded through the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme - the selection of the projects shall be made in consultation with IDRC and UNDP-APDIP.

The projects selected where the 14 projects visited during the mission to Asia of January 2006. Not all of these projects have completed their work, so success is still in coming in some of these projects. In some cases, because of the short time available with some of the grantees, especially those in the Philippines and because of the focus on the administrative issues, it was not possible to fully document success stories.

### **1. Open Source GIS/Mapping Solution for the Indian Tsunami Information Resource Center**

Project Leader: Jason E. Steward, Technical Director

Recipient Institution: Janastu

Address: 3354, K.R Road, Bangalore, Karnataka –560070, India

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URL: www.openrun.com

Amount: USD 8,902

Duration: 10 Months

Commencement Date: May 2005

#### **Success story:**

Most ICT professionals in India want to work on big corporate accounts and endeavours. However, there is little focus on the ICT needs of India. Janastu tries to redirect this focus by making available the services of Indian and other ICT specialists and apply these skills to solving IT problems in India. Janastu enters into flexible arrangements with NGOs to undertake work base on how relevant the work is to Janastu's interests. Janastu not only develops solutions, but also provides some backstopping, as they are doing for Saathii and their Online Resource Centre.

This project is ongoing. However the project has established a working relationship with villagers directly impacted by the tsunami and is moving to develop both an open source based GIS system and training the villagers to use this tool to map out all features of value to them for planning purposes. Obtaining the license or acquiring the software from a commercially available GIS system such as those produced by companies such as ESRI would be prohibitively expensive. However, using Open Source tools and technologies as well as the tools developed by Janastu (the Pantoto tool kit for example) would allow greater access to the significant benefits of powerful GIS applications.

While the reviewer was meeting with the project managers and staff, work was ongoing on developing the modules themselves.

The potential for success lies in unleashing the power of geospatial planning tools such as a functional GIS for local and community development. Armed with visual documentation of natural and human processes and recording and then displaying these over time should empower villagers to make their points very clearly using visual evidence to support their claims related to environmental and or human impact on their surroundings.

More generally, Janastu works with Open Source solutions to empower the NGOs and other groups it is working with by releasing them from the constraints or proprietary and very expensive software solutions. Using a Web based application to build the capacity of these organizations to use ICTs and Open Source, Janastu hopes to enable organizations to develop their own browser based applications as a way of overcoming programme development dependency. This allows local language data input with browser based systems, even allowing searching in local languages. Janastu has developed the Pantoto tool kit to help NGOs take advantage of these tools.

The project helps to develop a rehabilitation map of tsunami affected areas. NGOs and community groups are trained in data entry and the use of GPS devices for entering geo-referenced data. The project seeks to train 50 NGOs in affected coastal villages over the coming months. The grant is being used to develop the Pantoto platform environment that will allow mapping a database to a geo-referenced data set. Other components of the grant include the integration of the tools being used as well as training. The project is waiting for the release of funds to undertake the training component. Because geo-referenced data is not available in India, activists go out and collect their own data using GPS and other tools. Existing geo-referenced datasets from US sources are being used to assist with this process, while doing some ground truthing.

One outcome of this work has been the development of the [www.mapunity.org](http://www.mapunity.org) site, which allows others to add their own bookmarks to the database and maps. Janastu is working with others on the content and to build a community of users and practitioners around the map. Using the Google API as well.

At present, the Web platform is undergoing internal testing and is expected to go live in about 1 month from when this interview took place in January 2006.

What makes this a success story?

- Innovative use of Open Source and of software in general for disaster management and rehabilitation. This project has realized the potential of the application given the need
- Applying technical solutions that can empower affected communities to better manage their environment and document, record and communicate environmental and other changes in their surroundings for development planning and in this case for rehabilitation and reconstruction and prevention
- A collaborative approach using resources at the local and community level and extending to the community of Open Source and other practitioners to focus their skills on tsunami relief.

Some comments from Janastu on how to enhance Pan

- Network the grantees. There is no effort in this direction according to Janastu. For Open Source enthusiasts, this is important, indeed crucial for further development and testing
- How is the work of the Pan grantees publicized? The applications and products being developed here buy this project could be used elsewhere. Why not provide support for Janastu to help others take advantage of and learn to use the tools that have and are being developed here
- Would appreciate help with information and hints on how to recruit more volunteers
- Also help on funding: how to help identify and secure other sources of funding.

## **2. Roadmap for Process Re-Engineering for Reaching e-Governance to the Disadvantaged, India**

Project Leader: Parminder Jeet Singh

Institution: IT For Change

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Amount: US\$ 8,888

Duration:

Commencement Date: November 2004

This project is undertaking research on e-governance in India. It is based on the premise that e-governance in India is not moving forward. There are only limited online services available at present. India is very much behind other countries such as Australia in the transition to a service oriented approach to government and the provision of government services using the Internet and related technologies.

The project aims to look at the reasons for this situation. What exists at present in terms of online services in the Government of India is very basic and has not motivated any fundamental changes in the way government works or in the way public services are provided. Several issues have been identified as root causes of this problem. These include a lack of ownership at the ministerial level. The one stop shop approach to the provision of government services has not succeeded yet. In part, this seems to be because the ministries themselves are not visible enough in their work and because they consider this issue to be strictly an IT issue, not one of changing the way government works. There is no structural change underway in the Indian administration, change that is necessary for e-government to take place. There are no apparent champions, no one to lead the way it would appear.

Consider the experience of Australia with CentreLink, the front-end department for all other departments. This online service provides 60-70% of all welfare services delivered and is recognized as an independent ministry. The aim of the project is to compare and contrast the situation in other parliamentary democracies with the situation in India and to make recommendations accordingly.

The project will also look at what individual states in India are doing where there do exist models at different stages of maturity. In Kerala for instance, there is an IT Ministry. The Minister for Kerala, the IT Secretary, has initiated a programme called AKSHAYA – a large multistakeholder Wi-Fi network that has been used to help devolve responsibilities to the local level. This person is now the UN Officer responsible for the ICT Task Force.

The outcomes of the research are policy briefs for governments and guidelines setting up front-end agencies for e-governance services. The project will include a comparative analysis of experiences and models that have been applied in parliamentary democracies and in India and make policy recommendations to e-government departments throughout India.

Because of a variety of delays, this project has just started and has very little to report.

In discussing support from Pan, the following points were made by the grantee:

- Pan has been too silent when compared to other funders who are much more involved in the project on the substantive side of things. It is difficult to establish a working relationship when this is lacking
- When working with APDIP for example, there were multiple exchanges with the staff there, whereas with AMIC, there is a distance separating us. Would appreciate a more intensive relationship with AMIC
- The online application form is a nightmare
- The Pan Asia workshop in Cambodia was excellent, except that there was too much emphasis on technology
- There is a need to go beyond communicating only about the administration side of the project. The grantee must have a fully professional service to offer grantees as is the case when dealing directly with IDRC or APDIP.

### **3. Using ICT to build capacities of HIV/AIDS Service Providers in India**

Project Leader: Dr. L. Ramakrishnan, Ph.D., Country Director (Programmes and Research)

Country Director (Programs and Research)

Institution Name: SAATHII (Solidarity and Action Against The HIV Infection in India)

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URL: [www.saathii.org](http://www.saathii.org)

Amount: US\$ 29,786

This project is ongoing and aims to build the capacity of various HIV/AIDS service provider organizations to use ICTs. The project seeks to encourage universal access to prevention and treatment services related to HIV/AIDS using ICTs. Two people are funded by this project, which is largely focused on building the capacity of NGOs and of the government, with a focus on public health institutions. There are about 1,200 organizations working on HIV/AIDS in India at present.

SAATHII and the project are focusing on information dissemination, training, networking and advocacy. It is fitting that SAATHII is based in Chennai, because it is here that HIV/AIDS first made its appearance in India in 1986. It is only since 2004 that the Government of India has taken an aggressive stand on fighting HIV/AIDS using anti-retrovirals (ARVs). SAATHII has been providing counseling and training to help. In Tamil Nadu, SAATHII is working with those in need of treatment, of which there are an estimated 50,000 in this state alone.

The focus is on the development of an online resource centre in collaboration with Janastu Servalots in Bangalore. The team believes that all organizations working in HIV/AIDS should receive support in order to build up their capacity to use and apply ICTs, such is the power of the electronic medium today in India.

Dr. Ms. Vilasini is the ICT Coordinator for this project. She is responsible for the online resource centre which includes an e-library, e-training module, e-support and e-forum functions. A newsletter, HIV News is published and available online. A nutrition for HIV module is also in the works.

One issue that the project is dealing with is how to reach HIV/AIDS sufferers and aid agencies as well as support groups. The online resource centre will hopefully address this issue by helping people post queries and seek support directly online via the resource centre site. Support is provided by email and by telephone.

The online resource centre has many postings. Janastu provided training on the use of templates, as well as date entry and form design. Several hundred entries have been made. Modules are being prepared for online training. The email list has been designed to allow for many options for receiving information, by subject, etc.

One problem is for government collaborators who cannot readily access the Internet because of red tape inherent in the Indian bureaucracy. On the question of community access, the first priority is to get drugs to HIV/AIDS sufferers first. The use of SMS has been discussed. Health extension workers do as SAATHII for information using SMS. However, the project is not yet working with end users on this.

While funds were made available in February 2005, the project has only been operating since October 2005 and was delayed until the project coordinator came on board. One of the issues that motivated this project was the question of how to reach HIV/AIDS sufferers as well as the aid agencies that support them? Obviously and online resources has appeal in trying to answer this question. People can post queries to the site and also seek support. People use mostly email and telephone for electronic support.

The project has nevertheless begun working on an online resource centre with the help of Janastu as mentioned above. This collaboration has proven to be very successful. The online resource centre will be used to collect data and information and of course for retrieving information that can be used by a variety of people and organizations dealing with HIV/AIDS.

Some issues that the project has raised in discussions:

It is very difficult to find qualified staff with basic knowledge of ICTs. Saathii's relationship with Janastu was a key point in ensuring the project was able to go ahead. Without Janastu's involvement, the online resource centre idea could not have taken off and then

been implemented. At the time of writing this report, the online resources centre mentioned here by Saathii was available: [www.saathii.org/orc](http://www.saathii.org/orc) and contained some apparently useful information.

