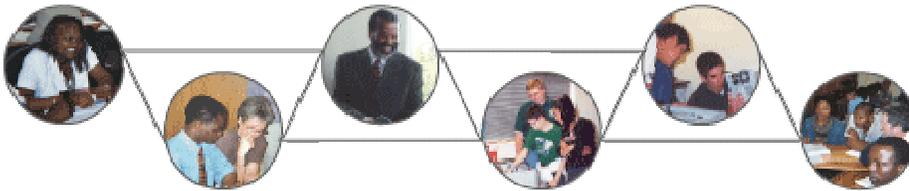




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Network for Capacity Building and Knowledge Exchange in the Telecommunications Sector (NetTel@Africa) Project



We Help People, Communities and Institutions Apply Information Technologies

11th Quarterly Progress Report to the dot-GOV Program,
Internews Network, Inc.

1 December 2004 to 28 February 2005

Dot-GOV Associate Award No. GDG-A-00-02-00008-00 under the Leader with
Associates Cooperative Agreement No. GDG-A-00-01-00009-00

Submitted by:

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I. INTRODUCTION

This 11th Quarterly Report (1 December 2004 – 28 February 2005) provides an update of the key outcomes of the four NetTel@Africa project components (see Box 1). A key consideration during this 11th quarter is the financial sustainability of NetTel activities beyond the original project completion date of 31 May 2005, as the final tranche of the estimated obligation has not been made by USAID. During this quarter we concentrated on:

- Convening the first formal academic board meeting in February 2005 to discuss academic management across the partner institutions; Links to the agreements reached at the first NetTel Academic Board meeting held at the University of Western Cape during in February 2005 are at <http://www.nettelafrika.org>
- Formalizing Nettel governance through preparations for an Executive Council to be convened in April 2005;
- Requesting for both an Option 1: no-cost time extension and an Option 2: provision of un-obligated funds.
- RFP for an independent evaluation of NetTel circulated via email for a transparent process for selection; evaluation to commence during the 12th quarter.

Box 1. NetTel@Africa Components

The Africa-based **Training Program in ICT Policy and Regulation** includes: development of ten courses at the basic level for the post-graduate diploma and ten courses at the advanced level for the master's degree at African universities; training for faculty members and their teams on the use of the Knowledge Environment for Web-based Learning (KEWL); development of academic programs in telecommunications at the graduate diploma and masters' levels; and development of an Executive Development Program.

The **Peer-to-Peer (P2P)** exchanges focus on three types of relationships among and between Africans and their non-African peers: academic-to-academic (closely tied to the training program above); regulator-to-academic (linked to the training program); and regulator-to-regulator (fostering reciprocity agreements for training and knowledge sharing between regulatory bodies in Africa and the U.S.)

The **Community-to Community (C2C) ICT Applications** demonstrate the relationship between telecommunications policy and regulations with key sectors critical to the economic development process, particularly education. The C2C networks help policy makers and regulators understand the concrete ICT applications for development and implications of legislation on universal access policies and funds.

The **Research Program** focuses on monitoring and evaluating the progress of the Training Program, provides a mechanism for collecting and analyzing new content that feed the various courses that compose the Training Program, and catalyzes research on the telecommunications sector.

II. PROGRESS ON PROJECT COMPONENTS

A. Summary of Anticipated Outcomes

As indicated in the Nettel agreement, NetTel's capacity building network is strengthening the telecommunications sector in Africa through four key components. The status of each is summarized below:

1. Training Component

- Module and Coursework content development (completed for 20 courses).
- Delivery of Program via eLearning (pilot year for postgraduate diploma completed 2004; Masters to start in July 2005).

2. Peering Component

- Exchange programs and field attachments (underway).
- Secondments (underway).

3. Collaborative Research Component

- AfricaDotEdu (completed 2003).
- Policy and regulation symposia (July 2004).
- Survey of Telecenter use in Kenya and Rwanda (ongoing).
- Student mini-thesis (ongoing).

