

Partnering for Development



USAID/Rwanda is funding dot-ORG project activities in Rwanda, including:

- Strengthening the National Electoral Commission of Rwanda; and
- Establishing Computer Internet Centers in partnership with Rwandan entrepreneurs.



The dot-ORG project (part of USAID's DOT-COM Alliance), which is administered by the Academy for Educational Development (AED), will

implement these two activities. AED is an independent, non-profit service organization based in Washington, D.C. AED is committed to helping local people and organizations solve development problems in the United States and throughout the world.



The National Electoral Commission of Rwanda was established in November 2000 to manage free and fair elections at all levels of government. The

Commission created and maintains a computerized database of all Rwandan voters as one strategy for achieving this goal. The Commission has graciously offered to provide the project with office space on the Commission's premises.



Strengthening Democracy with Information Technology

The National Electoral Commission of Rwanda has made critical and positive strides in implementing fair and open elections. To help the Commission continue this progress, dot-ORG will work with Commission staff to strengthen its operations through innovative uses of information and communication technologies (ICTs).

USAID and the dot-ORG Project will assist the Electoral Commission in the following ways:

- Provide hardware and software to help Commission staff maintain the national voter database;
- Provide Commission staff with a mix of training opportunities to enhance their skills with developing and managing advanced databases;
- Complete the cabling for the commission's Local Area Network;
- Assist Commission staff with developing a secure Internet platform and interface for its database to increase the efficiency, and provide easy access to data and validation;
- Help the Commission to print high-quality voter registration cards through the procurement of a high-speed commercial impact printer; and
- A possible pilot using personal digital assistants (PDAs) or hand-held computers for collecting, validating, and updating voter registration data.



entrepreneurs will increase access to ICTs by establishing locally-owned and operated Community Internet Centers (CICs) in 2-4 Rwandan communities. One CIC may be established in an area without connectivity or electricity.

Through the CICs Rwandan residents may access a variety of affordable services including: Internet, CD-ROM use, web page development, computer training, on-line professional development, e-mail, access to local information, fax, phone and photocopying services. The CICs will also assist Rwandan development organizations, NGOs, government agencies, and businesses to convert existing information and training materials into different digital formats. The CICs will be selected through a competitive process.

To help the CICs become sustainable, they will be owned and operated by local entrepreneurs in partnership with dot-ORG staff during the two-year project. After this, the CICs will be privately owned. The owners will receive some software, equipment and technical advice through the project. To stimulate demand for CIC services among target communities, the project will distribute pre-paid vouchers that can be exchanged for training or access time at the CICs. The CIC owner/operators will provide in-kind investments, staffing, a premises and cover other costs during the project. The CICs will be expected to partner with public and private sector institutions, including NGOs and development organizations.



Connecting Rwandans, Enabling Development

Poor access to information and communications technologies (ICTs) such as telephones, computers and the Internet hampers economic and social development. Through this project, USAID/Rwanda with dot-ORG and local

Depending on entrepreneur contributions, the project will establish CICs in 2-4 communities over two years of project activity. The initial focus will be on secondary cities with populations between 20,000 and 40,000 and which lack ICT services. Once these CICs become sustainable, it is anticipated that they will serve as hubs for local development.

Creating Digital Opportunity

The DOT-COM Alliance works to leverage the potential of ICTs for development. With funding from USAID Missions, Bureaus and offices such as the Office of Women in Development, Alliance experts work with local partners to assess, design, implement, and monitor projects that harness the power of ICTs to overcome development challenges.

The Alliance consists of three related cooperative agreements:

- **dot-GOV:** Promotes policy and regulatory reform to create enabling environments for equitable ICT use and the free flow of information-led by Internews Network.
- **dot-ORG:** Extends access to ICTs by under-served communities and accelerates the adoption of development-related uses of ICTs-led by the Academy of Educational Development (AED).
- **dot-EDU:** Strengthens education and learning systems through customized ICT applications, interventions, and content for educators, students, and professional development in all fields-led by the Education Development Center (EDC).

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Information & Communication Technologies for Elections & Community Access