Not having done an extensive survey of online HIV/AIDS resources in India, it is not possible to state clearly the significance of this resource, but given the fact that Saathii focuses on organizations and users that are not in the mainstream suggest that this resource has its place. Saathii recognizes as well that access to these resources is an issue, especially for some of the marginal groups that are being targeted. It therefore focuses on doctors and on other organizations, for example NGOs working with people with HIV/AIDS as a way of getting the message through. In this way, this project is commendable and this strategy demonstrates intelligence in the design and understanding of this project and of its beneficiaries.

Although Saathii found Janastu on its own, it is clear that whatever can be done to bring Pan recipients together and to help them network and collaborate is a key ingredient in helping projects becoming successful.

Pan and AMIC's efforts to bring recipients together at conferences and the like is to be encouraged. However other efforts are also important. Saathii makes extensive use of the Internet and especially of the Google search engine to find partners. Saathii found out about IDRC and Pan this way. Saathii also found about other partners willing to fund them , including the Elton John Foundation using Google.

Pan should explore other ways of getting the message out.

What makes this project a success?

- Sound management and strong leadership and knowledge of the issues at hand gives this project an aura of success
- What appears to be very good and intimate knowledge and understanding of the HIV/AIDS situation in India, of the institutional players and of their relationships between themselves and with those affected, of their strengths and weaknesses and of the situation that HIV/AIDS sufferers are confronted with in India
- Professional, committed and highly trained staff are also other important factors
- The Online Resource Centre developed with the help of Janastu is also a very clean and informative site with the potential of reaching millions in India, although it is difficult to evaluate its relevance to HIV/AIDS NGOs in India in relation to other sites providing access to information and resources on HIV/AIDS.

#### **4. Impact of Remote Telemedicine in Improving Rural Health, India**

Project Leader: P G Ponnappa, CEO

Recipient Institution: n-Logue Communications Pvt Ltd.

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Amount and Duration: US\$ 29,313 / 22 months  
Commencement Date: January 2005

This company started as a project of the Indian Institute of Technology (Madras), which incubated the company. n-Logue has the objective of bringing Internet access to rural areas in India.

This is a well-managed and scientifically documented project that seeks to find a commercially viable solution to bring the Internet to rural areas. Part of the solution, from a technical perspective, seems to lie in the idea of using low cost wireless solutions. n-Logue estimates that with about 250 subscribers, such a solution would be commercially viable.

The novelty of this project is that it applies basic business principles and especially the principles of business planning to project development. Because this is a commercial venture, n-Logue must be able to substantiate the validity of its assumptions and the business model it is developing. Meticulous analysis and documentation of the market and of the work being undertaken is necessary in order to not only ensure that the operation takes off but is sustainable over the long run.

This project is based on initial research to find out what types of services could motivate a low cost telemedicine service model in rural parts of Tamil Nadu. It became evident that services based on a device capable of measuring certain vital human health statistics would work. Access to these services would be via an access facility such as a kiosk in a village for example. The team set to work in developing this device with the help of IIT Madras and another local company. The kit is now available and it is being tested. The device costs about USD 300. The Pan project aims to test this device using the business model that has been described above.

A simple model of teleconsulting was developed. The kit was piloted with certain doctors and kiosks. A cost model was developed and tested. However, the kiosks and the facilities are presently underused for a variety of reasons related to the patient doctor relationship and the certification of doctors in rural settings where there are many "quacks". Associating the project with these quacks presents a problem even though many of these people are in demand and appear to meet a need for health services from the population.

In order to increase demand, the provision of other basic medical services is also being considered. Some of these services require blood testing. Blood and diabetes as well as asthma testing are in great demand and this may provide sufficient motivation to drive the project to success. If a device can be developed that allows public testing via medical practitioners, then the project feels there is a business case to motivate further investment in this venture.

The project stands at this stage at present.

What makes this project a success?

- It is too early to call this project a complete success, but it is a success in that it involves applying business principles to applied research and to poverty alleviation. More private sector companies and investors need to be motivated to

- invest in applied ICT solutions to meet basic human needs and this is an example of how this can be done under very specific circumstances.
- Getting the private sector involved in applied research for commercial gain has its advantages, and this project could be a clear example of this. Bone fide businesses can be counted on to provide project oversight and due diligence in research and development because they have investors to answer to. This project needs to be monitored very closely to see if these assumptions hold in this case.

In discussing support from Pan, the following points were made by n-Logue:

- More networking would be most appreciated as a way of encouraging greater sharing with others, especially others working in this and similar areas
- Would appreciate more information about other opportunities for funding and support
- More exposure to possible business partners
- The project is not aware of other grantees in the immediate vicinity with which to network, Saathii for example. Given the dynamic nature of both organizations and their interest in the health sector, collaboration could certainly have been discussed.

## **5. ICT Enabled Life Skill and Sexuality Education for Adolescent Girls in India**

Project Leader: Ms. K.R. Renuka

Recipient Institution: Centre for Women's Development and Research

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Amount and Duration: US\$ 8,911 / 12 months

Commencement Date: June 2004

The CWRD was established about 12 years ago in the slums of Chennai to work with domestic workers and with township workers. Focus was on issues related to violence against women. CWRD was working in 84 slums areas and with 500 households / slum or about 500,000 people in total. Also working in fishermen villages affected by the tsunami. There are 5 coordinators on staff and 30 field staff.

While the Project Leader Ms. Renuka is the titular project manager, she does rely extensively on the help of her husband who has some good management skills and who provides much support to her and to the project.

This project was visited without any previous advance notice as it was not possible to reach them in any way and the reviewer arrived at the time of an important regional holiday festival.

This is a very small NGO with limited means that works with young women that has been experimenting with ICTs for the past few years. This project focuses on building the job skills of young women and at the same time, on providing them with education on sexuality where privacy is respected and the women can learn at their pace about issues that are not usually discussed openly in Tamil and indeed in Indian society.

Apparently, there is no other Tamil language site for girls in India. So on this sense, this project has a great potential. At present, the CWRD has trained 100 women in a tsunami-affected village and another 100 young women in the urban area of Chennai. All women who receive training find work. The training involves learning basic skills such as sewing for example.

The PCs are used to add value to the job training received and women must agree to receive sexuality training using the PC if they want to participate in the work skills training. There is some resistance to the sex education from parents. The sexuality training allows women to have a private and personal space to enquire about these issues for themselves and to obtain answers, something that does not appear to be feasible as a matter of course in Indian culture at present.

The CWRD notes that there is resistance among donors to projects of this type. The project has dial-up as well as high-speed access to the Internet.

The project does need lots of moral and technical support. It could and would greatly benefit from more support from Pan on the project and research management side of things. For example, CWRD needs volunteers to extend the reach of its work. It cannot find volunteers and has not developed a strategy to raise support in this and in other ways. Saathii, a much better developed and more mature organization that is located in the same city of Chennai, only a few kilometers from the offices of the Centre, has the wherewithal to help.

When I raised this possibility with Dr. Ramki of Saathii, he indicated his willingness to assist with some management support and in other ways to be determined. This reviewer believes that AMIC and Pan should have provided the link to Saathii. However, it was not forthcoming because no one knows this is an issue. It would appear that in this case at least, and we believe in other cases as well, that the project was not sufficiently supported.

In discussion with the CWRD on this and related issues, they indicated that they would have greatly appreciated more help from Pan and AMIC on issues such as volunteers as mentioned, networking with like minded organizations in the immediate vicinity and beyond, on project planning and the like as well as working with the private sector and ICT companies such as Saathii has done with Janastu. The CWRD would have greatly benefited from participating in workshops for grantees in order to learn about some of these things.

The project would also have appreciated some assistance on the use of Open Source solutions as an alternative to proprietary solutions. The project needs assistance in order to better understand how to approach this question. Likely this is a bit premature for this organization because it has such little capacity. Nevertheless, with the help of others, it could have built up some capacity in order to plan for the future on this and related issues.

The project manager felt that Pan could have helped more with regular site visits to provide support and to allow Pan to better appreciate the challenges facing this project. A helpline type of facility would have been very useful for this project.

If a help line type of facility was provided, the project would use it as follows: for assistance on questions related to software availability, on the availability of training and on project related challenges such as how to develop a business plan that would help the organization reach its objectives.

What makes this project a success and what should be done to help it become a full-featured success?

- It is premature to call this project a complete success because it is an ongoing project and the centre has very limited capacity to execute. However, it does have the potential to have a very significant impact on the education and empowerment of women in parts of Chennai and in some of the surrounding villages. The multiplier effect that this project could generate in Tamil Nadu and beyond is significant. For this reason, we believe it should be further supported and encouraged. Given the resistance and taboos that had to be confronted by the Centre managers, pulling off the project in the first place is itself a success
- Indeed, this project focuses on helping women develop the confidence to make fundamental decisions that will affect them for the rest of their lives by helping them gain some control over their sexuality and their relations with men
- This is clearly a project that very much needs more than administrative assistance. This project needs research management guidance and project management assistance. Associating the project with Saathii we believe will help achieve this in some measure, but we firmly believe that what is needed here is the personal attention of a Pan / AMIC research professional and also a site visit to allow that person to more fully appreciate the situation that the centre is confronted with. It may also be possible to ask Saathii, in the form of a short-term contract, to extend management support and assistance to the centre. We believe that Saathii has this expertise and would likely be very interested in helping out in this way. With this type of assistance, the project has the makings of a success story, although it has some way to go yet

In summary, the centre project manager made the following observations and recommendations:

- There were delays in getting funds and no reason was given for the delay
- The project would appreciate more information on other funding sources
- The project would appreciate more information on new technologies and their potential and on how to tap into ICT resources available in Chennai
- The project would appreciate more information and assistance on the question of how ICTs can be used to reach poor people
- The project would appreciate more information on the benefits of ICTs at the local level
- The project would appreciate more information on the \$100 PC being developed by the MIT (Negroponte)
- The project would appreciate more information on obtaining recycled PCs.

## **6. A Community-based Child Injury Surveillance System: Rapid Data Collection Using Short Messaging Service in the Philippines**

Project Leader: Prof. Herman D. Tolentino; Dr. Alvin Marcelo, same tel; alvinbmarcelo@yahoo.com  
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URL: <http://www.upm.edu.ph/>  
Amount and Duration: US\$ 22,642 / 9 months  
Commencement Date: 1 January 2004

This project originally was going to focus on the use of SMS for the reporting of child related injuries by health workers. But because of the higher than expected cost of SMS messaging along with a lack of capacity to manage information in the community health centres and because only government can provide information on injuries, the project focused instead on developing the CHITS (Community Health Information and Tracking System).