4. ICT Applications for Development

- Knowledge Exchanges and Learning Partnerships (four established by South African Partner institutions)
- eEducation White Paper for South Africa (completed 2004)
- Online learning management system (KEWL and KEWLNEXTGEN; ongoing 2005)
- Youth for Business and Information Technology in Rwanda (ongoing)

In addition, there are two cross cutting themes:

1. Gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation (course developed December 2004)
2. Network Development and Information sharing program (completed 2004)
 - Information website <http://www.nettelafrika.org>
 - Online learning website <http://elearn.nettelafrika.org>

B. Accomplishments this Quarter

1. Training Component

There was not a single African university teaching a full degree program in policy and regulation when NetTel began in June 2002. Thus, the first two years of the project were focused on building the capacity of African lecturers:

- To develop content on ICT/telecommunications policy and regulation;
- To work an online learning management system (KEWL); and
- To teach and learn with technology.

Content development for the 10 post-graduate diploma-level courses was completed by eight universities to implement a pilot year of delivery via eLearning in 2004 where 75 students successfully completed 10 courses at five universities. Students register at a host university, usually where the students reside, and lecturers from other universities act as “adjunct” lecturers to each other.

The NetTel Cooperative Agreement stipulated partnerships with eight African institutions. With additional funding provided by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and bilateral funds from two USAID Missions (USAID/Rwanda and USAID/Nigeria), the number of NetTel partner African institutions has increased to twenty. Furthermore, telecommunications regulators from national commissions and regional associations have requested development of a condensed version of the degree programs into an Executive Development Program.

A Grand Workshop to summarize lessons learned from the first year of on-line learning (2004, the pilot year), get hands-on training on the refined e-learning platform “KewlNextGen,” and build capacity of all the lecturers from all 20 universities through the Executive Development Program is planned during 5-11 June 2005. This workshop will be hosted by Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands, now a NetTel partner institution. Moreover, an online survey questionnaire prior to the workshop will be made available to kick-start the evaluation process to be followed by live interviews during the workshop.

During this quarter:

- The lecturers participating in NetTel finalized the development of the 11 advanced level Master’s courses which will be peer reviewed and uploaded on the e-learning platform KEWL at the University of Western Cape during the next quarter.
- Translation of the 20 courses into French is underway. This effort is lead by the Cheick Anta Diop University in Senegal and will be completed in December 2005.

- Modules for the Executive Development Program have been drafted by the National University of Rwanda, University of Zambia, University of Witswatersrand under the mentorship of the University of Maryland and will be presented at the Grand Workshop at the Delft University of Technology, June 2005.
- The first Academic Board meeting was held in February 2005 at the University of Western Cape, South Africa. Based on lessons learned from the 2004 pilot year, agreements to improve academic management procedures used by all NetTel partner universities were made for implementation when the next batch of students is accepted in July 2005. (Check out <http://www.nettelafrika.org>; click on academic board for a list of papers that highlight agreements reached.)
- A new set of post graduate courses on Telecommunications Management were identified by the Nigerian Communications Commission for development by four NetTel participating Nigerian universities—OAU at Ile-ife, University of Lagos, University of Nigeria at Nsukka, University of Jos. These courses are planned to be completed in July 2005.

Advanced course development. The 11 Advanced Masters level courses were finalized. These courses are:

- Advanced Micro Environment and Telecoms (University of Fort Hare)
- Advanced Technologies (University of Botswana)
- Advanced Industry and Markets (University of Lagos and University of Zambia)
- Advanced Spectrum Management (University of Western Cape and University of Lagos)
- Advanced Financial Analysis (University of Dar es Salaam)
- Advanced Approaches to Regulation (University of South Africa)
- Advanced Service Pricing (JKUAT)
- Advanced Universality and Quality of Service (University of Witswatersrand)
- Advanced Policy and Law (OAU at Iliife)
- Advanced ICT for development (Makerere University Business School)
- Research (University of Western Cape)

These courses will be made available to students at all NetTel universities. These courses are for those who have completed their post-graduate level courses. These courses will be offered initially by 5 universities who have already completed their post-graduate courses and eventually by all 20 universities. A course catalog for the Masters level courses has been drafted for use by all universities. The draft course catalog is available at <http://www.nettelafrika.org>.

French translation. One of the participating regional regulatory associations in NetTel—the West Africa Telecommunications Regulatory Association requested that the NetTel courses be available in French for West African students. In 2004 Cheick Anta Diop University in Senegal offered to coordinate this effort.

Executive program. Work on the draft Executive Development Program was completed during this quarter and will be pilot tested at the Grand workshop in Delft. This course was developed at the request of the regional telecommunications regulatory associations that are key clients of the NetTel Program. There is a request from Lesotho to host an Executive Development Program in July 2005 for TRASA member countries. Lesotho will cover local costs and expenditures of their members. Nettel will fund the travel of facilitators from the National University of Rwanda, University of Western Cape, University of Lagos and 1 or 2 U.S. commissioners.

Academic management. As per the MOU signed among African universities, the Academic Board is composed of Deans of the Faculties in the different universities and institutions that will participate in the training component (African and non-African) as well as a representative from the regulators (1), policy makers (1) and the private sector (1). The Academic Board shall be responsible for the broad academic policy, strategic direction, and quality assurance within a loose network that recognises the independence and unique character of each training institution. They will also approve curriculum, content, delivery, and assessment methods (while recognising the loose nature of the training network). They will also approve the technical aspects of course delivery and digital tools for eLearning. The first Academic Board meeting held in February 2005 revealed important lessons learned regarding academic management. These include ensuring a common calendar, management of homework and final exams, and release of grades within two months. Twenty eight participants showed up for the first academic board meeting representing 19 academic institutions from 11 countries (see attached participants list). The agenda included considering proposals on effective local academic management: Program management; Developing local instructor capacity; Examination processes, procedures, and deadlines (Paper 1.5); proposals on the job description, qualifications, terms of service, and method of identifying the Academic Coordinator (Paper 1.6); proposals for the Academic calendar (Paper 1.7). These documents which reflect the decisions made at the meeting are available at <http://www.nettelafrika.org>

Telecommunications management course. During this quarter a national regulator, the Nigerian Communications Commission requested a set of courses on telecommunications management to be developed. These courses were identified as part of the stakeholders consultations in Nigeria which included industry representatives. Four Nigerian universities agreed to develop this set of courses. It will be reviewed by the Nettel partner institutions and should be available for the next intake of NetTel university students by July 2005.

During the rest of the project period with current funding, NetTel will fine-tune academic management procedures across the 20 universities and fully embed the degree programs within the relevant academic structures. Further development of the training component is dependent on provision of the remaining original estimated obligation for NetTel.

2. Peering Component

The peering component began with regulator to academic peering in order to get input from practitioners into the on-line course content development and to respond to urgent requests for peering from regulatory agencies. The peering component has continued to stimulate the regulatory associations' sustained interest in the training component, and in gaining the skills needed to address new policy challenges. Moreover, the focus of the peering component has shifted to regulator to regulator exchange.

In the time remaining in the project, NetTel will strengthen the ties between regional African regulatory associations and the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), all of which was anticipated in the original NetTel Program Description.

During this quarter:

- Workshop for Judges hosted by the Nigerian Communications Commission in January 2005.
- Participation in the AFRINET conference where Dr Beebe did a presentation on *“Capacity Building and role of International partner organizations in ICT Development in Africa”* on February 24, 2005.
- Preparations to attend the Telecommunications Regulatory Association of Southern Africa (TRASA) Annual General Meeting (AGM) in March 2005 and the Association of Regulators of Information Communication in East Africa (ARICEA) AGM also in March 2005.
- Preparations for a universal access workshop to be hosted by the Kenya Communications Commission in March 2005.
- Preparations for a Spectrum Management workshop to be hosted by the Zambia Communications Commission in April 2005.
- Field attachment of two Rwandan regulatory staff with the Nigerian Communications Commission

Workshop for judges. This is a second workshop held for judges from Nigeria and hosted by the Nigerian Communications Commission. Nettel helped identify agenda items and peers from the U.S. (FCC and NTCA) to act as facilitators. Unfortunately, last minute changes did not make it possible for the U.S. participants to travel. This workshop held in Abuja (24-26 January 2005) covered the following topics:

- To sensitize and increase the knowledge of our Judges in the application of Telecommunications laws.
- To create awareness on emerging trends in Telecommunications.
- To create a forum for the exchange of ideas on topical issues in Telecommunications.