This is a reporting system with three main components: a short messaging system for reporting child injuries, the training of village health workers on injury surveillance, and a web-based graphical presentation system of injury data for decision makers. It will be implemented in an urban poor village as pilot. SMS has been chosen because of its widespread penetration in the Philippines and its wireless capabilities.

The novelty of this project lies in its ability to adapt to the changing circumstances of the environment in which it was working. The project developed a software application for health facilities that could be customized to meet varying needs and a training component for data collectors and community health centre staff.

The project developed applications that could be used nationally, namely a Web based electronic medical records system for government health centres. Several applications were developed for immunization, maternal health, tuberculosis, family planning, public health, etc.

The project original objectives were to create a data collection system using SMS. However, the researchers soon discovered that the cost of sending messages was going to be very high and that for policy reasons, only government health centers can submit official health data.

The project responded focused instead on creating a computerized based information system that served the needs of the health center facility primarily, and of the national public health system secondarily. The project was renamed CHITS (Community Health Information and Tracking System).

CHITS was piloted in two health centers in Pasay City. The pilots had two major components: first, an extensible and customizable software engine for health facilities, and second a training program for health data collectors, such as health center staff and community health workers.

The authors note that developing a community based health information system is a challenging task, closely approximating the level of difficulty found in the development of hospital and clinical information systems. By paying close attention to health center

events and culture and by employing purposeful immersion in the end-user's way of life, the authors were able to gain immense insight into their needs and requirements and apply these insights into software code, a process they call evolutionary software development. The authors were originally leaning towards a technology-centric implementation of an information system. With deeper analysis and understanding of the needs and requirements of end users, the authors were able to put technology in its place to serve the genuine needs of community health workers.

Why is this project a success story?

- The success of this project lies in part in the ability and capacity of the project managers to meet the perceived needs of community health centres and to change the focus and approach of the project to deal with the reality that it confronted in the community health centres.
- The ability of project managers to work closely with the staff of the community health centres and within the constraints imposed by the government to develop an appropriate solution
- By using a Linux based solution, cost was less of an issue when further deployment was considered.
- The other aspect that makes this a successful story is the commercial appeal that this model presents. An application service provider (ASP) may well be interested in developing this system further and in selling services to government health facilities and departments.
- The project team is currently looking at the privatization of this endeavour. This is also challenge to the staff who are do not have experience doing this.

The project could benefit from input from Pan / AMIC in the form of advice on how to privatize such a project so that it may be reproduced and reach more centres and people.

In summary, the project manager made the following observations and recommendations:

- Dr. Marcelo and colleagues found out about Pan using Google. He feels that Pan can do more to publicize its existence and do more outreach. Perhaps an email burst would be a good way of getting the message out
- Pan needs to have more presence locally. It may be useful for Pan to work more closely with local ministries and/or departments of science and technology to do so
- Need to enhance support for research networking and for helping the projects go the next step beyond the project's immediate outputs
- Need for Pan to act as a broker with other potential donors
- A Pan mentor would be of great assistance, especially if face to face meetings with the mentor and others at conferences would be very helpful
- At the end of the project, would want to know if the project has been considered a success and why or why not
- Also would like for Pan to recognize the effort and contributions of researchers by providing them with some form of recognition, professional recognition that they could use in the pursuit of their career
- Would appreciate receiving hard copies of the articles and newsletters produced by Pan, especially if these mention the project.

## **7. Pilot Testing of a Local Government Knowledge Sharing Network in the Philippines**

Project Leader: Luz Lopex Rodriguez  
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URL: <http://www.galingpook.org>  
Amount and Duration: US\$ 30,000 / 24 months  
Commencement Date: 1 December 2003

This project has been running since 2003, but has encountered some delays, in part due to changes in staff. The interest of this project lies in the attempt to capture a knowledge base of best practices in local government. The Galing Pook Foundation, Inc. has been awarding local government awards nationally in the Philippines for the past 13 years. These are highly publicized and prized awards for the local authorities concerned.

The objective is to contribute to good governance in the Philippines. The project also hopes to connect each of 15 LGU (local government units) into a knowledge and ICT innovations sharing network. So far, most of the LGUs are participating although there are several problems related to connectivity, the state of information management in the LGUs, the limited support from the LGUs themselves because they are resource constrained, computer literacy, few incentives and the issue of sustainability. The LGUs in question can be at all levels, from the village to the governorate. Fortunately, there is a core of committed experts and some local planning officers that are making the project work. Two major consultations have taken place and the final specifications for the Logoshare project are being drawn up. Logoshare is an ICT - enabled knowledge sharing mechanism for connecting all local government units (LGUs) and other institutions holding and / or needing knowledge in local governance and development, into an ICT-enabled network for mutually-beneficial knowledge sharing and technology innovations.

LGOSHARE is a partnership between Galing Pook Foundation, the Philippines Sustainable Development Network and the Center for Conscious Living. The project is basically a learning project, --- it aims to uncover what works and what does not work. The project has 5 components corresponding to 5 R&D questions.

First, to identify where the best practices are, the project will conduct an inventory of existing knowledge bases in best practices, tools, templates and know-how in local governance and local development. Second, an inventory, design of a classification system and the development of an e-directory of existing expertise in governance will be undertaken to identify the best practitioners in terms of best practices. Third, the project will provide the impetus to the "knowledge pull" of the project. In order to do this, the project will undertake action research and pilot an e-group among Local Planning and Development Officers to develop a knowledge sharing culture and to uncover what are their priority knowledge needs for local governance and development at the local level. Fourth, the project will try to identify the key success factors in a user-driven system by

developing a bottom-up system that the users themselves will design and they will also maintain a knowledge base for their priority needs. Fifth, a top-down Help Desk will be organized.

Volunteer experts on various technical governance areas will freely give their expert advice through an on-line consultation for those who need knowledge and information at the local level.

The success of this project comes from the innovative idea of capturing best practices and then making these available to all as well as identifying and linking experts in the area so that they can also assist in sharing and applying the best practices. An e-directory has also been developed and an electronic discussion group has also been set up for generating knowledge from the experts who participate in it. The project provides a very good example of how to go about sharing knowledge.

## **8. Building a Philippine IPv6 Research Network**

Project Leader: Denis F. Villorente

Recipient Institution: Advanced Science and Technology Institute

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Amount and Duration: USD \$ 8,990 / 9 months

This project seeks to build a test bed for IPv6 in the Philippines. This project recognizes the need to start building internal capability and a knowledge base in preparation for IPv6. The Advanced Science and Technology Institute (ASTI) initiated the IPv6 research in the Philippines. Using the Philippine Research Education and Government Information Network (PREGINET), the team will test the IP version 6 protocol by extending the version 6 protocol to some institutions in order to encourage them to adopt it. This will help to build human capacity as well as technical capacity. Using a test bed, the schools involved in the project explore transition mechanisms and pursue in-depth research on the protocol itself. Sustainability of the project is supported by PREGINET. There are 92 organizations throughout the Philippines connected to PREGINET.

ASTI is an organization of the Government of the Philippines that has 42 full time staff along with project staff, which makes for 130 staff in total.

The Philippine IPv6 Research Network has now been completed successfully. The IPv6 network developed through this project is now being used as a testbed for the design, development, and testing of IPv6 applications by the participating institutions of the project. It continues to be used by faculty, researchers and students. Some applications developed through this project are now being used such as the "Dynamic DNS Solution for a Campus Network" project of the students from MSU-IIT, which was among the top 20 Grand Prize Winners of the 2004 Linux Scholars Challenge.

The project has conducted workshops on IPv6 routing, DNS servers, web servers, web proxies, email and IPv6-enabled applications for faculty, students, government staff, and the identified project managers. It also organized an IPv6 Forum on applications, operations, and possible business models that companies can use in adopting IPv6.

The project deployed hardware to three project sites including computers, routers and application servers. This included connecting several non-partner institutions to the test bed as well. CVISNET, UP, and MSU-IIT, were able to establish IPv6 connectivity to ASTI, and to other international IPv6 networks through ASTI and AI3.

The project created a number of presentations and other materials including publications on IPv6.

ASTI has become the point of contact for IPv6 in the Philippines. ASTI's collaboration with institutions, particularly with schools and universities, Internet service providers, telecommunications companies, and other IPv6 stakeholders, has contributed to its aim of deploying IPv6 in the Philippines. As a result of the project, there has been an increased appreciation of IPv6 within the government and in the IT community in the Philippines. The private sector is also paying attention and large telecommunications providers (TELCOs) and Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in the Philippines are taking steps to become IPv6 compliant.

The success of this project lies in its impact on these communities of users.

## **9. A Philippine Business Model and Government Interventions Strategies for Viable Community Telecenters in Rural Areas**

Project Leader: Mr. Enrico Basilio, Director for Special Projects  
Recipient Institution: Centre for Research and Communication (CRC) Foundation  
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URL: [www.crc.org.ph](http://www.crc.org.ph)  
Amount and Duration: US\$ 29,974 / 20 months  
Commencement Date: January 2005

This project is ongoing. The project focuses on developing a business model for sustainable telecentres in the Philippines. While there are many telecentre initiatives in the Philippines, only a few are operational. Telecentres are a priority of the government in reaching the objectives set in the ICT Road Map. The project team will be visiting telecentres in 3 parts of the Philippines. Already, 3 telecentres have been visited. The selection of telecentres to visit is based on their use of different management models. Some telecentres are run by NGOs, others by government and some are run privately. Based on research undertaken to date, one success criteria that appears is having close contact with the people the telecentre is intended to serve. Close contact helps ensure success. Maintenance and hardware issues are also important and have to be taken into consideration over the longer term.

Most telecentres are subsidized by government and/or foreign agencies and therefore charge minimal fees. For these centres to be sustainable, they must have a business plan. Unfortunately, as in other jurisdictions, telecentre managers don't have sufficient training in general and business training in particular. Connectivity is also a problem in parts of the Philippines.

The project is ongoing and the outcomes are not yet clear, so it is difficult to call this project a success at this stage.

In summary, the following observations and recommendations were recorded in discussions with the project team:

- How are projects evaluate and selected? It is not clear what Pan is looking for in projects
- Not sure what criteria or themes are more likely to attract the interest of Pan
- The team submitted another project to Pan. It was not approved and the team would like to know why
- There is a need for more support from Pan beyond Nanditha. Sometimes communications are an issue. Payments have it been received o time and this has created some programming problems.

### **10. Policy, Praxis and the Public Interest: Engendering a Strategic InfoComms Policy Research Programme in the Philippines**

Project Leader: Alan G. Alegre, Executive Director

Recipient Institution: Foundation for Media Alternatives

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URL: [www.fma.ph](http://www.fma.ph)

Amount: USD 26,477

Duration: 18 Months

Commencement Date: June 2005

This project aims to strengthen the capacity of the government of the Philippines to develop appropriate policies in the ICT area. Resources were needed to go into more detail on certain policy issues and to look into best practices in certain areas such as VoIP, etc. The FMA is also interested in ensuring that the public interest is respected and accounted for in policy considerations.

There have been delays in getting this project going, partially because of some misunderstandings about when the funds would be made available.

As a result, the project is not yet complete. It is not possible to state that this project is a success at this stage. However, the focus on policy research is commendable. Pan should continue to support applied research as well as policy research.

The potential for success for this project lies in its ability to translate policy research into action.

In summary, the centre project manager made the following observations and recommendations:

- Pan should make it clear that it also supports policy research.

## **11. ICT-Based Telemedicine System for Primary Community Healthcare in Indonesia**

Project Leader: Prof. Dr. Soegijardo Soegijoko

Recipient Institution: Research Group on Biomedical Engineering Biomedical Engineering Programm Department of Electrical Engineering Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB)

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URL: <http://biomed.ee.itb.ac.id>

Amount and Duration: USD \$ 26, 992 / 20 month

Issues and what make this project a success:

There are two projects that the Institut Teknologi Bandung that this research group has been working on. In the first project, which has now been completed and which started in 2002, the focus is on an urban setting and on developing a pilot telemedicine system in 6 nodes with an objective of having eventually 20 nodes at a later stage, i.e. after the project has been completed. The second project is commented on separately below.

The main challenge when the project started was persuading people to participate in the project. This took much longer than expected by the team. One issue was dealing with the different perceptions of the health care professionals and staff themselves. These people had a different perception of the role of PCs and this had to be overcome. To deal with this issue, the project organized 8 workshops to deal with issues related to human resource development. In order for the project to be sustainable, the human resource development issue had to be dealt with. Another issue of concern was the policies of the institutions concerned.

While the first project has been completed now, activities are ongoing that now reach beyond Bandung. There is now new research collaboration with the community health centres. There has even been an extension of the project to Banda Aceh that has been undertaken in collaboration with the University of New South Wales. Health kiosks have been installed in Banda Aceh.

The project has the following outputs:

1. A patient data recording and reporting system. This project revealed many important issues that had to be dealt with. Getting operators to use this system was an issue because there were no incentives and no recognition for using a PC based data input tool. With a lack of incentive to automate, there was resistance to learning and implementing this module.
2. A health care evaluation for under 5 year olds. Every two weeks, mothers come to the clinic with their children. The system can also be implemented manually.
3. Tele-consultation: this is done offline and involves a specialist in the Bandung hospital working over the telephone with someone in clinics.

4. A referral forum for health professionals to discuss issues and exchange information – this in the form of an e-mailing list as well as a Web based application
5. A Web site that was not developed as part of the Pan project but that had to be developed as a Web template for the 70 community health centres. It is expected that these centres will host their own sites as a result.
6. A mobile phone accessible Web site that includes the Community Health Care Information System. People can use this site to find who is the medical doctor in a given health centre, where drug stores are located. Problem is updating the information when staff moves around.

The project is also looking at how it can collaborate with the private sector for example in delivering services to the end users. However, the project staff are concerned such an approach may eliminate services for those who cannot afford to pay.

Overall, the success of this project to date is due to the willingness of the staff involved to persist and take the time required to explain to people what was being attempted and the advantages of computerizing. The most important issue here was not technical, but it was a human problem that was overcome through communication and patience as well as understanding. Once the project staff had overcome the resistance of health professionals, the rest was a question of diligence in getting the applications installed and in training the staff and demonstrating the functionality of the systems.

While there remains much to be done to reach all of the other health centres, the initial success has been noted by the health authorities and is helping chip away at resistances to the further automation of health systems and clinics in Bandung and beyond.

Clearly, for technical projects that are going to change the way people work, it is a priority to take the time to show the people that technology can also make work easier and more worthwhile or all concerned and especially for the patients.

On the issue of research support for the project from Pan, the AMIC conferences were helpful. These conferences allowed the grantees to meet and exchange ideas and explore the possibility to collaborate. Obtaining information from other projects was very helpful. Accessing intellectual property from other countries was also considered an advantage of these conferences, for example information about telemedicine projects in Canada.

## **12.F root server measurement and analysis, Indonesia**

Project Leader: Mohamad Dikshie Fauzie, Project Manager

Recipient Institution: Pusat Sumber Daya Informasi Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB), Indonesia

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Amount and Duration: US\$ 8,780 / 6 months

Commencement Date: February 2005

This project has been stalled because the Institut Teknologi Bandung team cannot secure the F root server data from the Internet Systems Consortium (ISC), a not-for-profit corporation dedicated to developing and maintaining production quality Open Source reference implementations of core Internet protocols. To do this, the project needs USD 4,000 to become a member of the ISC for 1 year. The project leaders have therefore not signed a contract with Pan to implement this project for this reason. The project team was hoping that Pan could assist with obtaining the required permissions from the ISC, but this has not happened.

The project team will resubmit this proposal if the ISC issue can be resolved.

### **13. Development of ICT-Based Mobile Telemedicine System with Multi Communication Links for Urban and Rural Areas in Indonesia**

Project Leader: Dr. Soegijardjo Soegijoko

Recipient Institution: Biomedical Engineering Programme, Department of Electrical Engineering, Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB)

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URL: <http://biomed.ee.itb.ac.id>

Amount: USD 29,479

Duration: 24 Months

Commencement Date: July 2005

#### **Project 2**

This project started in July 2005 and hopes to reach some more rural health centres. A telemedicine unit with multi communication links has started making test transmissions using mobile phones and radio. Because there is much less communication infrastructure in rural areas, the project has been using GSM based technology along with radio and wireless with an eventual possibility of using satellite communications.

The key issue here for this project as well is getting local buy-in. The base unit in the local hospital along with local health authorities has all been very supportive of the project. The local authorities feel that this project can help manage an outbreak of polio in the region.

As this project is ongoing, it is too early to label it a success. However, given the experience in Bandung with the first project, it can be hoped that the project will demonstrate the value of ICTs as tools to assist the community centres, even in rural settings.

See the comments in the previous and now completed project for feedback about Pan and AMIC support.

## **Final section: Observations, conclusions and recommendations**

### Main observations

1. The Pan grantees visited are making good use of the funds available and appreciate the work that Pan does
2. The mix of projects supported is fairly diverse and covers ICT policy research as well as projects where ICTs are applied to specific development problems. In this sense, it is our feeling that the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme projects are meeting the needs that they are intended to address in the first place
3. The Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme is working. It has a reliable management mechanism that ensures that the word about grants gets out on time and a well-honed mechanism for selecting grantees and getting the contracts into the hands of grantees. This mechanism could benefit from more active publicity however as relatively few people are aware of the Web site, although some grantees did mention using Google to learn about Pan.
4. AMIC provides the administration services and AMIC has been doing a relatively good job of ensuring that the grants selection process as well as the project implementation mechanisms are working from an administrative perspective
5. AMIC does not provide research management support nor does it provide scientific or technical support to the grantees
6. The Pan bi-annual competitions are marathon events that tax the capacity of AMIC and of the Steering Committee and of partners. The number of applications is such that an enormous amount of energy and time has to be set-aside for this purpose. After going through the motions of publicizing, agreeing on selection criteria and then going through the extensive selection process, there is very little time and energy devoted to other substantive issues such as research management, technical and scientific support, project follow-up, monitoring and evaluation, mentoring and providing other forms of support to the grantees
7. Most grantees appreciate the opportunity of attending meetings and conferences and these provide Pan with an important source of feedback and input into the ongoing status of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme
8. Another important learning opportunity for Pan partners and also to some extent to Steering Committee members are the individual contacts that the staff of Pan partners has with grantees. This is probably the most substantive contact that grantees can have with the Pan. Unfortunately, not all Pan grantees can benefit from these contacts for a variety of reasons
9. The mix of projects supported appears to be well balanced. Pan also supports policy research on ICTs, not just research on technical issues related to ICTs
10. Partners do not have the same view of how the private sector can or should be accommodated in the partnership. Should companies such as Microsoft be required to contribute more than others because of their size and financial heft

for example? This is an ongoing debate. However, all partners appear to agree that involving the private sector in the Pan partnership is a good idea

11. Grantees, for the most part, have no problems with involving the private sector as a partner in Pan
12. Grantees want more than administrative support and feedback from Pan. Grantees want specific help with funding and networking with other like-minded researchers in the region and beyond. Grantees for the most part do not know how to interact with the private sector and do not know how to approach the idea of commercializing their venture as one way of making the research results and outcomes sustainable.
13. Pan grantees can benefit significantly from networking with other organizations and especially with other grantees. Some grantees have more capacity than others and could provide management support and assistance to other smaller and less experienced grantees.

### Conclusions

- The Pan programme, for the most part, is well managed from an administrative perspective. However, AMIC does not have the capacity to provide research and more substantive technical and management support to the grantees. Pan needs another institutional home for this or another organizational set up that will allow the programme to fully achieve its objectives
- There is an unbalance between the effort allocated to administration and the effort allocated to supporting and mentoring the grantees, who for the most part, can use some technical, scientific and/or research management support of one fashion or another. It is left in fact to the partners to provide some of this other than administrative support. While the IDRC officer responsible for the Pan programme tries his best to deal with all projects, he does not have the time and resources to do so, having 15 other programmes and/or projects to deal with as part of his overall responsibilities at IDRC. The same applies to the officers from APDIP and APNIC. Therefore and unfortunately, because the partners have different interests and objectives, projects and grantees that do not fit into a specific category of direct interest or of priority interest to partners appear not to be supported as much
- Pan grantees are under supported when it comes to receiving technical support and research management support and guidance
- Pan grantees want more substantive support dealing with science and technology, research management and commercialization of research results
- Pan grantees want more direct communication with Pan and its partners
- The partners work well together, but IDRC has a strong attachment to the programme and feels it has a right as first among equals in matters dealing with the financing and running of the programme. This is partly due to the fact that IDRC appears to have more flexibility in funding and supporting Pan than either of the other partners and also to the fact that Pan started with IDRC

- There appears to be a need for much more support for ICT research in the region and Pan's contribution, while important, could probably be strengthened significantly, given the size of the region and its population and level of economic activity.
- There is agreement on the role of the private sector as potential partner, but some disagreement on the detailed conditions under which private sector organizations can become partners.