AFRINET conference. The theme of the AFRINET Conference was “*Sustaining the Growth of ICT Access in Africa.*” Project Director Dr. Beebe’s presentation “*Capacity Building and role of International partner organizations in ICT Development in Africa*” provided tangible examples of how peer-to-peer experiences had increased capacity and understanding on both sides of the relationship on the need for policy reform and the impact of policies, such as eRate.

TRASA and ARICEA AGM. TRASA and ARICEA requested the participation of the Nettel to discuss the capacity building components of Nettel, with a focus on peering. The Project Director attended the pre-AGM meetings held in Gaborone which laid the foundation for the Executive Council meeting to be convened by TRASA and to be held in April 2005. The Peering Coordinator from the Uganda Communications Commission attended the ARICEA AGM.

Universal service access. Planning for a workshop in Kenya to be hosted by the Kenya Communications Commission to be held in March 2005 followed discussions in 2004 with the Benton Foundation and dot-GOV Program regarding NetTel participant’s interest in lessons learned from implementation of Universal Service Obligations as a means of increasing rural access. To this end, NetTel assisted with designing the agenda, identifying facilitators and planning for logistics. This workshop is a regulator to regulator peering component as the notion is for regulators to share their experiences with each other and to then develop a cookbook for universal service access.

Spectrum management workshop. As well, in response to a request by the Communications Authority of Zambia, NetTel helped plan a spectrum management workshop to be held in April 2005. Nettel will cosponsor the event, supply facilitators, and design the agenda. This workshop is a peering component since the regulators get together to exchange information with some valued added by Nettel course lecturers.

Rwanda regulators visit to Nigerian Communications Commission. Two regulatory staff from Rwanda were attached to the Nigerian Communications Commission for a couple of weeks. The purpose was to observe how the Nigerian Communications Commission did its normal day to day functions. Funding was provided by the CATIA component 1(e).

Should the remaining estimated obligation become available, four mission critical requests for exchange visits between U.S. and African regulators would be completed. In addition, NetTel would be able to respond to urgent requests for technical assistance from peers.

3. Research Component

Under the leadership of the University of South Africa, NetTel hosted an ICT Policy and Regulation Symposium in July 2004 where students (also practitioners) shared papers ranging from “*Negotiating the Internet in Africa*” to “*Crystal gazing: Policy and regulatory challenges in the regulatory environment of the future*” to “*Financial performance of telecommunications industries: Tanzanian case studies.*” In addition to providing more information about the sector, this kind of research by students in NetTel partner universities is now fed back into the teaching and learning process at all Nettel partner universities as part of their eLibrary.

During this quarter:

- Results from a survey of telecenter uses in Rwanda and Kenya is being compiled into a single database, discussions are underway to add two additional countries.
- Discussions with the West Africa Telecommunications Regulatory Association (WATRA) regarding to identifying indicators for telecommunications competition.
- Discussions initiated for a scaled down version of the evaluation SOW to be initiated in June 2005

Telecenter uses. Based on requests to have baseline information, Nettel university partner institutions (University of Maryland, National University of Rwanda, and KENET) initiated a survey of telecenter uses. Based on the Rwanda and Kenya questionnaires a survey instrument is finalized and standardized. The standardized instrument will be made available to interested countries. These studies commenced in 2004 and the results are now being compiled into a single database. This research helps regulators discern Internet use when available through a donor-funded community service oriented telecenter or a commercial entity like a cyber café. More information will be available during the next reporting period.

Telecommunications sector indicators. Members of WATRA have requested help in identifying indicators for telecommunications competition to compare what is happening in the sector against the broader economy. Discussions took place on how a workshop on research concerning formulation of such indicators lead by WATRA could be supported should funds be available.

To summarize: During the next quarter NetTel will work with the first batch of students to finalize their research topics on areas are relevant to their workplace and the telecommunications sector. Should the remaining estimated obligation be provided, NetTel would be able to co-fund a second ICT Policy and Regulation Symposium in September 2005 and leverage research funds from ICT industries.

4. ICTs for Development Component

This component focuses on demonstrating the relationship between ICT policy, specifically telecommunications policy and regulation impact key sectors critical to the economic development, particularly the education sector. Under this component, four South African universities developed Knowledge Exchanges and Learning Partnerships. These universities are: University of Fort Hare, University of the North, University of Pretoria, and University of Zululand.