### Recommendations

1. Pan needs to find an institutional home or organizational set up that offers more than just administrative management support. AMIC has provided administrative support and done this relatively well, but does not have the capacity nor the interest to support the substantive and research objectives of the programme
2. Pan should therefore find another institutional home and/or institutional mechanism to support its activities and ambitions. PAN has already recognized this and IDRC has apparently taken action to rectify this situation. There are surely other national research organizations that can be approached to provide more of the type of support that Pan requires.
2. Pan needs to grow. Existing demand is significant and growing from year to year. The region is vast and there are many research management issues that need to be dealt with in the ICT sector and beyond. There is a need to support research on ICTs as applied to development issues. There are also issues related to ethics in education and in science and technology that Pan could have a role in addressing. Given the importance of the information economy and of the role of the region in this, there is undoubtedly more room for supporting innovative research through small and eventually larger research projects as well. Here are some actions that the reviewer feels should be considered and taken to enhance the capacity of the Pan to meet its objectives
  - Maintain the same focus on ICT research and development as well as policy research on ICTs in the region
  - Aggressively and immediately seek more partners from the international community and especially from the private sector with a focus on regional and other international companies working in ICTs, including some of the transnational corporations (TNCs)
  - The programme needs more resources. For this reason, Pan should grow through the addition or recruitment of other partners. This will open up the programme to other influences and partners. IDRC needs to recognize that the programme has the potential to become much more successful if other partners, and perhaps partners with more resources to commit are involved in the programme
  - While IDRC can feel proud of its achievements with Pan, there remains much to do and it may not be possible for IDRC to achieve the impact the project deserves without more partners and greater sharing of decision making and much more funding, more perhaps that IDRC or any of the other partners can at present commit to this programme

- Indeed, one of the reason the issues raised here have been identified is in part because the resources are not sufficient to provide the complement of full time staff the Pan programme requires to achieve the outcomes intended. Given the present size of the programme, it may not be justifiable to hire more staff.

### 3. Greater involvement of the private sector

- Many private sector companies have an interest in the development of ICTs in Asia. The experience of Pan with Microsoft has demonstrated this. Microsoft believes that many other companies would be prepared to work with Pan if the rules of engagement allowed them to do so and if there was more accountability for the funding that has been allocated to date. Both of these issues can readily be accommodated. It is the reviewers feeling that private sector engagement should be encouraged
- Many of the ICT companies in the region and beyond share some of the research and other concerns of Pan. Like Pan, they are interested in seeing more use made of the technologies they have developed. Some are also interested in networking with researchers from around the world.
- Some companies have strong research and development cultures.
- Companies such as Akamai, which is responsible for caching content on servers located around the world are run by researchers that share some of the concerns related to Internet behaviour in the countries and networks of the region and beyond.
- Companies involved in the development of cutting edge wireless technologies may be interested in partnering with Pan grantees to experiment the application of these technologies to real world development situations.
- One can think immediately of the Chinese telecommunications companies Huawei and ZTE, which are at the cutting edge of telecommunications technology development and marketing and who are aggressively rolling out new solutions and capturing markets around the world. Perhaps they would be interested in working with Pan to experiment their technologies and others as well
- Some of the established telecommunications companies such as Alcatel, Nortel, Nokia and others may also be interested. There are many possibilities and these possibilities should be exploited.
- Pan should develop an expansion strategy for this purpose and assess the interest that ICT and/or related companies may have in joining Pan. If the results are positive, then Pan should use these results as the basis of a communications and charm campaign to encourage private sector participants to learn and make a contribution and/or become Pan partners

4. Institutionalize Pan: in the medium term, consider altering the institutional arrangements upon which Pan is based – This would mean institutionalizing the Pan partnership. This would require turning Pan into an international collaborative research institution. Such an entity would be run by a board of directors or trustees made up of officially nominated representatives of Asian member states. Support for the research institution would come from contributions from international partners as well as national governments. If acceptable, the institution created could be also generate funds by rendering

services on a cost recovery basis. These services would be to support newly established private sector R&D companies working on ICTs and/or facilities in the poorer areas of the region.

- IDRC, UNDP and APNIC transform the programme into an institution that would be responsible for promoting priority research on ICTs for the development of the region. This would mean also funding larger projects.
  - To do this, the partners need to enlist the assistance of many other institutions and of the private sector.
  - This institution would be located in a given country selected on the basis of the appropriateness of the country as a host and the willingness of the country to support the institution and recognize it as an international research facility. Regional offices would also be established
  - It may be pertinent to establish such an institution and link it to other activities including providing support in the form of business incubators or equivalent to ICT companies in some of the poorer countries seeking to develop their ICT industry
  - IDRC as well as UNDP have on several occasions established international research centres to address specific issues of particular concern to development. For example, IDRC has been involved in establishing several of the CGIAR institutions, including for example the International Council for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) now known as the World Agroforestry Centre in Nairobi.
  - It has to be recognized that doing this would require time and would likely take a few years to realize, based on previous experience
  - The first step could be to commission a rapid assessment and feasibility study looking at this and other options for establishing Pan in a more definite form. One advantage of doing this would be that eventually, the institutionalized Pan offices would be staffed and eventually operated by Asian researchers and staff.
5. Hire “Research support specialists” to support the grantees: Given the size of the programme at present and the interest it generates in the region as measured by the number of applications received, Pan needs to hire in the near future two full time ICT and research management specialists or programme officers.
- These officers would closely with the grantees on scientific and technical aspects of their work and also on issues related to sustaining their research. They would also help grantees secure future and ongoing funding as well, when appropriate.
  - These research professionals would also help the grantees to think about and actually plan for the transition of their work into a next phase of research and funding and/or commercial activity when appropriate. In some cases, the transition will be to other sustainable forms of support, not necessarily commercial in nature.
  - This may not be appropriate for all projects, but some of the projects that were visited by the reviewer during his short visits could certainly have benefited from more input on this score.
  - Individuals with a good understanding of the application of ICTs to the development needs of the region as well as having a good understanding of scientific research and of ICTs would be desirable candidates.

- These specialists would be required to travel to visit the projects on an ongoing basis and to stay in touch with the grantees at all times
  - Specialists should have strong technical knowledge, a good scientific background with a clear understanding of the applied science environment in the region and internationally
  - The Research Support Specialists should have a good business sense. Candidates that have strong science and technology credentials such as engineers and/or research scientists with a strong management background, i.e. an MBA, would be strong candidates
  - One idea could be to consider involving one or more of the large consulting firms such as Price Waterhouse Coopers or Accenture and asking them as part of their support to provide management advice for projects that seek to commercialize their research activities or results. This could be done on a demand basis. Accenture in the past has assisted UNDP New York through the provision of pro bono advisory services
  - Funding for these specialists under the present partnership arrangements seems not to be possible. The funds do not seem to be there unless partners agree to substantially increase their financial commitments. A more likely scenario is for Pan to grow by increasing the number of partners and by increasing the mechanism under which the programme is funded. See the recommendations that are being made elsewhere in this section for more details.
6. Strengthen communications between Pan and grantees as well as networking among and between all present and past grantees and others working on ICT for D R&D issues in the region. Establish a research network on ICT for D
- Establish electronic discussion groups and include all grantees as a condition of funding. Establish separate newsgroups for present and past grant recipients in the newsgroups so established. The newsgroups would be used to communicate information on all aspects of the programme. They would also be used by the Research Support Specialists to share useful information with the grantees and to help promote discussion and research exchanges and hopefully research proposals and research collaboration on issues of common concern.
  - One issue sure to attract the attention of all grantees is news and views on sources of funding for research as well as a news feed on research ongoing in the region and beyond - and not just research funded by Pan
  - If appropriate, consider establishing the equivalent of an Asian ICT Research Consortium to link researchers working on ICT for D issues in the region and possibly beyond. One model that could be considered here is the African Economic Research Consortium that was established in Africa in the 1980s and which had much success strengthening links between researchers on that continent as well as drawing attention to the pressing issues facing economists in Africa at the time. The project attracted participation from many organizations in the international community including funding agencies. The electronic discussion groups could be the underpinning of the network, which could also have its expression through regional events and happenings. Participation would not be limited to grantees.

- An Asian ICT Research Consortium could also link
7. Provide support and/or incentives to larger better-organized grantees to help smaller less experienced grantees in their vicinity.
- Smaller organizations appear to need more assistance than larger and especially better-established research organization. Some of the larger organizations are NGOs, or research centres that have good management capacity. This capacity can be tapped to help the smaller and less experienced organizations that receive grants by providing them with advice and other forms of support to help them deal management issues. In Chennai, SAATHII is a larger NGOs that volunteered to assist a smaller organization in the area with some basic management support and advice. Many of the issues that the smaller organization was dealing with were issues that a larger NGO would have some experience and advice to share
  - Pan may want to consider encouraging and/or asking some of the larger better established grantees to help the smaller and less organized ones by making available some of their management expertise and possibly by sharing some resources and/or equipment.

## **APPENDIX 1 TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The consultant shall conduct a review of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme, covering the period of January 2002 to December 2005.

Some of the specific activities to be undertaken include:

1. Undertake a review of the past evaluation reports of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme

It appears that the previous grant evaluation focused mostly on management related issues. Issues that may not have been apparent at the time such

2. Obtain successful grant incumbents' feedback on the process and value of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme
3. Obtain the Programme committee's feedback on the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme, particularly focussing on the following:
  - a. the administrative element of the program
  - b. the partnership element of the program
  - c. the existing program modality and structure
4. Analyze a sample of different project attributes (according to thematic focus and geographic area under study), main ICT issues being investigated by the projects, and methodology of research of the projects approved through the Programme within the period stated above.
5. Conduct a review of the conclusions and recommendations of all Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants committee meetings (both meetings for selecting the proposals and to discuss programmatic issues), and assess the subsequent actions to be followed based on the conclusions and recommendations of the meetings.
6. Undertake travel (maximum 14 days) during the period of December 1, 2005 to January 31, 2006 to perform the following task:
  - a. visit selected projects in Asia (maximum 1 round trip) to interview project personnel and inspect work accomplished - the selection of the project sites shall be made in consultation with IDRC and UNDP-APDIP.
7. Analyze and review the manner by which the lessons from the funded project have been consolidated, analyzed, and disseminated, including a review of the mechanisms in place for monitoring and capturing learning from the different projects, as well as the methods of analysis, documentation and dissemination.

8. Document success stories of select projects that have been funded through the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme - the selection of the projects shall be made in consultation with IDRC and UNDP-APDIP.
  
9. Submit to IDRC the following deliverables:
  - a. summary of the grant incumbents' feedback and the Programme committee's feedback, to be submitted by February 15, 2006
  - b. a draft report by March 3, 2006, which will include:
    - (i) the assessment of the project attributes and post-committee meeting accomplishments (item 4 & 5 above), and
    - (ii) the nature and modality for capturing, analyzing and disseminating lessons (item 7),
  - c. a final consolidated report (incorporating deliverables a and b) by March 24, 2006.

## APPENDIX 2 LIST OF PROJECTS VISITED

### India

1. Open Source GIS/Mapping Solution for the Indian Tsunami Information Resource Center, Janastu, Bangalore
2. Roadmap for Process Re-Engineering for Reaching e-Governance to the Disadvantaged, ITforChange, Bangalore
3. Using ICT to build capacities of HIV/AIDS Service Providers in India, Solidarity and Action against the HIV infection in India (SAATHII), Chennai
4. Impact of Remote Telemedicine in Improving Rural Health, n-Logue, Chennai, India
5. ICT Enabled Life Skill and Sexuality Education for Adolescent Girls in India, Centre for Women's Development and Research (CWDR), Chennai
6. Wireless Internet post office for delivering text based messaging service for remote villages using a mesh network of wireless relay stations, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi

### Philippines

7. A Community-based Child Injury Surveillance System: Rapid Data Collection Using Short Messaging Service in the Philippines, University of the Philippines, Faculty of Medicine, Manila
8. Pilot Testing of a Local Government Knowledge Sharing Network in the Philippines, Galing Pook Foundation, Manila
9. Building a Philippine IPv6 Research Network, Advanced Science and Technology Institute (ASTI), Manila
10. A Philippine Business Model and Government Interventions Strategies for Viable Community Telecenters in Rural Areas, Center for Research and Communication (CRC), Manila
11. Policy, Praxis and the Public Interest: Engendering a Strategic InfoComms Policy Research Programme in the Philippines, Foundation for Media Alternatives (FMA)

### Indonesia

12. ICT-Based Telemedicine System for Primary Community Healthcare in Indonesia, Biomedical Engineering Programme, Dept. of Electrical Engineering, Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB), Bandung
13. F root server measurement and analysis, Information resources Center, Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB), Bandung
14. Development of ICT-Based Mobile Telemedicine System with Multi Communication Links for Urban and Rural Areas in Indonesia, Biomedical Engineering Programme, Dept. of Electrical Engineering, Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB), Bandung

AMIC and the regional offices of IDRC in Singapore and Delhi were also visited during this mission.

## **APPENDIX 3 – QUESTIONNAIRE SUBMITTED TO STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS.**

### Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme review

1. Are you satisfied with the present modality and structure of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme?
  - a. What aspects are you satisfied with?
  - b. Which areas do you feel need to be enhanced or strengthened and why?
  - c. Are you satisfied with Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme management and governance mechanisms and arrangements?
2. Please provide your impressions concerning the administration of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme
  - a. Overall, are you satisfied with present management arrangements?
  - b. In your opinion, is there a need to strengthen the administration of this PAN programme and if so, in what areas?
3. Concerning the partnership element of the programme:
  - a. Please provide comments on the partnership elements of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme
  - b. If you represent a Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme partner, have the specific objectives you or your organization had at the onset been met through this Pan programme?
    - i. If so how?
    - ii. If not, why not in your opinion?
4. Has the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme lived up to its own expectations?
  - a. Generally as per its mandate?
  - b. In terms of the mix of projects, i.e. types of projects and types of beneficiaries, etc.?
  - c. Otherwise?
5. Have you participated in recent Steering Committee meetings?
6. Are you satisfied with the Steering Committee meetings or mechanism as a tool for obtaining feedback on the programme and as a way of helping the Programme manage expectations and deliver results
7. What other issues are you concerned with?
8. What priority recommendations would you care to make?
9. Any other comments?

## **APPENDIX 4 – ORIGINALS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES COMPLETED BY MEMBERS OF THE PAN STEERING COMMITTEE.**

### **Response received from APDIP**

#### Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme

1. Are you satisfied with the present modality and structure of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme?

- a. What aspects are you satisfied with?

We are satisfied with the structure in place – i.e. the selection committee and steering committee structures and modality. However, while the structures are clear, we have been unsatisfied with the follow-up process, especially when it comes to the policy decisions or agreements made by the steering committee. Agreements to survey the projects and build a virtual community are two examples of non-action after agreements made by the steering committee.

The selection process – although invariably tight – has evolved into a good one. The processes here can be used for future grant programmes. Having external nominees for the selection process has greatly added value to the evaluation of project proposals.

While internal structures were in place – there is little to indicate that a structure was in place to ensure a connection with the proponents. More could have been done to provide proponent guidance, and to do so, structures/mechanisms (such as a virtual facility) could have been in place to keep partners connected with the projects.

- b. Which areas do you feel need to be enhanced or strengthened and why?

Please see above. There could be better facilitation and leadership from AMIC to follow-up on the agreements made each steering committee meeting and decisions taken virtually by the group. Clearly action plans could have been provided to all partners so that collective action and assigned responsibilities could have been in place. For example, the recent grants booklet could have been a collaboration or at least it could have benefited from inputs from all partners.

- c. Are you satisfied with Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme management and governance mechanisms and arrangements?

Perhaps due to arrangements between IDRC and AMIC, there has been unilateral decisions with regards to outputs outside of the administration of the grants – producing publications and promotion materials, updating of websites, etc. We understand that IDRC is the larger donor, however, it may have been appropriate that for every new year, a collective proposal or action plan could have been developed so that all partners are aware of what is

expected of AMIC and what the intended outputs and opportunities for promotion were exactly, and when, so that the partners could provide input.

2. Please provide your impressions concerning the administration of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme

a. Overall, are you satisfied with present management arrangements?

Overall administrative of the grants is satisfactory; however, issues regarding contracts and problematic grantees should have been made known to the partners as soon as possible and not wait for face-to-face committee meetings. This applies to all issues requiring discussions by the partners.

AMIC may not have allocated enough staff to handle administration. From a partner's point of view, it appeared as though Nanditha was carry almost all the administrative load (except for financial reporting). It may have been too much to ask for one person to handle the selection process (including logistical arrangements) to issuing the contracts, to managing the websites, etc. Perhaps AMIC should have allocated more staff to share the burden and concentrate on substantive matters. It is our understanding that there were funds provided from IDRC to cover additional staff costs, other than that for Nanditha.

In the end, the result is that we do not do justice to extracting the lessons learned and research outputs/outcomes from the project. This being the main point of the programme falls short of expectations.

b. In your opinion, is there a need to strengthen the administration of this PAN programme and if so, in what areas?

As mentioned, there is need to strengthen the leadership in the administration of the programme – decisions made by the committee, such as building a virtual community for the grantees, surveying, monitoring, etc., are not acted on. And again, more staff could have been allocated to ensure quality of administration and proper/timely follow-up on all matters. All this with an aim to free time to concentrate on building a network of the proponents and providing them with support and guidance and monitoring their progress.

3. Concerning the partnership element of the programme:

a. Please provide comments on the partnership elements of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme

Relationships among core partners is amicable and professional; however, the agreement modality is fragmented and should have been streamlined. By necessity and individual organization's rules and procedure, AMIC enters into separate agreements, but a common proposal/work plan developed collectively would have greatly clarified what could be expected above the administration of the grants (e.g. the publications, and monitoring activities).

b. If you represent a Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme partner, have the specific objectives you or your organization had at the onset been met through this Pan programme?

i. If so how?

Yes and no – yes, in that we had intended i) pilot some development projects, ii) develop capacities for the proponents; and no, in that we do not have comprehensive knowledge of the outcomes and impacts of the projects.

ii. If not, why not in your opinion?

As stated above, unless we know the outcomes, we can not even begin to answer the question of whether or not we have met our objectives.

4. Has the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme lived up to its own expectations?  
a. Generally as per its mandate?

In general, the programme has lived up to its mandate. Even though there are different partners and institutional mandates, the committee is able to generally agree on the awards. Perhaps the programme could have done more to build the capacities of the proponents, in terms of project execution/management and networking.

- b. In terms of the mix of projects, i.e. types of projects and types of beneficiaries, etc.?

There is a good mix of projects – at first, there were many similar projects that were being funded, community-centric projects with some ICT component (portal, telecentre). Overall there is a good mix of technology centred projects and projects based on social causes, while policy oriented research have also been awarded.

- c. Otherwise?

5. Have you participated in recent Steering Committee meetings?

Yes, APDIP has attended all Steering committee meetings since entering into partnership.

6. Are you satisfied with the Steering Committee meetings or mechanism as a tool for obtaining feedback on the programme and as a way of helping the Programme manage expectations and deliver results

Steering committee meetings do cover a lot but because they only happen twice a year, there needs to be mechanisms to prepare for discussions so that we are not just covering issues but are ready to make decisions and not have to wait for the next meeting to table issues again. More virtually discussing is required to discuss project, case by case, as problems or issues arise.

7. What other issues are you concerned with?

8. What priority recommendations would you care to make?

In light of the decision to not hold any rounds this year, we recommend that the programme take the time to thoroughly evaluate completed and ongoing projects. APDIP is undertaking such an exercise now, based on the survey tool developed earlier together. APDIP will share the results with all.

9. Any other comments?

Please refer to conversations with Phet Sayo and Shahid Akhtar.

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Response from APNIC

### **Responses received from APNIC**

#### Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme

1. Are you satisfied with the present modality and structure of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme?

a. What aspects are you satisfied with?

We are satisfied with the general level of funding for projects and the broad range of project proposals that are received (although as an Internet organisation, we would always like to find ways of encouraging more research related to Internet infrastructure, standards, technologies and protocols).

We are satisfied with the frequency of grant rounds.

We are satisfied with the dynamics of the selection committee process and the productive way that projects are considered and debated.

b. Which areas do you feel need to be enhanced or strengthened and why?

Evaluation of the programme outcomes remains an issue. We believe it is desirable that the majority of funds go directly to the research projects and we do not believe that it makes sense to spend substantial amounts of money on detailed evaluations of individual projects. Nevertheless, it would be very helpful to have access to research and recommendations about the effectiveness of broad project types. For example, there are many proposals for telecentres, mobile health applications, software localizations etc. It would be great to have concise summary reports available on the partners' web site explaining the relative effectiveness of such projects and noting the common elements in the success or failure of such projects in the past.

Another approach which can be adopted is to ensure that the public project reporting includes explicit and comprehensive self-evaluation, which could be done in a pro-forma or questionnaire mode. Such approaches would not rule out the need for overall evaluation of the

grants programme, at which time a sample of individual projects may also be evaluated.

- c. Are you satisfied with Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme management and governance mechanisms and arrangements?

In general, we are satisfied with the management of the programme, although we feel there is a need for more coordinated communication mechanisms between partners and formalised documentation of decisions and programme directions.

2. Please provide your impressions concerning the administration of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme

- d. Overall, are you satisfied with present management arrangements?

We are satisfied with the general nature of the project administration, but believe that there is a very strong need to improve all aspects of communication within the programme (as detailed below).

- e. In your opinion, is there a need to strengthen the administration of this PAN programme and if so, in what areas?

As noted above, we believe that communication issues need to be improved. This applies to both internal and external communication.

Currently, important programme information is scattered across several different web sites. There is no single, simple URL that can give potential applicants access to complete programme details including application procedures. We would like to see a new, dedicated web site established with clear, simple guidance on the programme and application procedures.

Under the current arrangements, there is a relatively short period between the announcement of each funding round and the deadline for applications. We would like to encourage all partners to give greater support to the administrators to help set key dates further in advance. We believe that improving the predictability of the rounds would be of significant benefit to both the applicants and the partners.

There is a need to provide support for more structured communications between the programme administrators and partners. An improved partners' web site would be a good starting point. It would also be very desirable to establish an archived mailing list to discuss programme administration.

We feel that the programme could feasibly adopt online conferencing for 50% of meetings, to help reduce the cost of partner and committee meetings. Although such techniques were tried unsuccessfully in the past, conferencing technology has improved in quality and decreased in cost since then and is worth trying again.

We suggest that the partners should give clear instructions to the grant administrators about the expectations for programme communications and archival practices and offer appropriate technical assistance and expertise to achieve these goals.

We believe there is also a need for a clearer set of procedures to guide the administrators in how they should make payments to proponents, track the progress of projects, grant extensions for completion of work, and document results. Currently, some of the practices appear to rely on arbitrary case-by-case decisions made in committee meetings.

3. Concerning the partnership element of the programme:
  - f. Please provide comments on the partnership elements of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme

The partnership relationship is generally satisfactory but could be improved by more transparent formalising of the relationships, roles, and expectations of the partners. As noted above in other areas, better management of partner communications and documentation of partnership decisions would help.

Currently, there are ongoing discussions about the potential role for commercial partners. Although there have been many attempts to determine a firm policy on the issue, the discussion does re-emerge regularly. Perhaps formal, accessible documentation of partnership policies and decisions could help to resolve uncertainty in this and other areas.

- g. If you represent a Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme partner, have the specific objectives you or your organization had at the onset been met through this Pan programme?

- i. If so how?

- ii. If not, why not in your opinion?

As noted above, APNIC is particularly interested in encouraging projects dealing with Internet infrastructure and related issues. Perhaps it is necessary to refine the stated goals of the programme to make it clear to proponents why this type of work is considered important to regional development.

4. Has the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme lived up to its own expectations?
  - h. Generally as per its mandate?

Our feeling is that the programme does generally live up to its expectations. However, the problem of how to balance the cost of

evaluation with the relatively low project amounts makes it hard to be firm in this conclusion.

- i. In terms of the mix of projects, i.e. types of projects and types of beneficiaries, etc.?

In general the mix of projects and beneficiaries has been very diverse. While this demonstrates the wide range of interest in the programme, we feel that the unclear scope of the programme has also allowed some inappropriate projects to be approved. The lack of documentation of committee policies and guidelines has also resulted in some inconsistency in terms of project approvals and rejections over time.

The level of awareness of the programme seems to vary greatly from country to country, although in recent rounds, the geographical diversity of applications appears to have improved.

- j. Otherwise?

- 5. Have you participated in recent Steering Committee meetings?

- 6. Are you satisfied with the Steering Committee meetings or mechanism as a tool for obtaining feedback on the programme and as a way of helping the Programme manage expectations and deliver results

Yes we are generally satisfied, however

- 7. What other issues are you concerned with?

When delegates are selected, it is important to consider not just their credentials, but also their capacity to make the necessary time commitment to the programme.

In the current structure, the number of proposals received is beginning to stretch the ability of the committee to deal with them all in an efficient manner. There may be a need to consider a more streamlined shortlisting process.

- 8. What priority recommendations would you care to make?

- 9. Any other comments?

## Responses received from AMIC

1. Are you satisfied with the present modality and structure of the Pan Asia programme?

a. What aspects are you satisfied with?

Providing seed funding to innovative research projects that can be replicated and eventually upscaled.

Small grants with visible results in a short time frame.

b. Which areas do you feel need to be enhanced or strengthened and why?

Consolidation of the lessons learnt

Dissemination of results to the various stakeholders

Monitoring & Evaluation of results

c. Are you satisfied with Pan Asia Grants Programme Management and governance mechanisms and arrangements?

Yes, there is a need for closer interaction and sharing among the partners regarding the projects apart from the partners meetings twice a year

Partners can get more involved for monitoring on going projects during their travel

Greater involvement of partners for dissemination

2. Please provide your impressions concerning the administration of the Pan Asia Program

a. Overall, are you satisfied with present management arrangements?

As administrative partner we feel AMIC can be more involved our earlier arrangements and budget allowed us only to administer the grants not qualitatively contribute to monitoring, evaluation etc

b. In your opinion, is there a need to strengthen the administration of this Pan programme and if so, in what areas?

There is a need to strengthen the administration in areas of consolidations of lessons learnt, more interaction with other partners on the project ongoing, monitoring and constant evaluation.

As mentioned earlier the previous contract until 2004 did not have the above scope.

3. Concerning the partnership element of the programme

a. Please provide comments on the partnership elements of the Pan Grants programme

Need for strengthening the Monitoring and evaluation aspects of the program – There should be a joint effort by all the partners involved

- b. If you represent a Pan asia ICT R&D Grants Programme partner, have the specific objectives you or your organization had at onset been met through this Programme?

N.A.

4. Has the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants programme lived up to its won expectations?

- a. Generally as per its mandate?

Yes, it has provided seed funding for several initiatives across the region and has resulted in innovative projects like localization of fonts which grew as project by itself

It has fulfilled the objectives of a small grants project showing visible results

It has also provided the list of huge database of prospective ICT4D projects across the region

It has been able to attract high number of proposals every year

- b. In terms of mix of projects, i.e., types of projects and types of beneficiaries, etc.?

Wide varieties of projects spread across the region including LDCs and also across different spectrum of beneficiaries

5. Have you participated in the recent steering committee meetings?

Yes, I have participated in every one of the steering committee meetings since AMIC took over the administration of the programme.

6. Are you satisfied with the steering committee meetings or mechanism as a tool for obtain feedback on the programme and as a way of helping the programme manage expectation and deliver results?

The steering committee meetings are the best possible means we have at our disposal to manage the program and allocate the grants. The discussions are open and democratic and every member's opinions are taken into consideration before the grants are awarded.

7. What other issues are you concerned with?

Administration requirements and budget  
Monitoring, evaluation and consolidation of results learnt  
Expectations of partners

8. What priority recommendations would you care to make?

I have no specific priority recommendations to make. I think the partners should show more commitment to the programme.

9. Any other comments?

No other comments.

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## Response from IDRC (Frank Tulus)

This is a transcript of the notes taken as a result of telephone interview with Frank Tulus, IDRC, Delhi

### Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme

1. Are you satisfied with the present modality and structure of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme?
  - Satisfied
  - Sharpening the committee members
  - Sharpening the process for selecting the grantees
  - Coming up with a workable solution that all the partners would agree on
  - Are paying AMIC and want AMIC to add some value added thinking, want them to make suggestions to improve the programme, in all of its aspects
  - AMIC has not done anything on this score, with exception of dissemination aspects and promotional aspects
  - a. What aspects are you satisfied with?
  - b. Which areas do you feel need to be enhanced or strengthened and why?
  - c. Are you satisfied with Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme management and governance mechanisms and arrangements?
2. Please provide your impressions concerning the administration of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme
  - a. Overall, are you satisfied with present management arrangements?
  - b. In your opinion, is there a need to strengthen the administration of this PAN programme and if so, in what areas?
    - Overall, admin can be improved, but not horrible
    - Logistical aspects of arranging meetings is quite good
    - But other admin details such as payments and notification of grants, coming up with the minutes of the meeting and other follow-up could be improved upon, but appear not to think that this aspect needs improvement
    - Not all others are agreeable to this
    -
3. Concerning the partnership element of the programme:
  - a. Please provide comments on the partnership elements of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme
    - Partnership between 3 main partners is strong and van overcome the differences because of strong collegial approach, even with AMIC

- AMIC does not like being criticized and this is an issue, and there is room for improvement here
  - IDRC would prefer continuous monitoring the programme in terms of smoothing out the partnership issues, but AMIC has been remiss here. Look at partnership in a bilateral way, not as a multilateral issue.
  - Such an approach would lighten their workload
  - If they do more about managing the partnerships between the partners, and looking at sharing the load, this would improve the process and the relation with the partners, so room for improving the partnership within the program by focusing on the multilateral approach
  - Role of the private sector: there are different approaches here. Some feel different approach in terms of funding from the private sevctor participants and partners especially. Form IDRC side, we see thia as an equitable issue
  - IDRC assumes the administration, and as such are allowed to undertake activities such as the evaluation and some publications, which are done according to IDRC's mandate and way of doing this. Some partners feel otherwise, but IDRC feels that this is its prerogative because of the Admin side
  - While no tensions on this issue for now, but IDRC welcomes their further involvement. In the case of the review, thre is no mechanisms to coordinate this issue and to allow other partners to have a say in the evaluation, but IDRC open to
- b. If you represent a Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme partner, have the specific objectives you or your organization had at the onset been met through this Pan programme?
- i. If so how?
  - ii. If not, why not in your opinion?
4. Has the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme lived up to its own expectations?
- a. Generally as per its mandate?
  - b. In terms of the mix of projects, i.e. types of projects and types of beneficiaries, etc.?
  - c. Otherwise?
- Yes PAN has met the basic expectations in the mix of projects, the size and diversity of the projects and by making available research funds that would otherwise not be available.
  - But only a few projects have been up scaled, but this is not a specific requirement or outcome of the project, although this is welcome when it does happen. This has not been as successful as would have been expected.
  - Should stay as a not too ambitious program?
  - Otherwise, Pan has achieved all of the objectives that originally were set out at the onset
  - Pan has become an important granting mechanism in many countries in Asia
5. Have you participated in recent Steering Committee meetings?

- a. Yes, the last in Bangkok
6. Are you satisfied with the Steering Committee meetings or mechanism as a tool for obtaining feedback on the programme and as a way of helping the Programme manage expectations and deliver results
- Yes and no. The Steering Committee itself has a good mix of people, qualified that would be available to evaluate and appraise all of the projects received. When other expertise required, someone on the Steering Committee will know someone who can add expertise, so composition is quite good
  - Size: was some concern because of increasing size, but with the departure of ISOC and Microsoft, this no longer an issue
  - Management & coordination of the Steering Committee: room for improvement. Discussions about the programmatic issues. Sometimes all day is required to discuss the programmatic issues, but each time AMIC organizes the meeting; this issue is only allocated a half day. Feel that this is a requirement that requires more time and detail
  - AMIC does not bother to come up with an agenda for these programmatic meetings. AMIC should have reviewed previous meeting minutes to carry on from one meeting to another and to ensure efficiency and continuity on some of the programmatic issues
  - Let unresolved issues stagnate. Not enough follow-up, not enough e-mail traffic to continue discussing and to resolve outstanding issues: need a mailing list for example?
  - For example, level contribution for private sector partners. Discussed in Manila but unresolved. At next meeting in Colombo, there was consensus achieved, in compromise, but nothing final resolved, so should have been discussed at the next Steering Committee meeting and it was not. Agreed at the Manila meeting, that Microsoft becomes part of the Pan program, they should perhaps not be part of the committee deciding the grantees. This was not followed up and the Microsoft partner was in the committee selection meeting... Appears that this not taken seriously by AMIC
  - So management of the program is an issue
7. What other issues are you concerned with?
- Main issue is gathering key lessons from the different projects: what have we learned from ICT and health for ex., need more in depth analysis on a variety of these issues and about the way forward as a result of these lessons learned, for example, who the lessons learned can help improve women's participation in the information economy. Partners are keenly interested in this, but AMIC appears to be less so. AMIC has a research coordinator so we are let down that AMIC has not taken this on
8. What priority recommendations would you care to make?
- A: to take stock and learn from the different projects, this is a first, especially the macro issues and the key lessons learned. This really the only way of learning if and how the program has been successful or not

- B: Knowing which aspects of the program can be improved
- C: Monitoring and evaluating projects. There is a need for improved monitoring of projects and to flag problem projects and related issues

9. Any other comments?

- IDRC values this program highly and wishes to continue and it would appear that APDIP and APNIC share this commitment and would like to look forward to addressing these issues once and for all. Will not continue with the status quo. Many of these issues have been raised for some time now, and we must act on these concerns once and for all, and for the greater.
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## Response from Ma Yan

### Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme

1. Are you satisfied with the present modality and structure of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme?
  - a. What aspects are you satisfied with?  
[participations was already coming from countries in our Asia and Pacific region.]
  - b. Which areas do you feel need to be enhanced or strengthened and why?  
[It could be promoted more in applied technology and application oriented area.]
  - c. Are you satisfied with Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme management and governance mechanisms and arrangements?  
[ok by now.]
2. Please provide your impressions concerning the administration of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme
  - a. Overall, are you satisfied with present management arrangements?  
[Need to enhance the project quality inspection to ensure the founding be used more effectively. But this will occupy more resource to do the job.]
  - b. In your opinion, is there a need to strengthen the administration of this PAN programme and if so, in what areas?  
[As the response to question a., Communication to project undertaker during the project lifespan is needed.]
3. Concerning the partnership element of the programme:
  - a. Please provide comments on the partnership elements of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme  
[no comment yet.]
  - b. If you represent a Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme partner, have the specific objectives you or your organization had at the onset been met through this Pan programme?
    - iii. If so how?
    - iv. If not, why not in your opinion?  
[no comment yet.]
4. Has the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme lived up to its own expectations?
  - a. Generally as per its mandate?  
[Yes.]
  - b. In terms of the mix of projects, i.e. types of projects and types of beneficiaries, etc.?  
[When the projects be selected finally, the type/theme/Country/Gender etc. factors be considered. ]
  - c. Otherwise?
5. Have you participated in recent Steering Committee meetings?  
[yes, on in Manila/Philippines, and in Colombo/Sri Lanka.]
6. Are you satisfied with the Steering Committee meetings or mechanism as a tool for obtaining feedback on the programme and as a way of helping the Programme manage expectations and deliver results  
[yes.]

7. What other issues are you concerned with?  
[Not now.]
  8. What priority recommendations would you care to make?  
[No, by the moment.]
  9. Any other comments?  
[Not, by the moment.]
- 

## Response from Salman Ansari

1. Are you satisfied with the present modality and structure of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme?
  - a. What aspects are you satisfied with?
    - i. Excellent program and very well administered
    - ii. This is wide ranging and does attract a wide base. However, the publicity in different countries is not sufficient
  - b. Which areas do you feel need to be enhanced or strengthened and why?
    - i. The scope is too narrow,
    - ii. There is no follow up to see if there was really a successful conclusion of the projects which have been funded. This is important for scalability and for replication across countries.
    - iii. There is no mechanism to use the 'lessons learnt' by other countries or people
    - iv. Well written proposals usually get funding, even though these may not end being useful
    - v. There is not sufficient time for validating the costs given as line items. I find this critical since it appears that once the funds are given the recipients can get away with misuse.
    - vi. There should be linkages between projects so that these are not stand alone and repeated.
    - vii. Some core areas should be defined so that there is a framework where complete vertical areas can be addressed. Thrust areas like VAS on Cellular, IP Radio, for applications in developing countries can be defined.
    - viii. The time given for reviewing projects is too short and this gives way to sloppy work by the committee.
  - c. Are you satisfied with Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme management and governance mechanisms and arrangements?
    - i. APDIP does a good job of the Administration. There should however be a couple of people to follow up and coordinate throughout the year.
    - ii. It appears that some people have more than necessary influence on the process. These are representatives of the donors. Sometimes this detracts from fair results
2. Please provide your impressions concerning the administration of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme
  - a. Overall, are you satisfied with present management arrangements?
    - i. With Logistics and Management is OK



8. What priority recommendations would you care to make?
    - a. Most are made above
  9. Any other comments?
- 
- 

## Response received from Esther Williams

Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme

1. Are you satisfied with the present modality and structure of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme?

*Yes and No.*

- a. What aspects are you satisfied with?

*The program is now very well known and is seen by many, at least my colleagues, as a worthwhile program that has benefited many people and communities. People are able to apply and be considered. Applicants are provided with feedback and also comments that are useful. It is a source of assistance that assists many small, medium and large size projects in very meaningful ways.*

*The structure allows a small group able to get together to discuss the projects/proposals in areas of mutual interest. Rewarding participation.*

*But sometimes bureaucratic and detailed in our method of assessment but is a valuable system.*

- b. Which areas do you feel need to be enhanced or strengthened and why?

*The program panel is small that I feel that we do not necessary have to come together physically to decide on projects. I am on two other such committees and we meet virtually either teleconference or videoconference over two to three days and it works very well, We could consider having meeting this way and then a face to face once every two to three years.*

- c. Are you satisfied with Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme management and governance mechanisms and arrangements?

*Yes I am. The management is good and the governance I have no difficulty with.*

2. Please provide your impressions concerning the administration of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme
  - a. Overall, are you satisfied with present management arrangements?

*Could be improved and there could be more communication between the meetings. We could be kept informed on a regular basis on progress made and developments. Would have appreciated this apart from going onto the website.*

- b. In your opinion, is there a need to strengthen the administration of this PAN programme and if so, in what areas?

*In the present status, I would say no. Unless the TOR are expanded and funds increased then perhaps we should be looking at expanding the administration.*

3. Concerning the partnership element of the programme:
  - a. Please provide comments on the partnership elements of the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme

*I think it is good and more partners could be found. However, as someone who is not a partner, I feel sometimes that there is almost a competition and push for projects that are in line with the certain partners' TOR and interest. This is fine and acceptable but sometimes it limits some decisions and progress overall.*

If you represent a Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme partner, have the specific objectives you or your organization had at the onset been met through this Pan programme?

- v. If so how?
  - vi. If not, why not in your opinion?
4. Has the Pan Asia ICT R&D Grants Programme lived up to its own expectations?
    - a. Generally as per its mandate?

*I think it has especially meeting the needs of some of the communities in specific areas and these having impact on the social, economic development and the quality of life of the people that the projects have been for.*

- b. In terms of the mix of projects, i.e. types of projects and types of beneficiaries, etc.?

*No I do not think so. While we try and have a balance, I think there has been some politics played and some areas getting more support than others – maybe more out of quality of applications than anything else. Some members have clear interest and we tend to go along with these people who tend to be strong on the committee and in their views. Gender for instance is an area that has not been covered well – projects that cover for women on women and by women. We tend to get so critical and judgemental about some of the proposals that we miss what the main benefits are and who they are for.*

- c. Otherwise?
5. Have you participated in recent Steering Committee meetings?

*It has been difficult for me to attend the recent screening committees in the past 2 years as our university was undergoing major leadership difficulties. I tried to participate virtually and felt that this was a good way to handle these proposals at the first stage but was told that this is not possible. I understand the value in getting to meetings and evaluate face to face with others each proposal and suggest that this continue if possible.*

6. Are you satisfied with the Steering Committee meetings or mechanism as a tool for obtaining feedback on the programme and as a way of helping the Programme manage expectations and deliver results

*Yes and No. For the meetings I have attended I have been impressed with the feedback for some of the projects visited. It would be good if reports on the projects were provided as well on a continuous basis.*

7. What other issues are you concerned with?

*I only have one concern – and that is my own not being able to find the time to participate in discussions and meetings more often. I had suggested more virtual meetings which are very possible now, and can be beneficial and effective, but this has not been taken up.*

8. What priority recommendations would you care to make?

*If the project can continue it will be good. More publicity, more funding, change in focus would be good ideas. We could be working more with the private sector. Support incubator centre projects that are researching into new products and services. More applied research taking into consideration that this could also serve as capacity building in research for many institutions and expect that for some projects we cannot expect the very best top quality proposals. We could be assisting in proposal writing and improvement as well if we note promising proposals that could be developed. The management of meetings can take different formats*

Any other comments?

*No. I have been happy to have participated in this exercise as it has developed my interest in a number of areas and has enabled me to provide advice in specific related areas. It has also developed links between our regions and the different institutions which I think is a good thing.*