A key success in this area is assistance to the South African Department of Education in the formulation of an eEducation White Paper which has been signed into legislation during 2004. Inclusion of an eRate discount for all public schools is part of the legislation.

During this quarter:

- Assistance was provided to the South African National Department of Education with the formulation of an eSchool Technology Assessment Readiness and Targets (eSTART) as part of kick-starting the implementation of the e-Education policy.
- Initiated a Youth for Business Initiative (BIT) program in Rwanda, leveraging discretionary funds from the WSU Center to Bridge the Digital Divide (CBDD).
- Began close out of the Knowledge Exchange and Learning Partnerships managed by the University of Pretoria, University of Fort Hare, University of the North, and University of Zululand.

eStart. As a follow-on to the technical assistance rendered in 2003 and 2004 to the South African National Department of Education, NetTel Project Director Dr. Maria Beebe collaborated on an “eSchool Technology Assessment Readiness and Targets.” This document will be used to help implement the e-education policy by focusing on a self-assessment tool for schools to measure their progress toward integrating technology to improve education. The document is included in the course materials on ICT applications and ICTs for development.

Youth for Business. This activity was started at the request of the Government of Rwanda in 2004, and was funded by discretionary funds from CDBB. Accomplishments during this quarter include ten days of immersive IT training to 20 young Rwandan adults who are between secondary school and university; with training provided by four American youth responsible for implementing training and three adults. Finally, a “lessons learned” kit was created to ensure better preparation for future endeavors, in Rwanda and in other countries.

Knowledge Exchange and Learning Partnerships. Because the final estimated obligation for the NetTel project had not been made by the start of the quarter, it became necessary to start close-outs of the Knowledge Exchange and Learning Partnerships managed by the University of Pretoria, University of Fort Hare, University of the North, and University of Zululand. These Partnerships were fruitful and the results will be reported in the next quarterly report.

In the request for a no-cost time extension, the Project indicated the need to capture lessons learned from these ICT for development applications and share them more widely within the NetTel. The lack of the final estimated obligation has meant that the requested changes on KewlNextGen that are specific to the Nettel requirements will be delayed until funding can be secured.

III. NetTel MANAGEMENT

(Please refer to the attached MOU explaining the roles and responsibilities of the Executive Council, also referred to as Advisory Council; the Academic Board; the Nettel Director; and the academic coordinator. In subsequent meetings the need for a peering coordinator was also noted.)

As described earlier, the first Academic Board Meeting in February 2005, really helped establish the need for cohesive, transparent NetTel governance among the African universities and other Nettel partners This progress made on this front will be furthered in the upcoming Executive Council meeting in March 2005. During the next quarter, re-alignment of Nettel responsibilities will shift most of the overall coordination responsibilities to African partner institutions. This is

all the more critical now with the lack of the final estimated obligation of almost \$722,715 for the Project forcing the need to dramatically scale back activities.

A. University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) - NetTel Coordination

As NetTel moves towards delivery of courses, academic coordination, a UDSM function, is taking center stage. With the university partners experiencing for the first time the delivery of elearning, there are many unknown joys and frustrations expressed by both the lecturers and the students. The pilot year – 2005 (with live students as guinea pigs) will provide some guidance on how to better structure the elearning Program on policy and regulation. However, there is good faith effort from everyone to ensure success of the Program.

B. Makerere University - NetTel Expansion

Makerere University, acting as the UK Department for International Development (DFID) (DFID) CATIA 1 Program eSecretariat, has initially taken the lead in the expansion of NetTel beyond Southern Africa, harmonizing the Africa to Africa peer program. As such Makerere assigned translation of courses from English to French at Cheik Anta Diop University in Senegal, and identified the needs for infrastructure interventions and NetTel documentation. Furthermore, this quarter Makerere University started to take the lead in overall coordination of NetTel. Overall coordination involves harmonizing the four Nettel components--training, peering, research and ICT applications.

C. CBDD/WSU Management

CBDD/WSU continues with its overall invoice and financial management role. Because of the lack of certainty with regard to the request for the remaining yet un-obligated funds, the proposed evaluation SOW will be scaled down. An online survey questionnaire prior to the workshop will be made available to kick-start the evaluation process to be followed by live interviews during the Grand Workshop scheduled on 5-11 June to be hosted by the Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands. This workshop will address the future management of NetTel once the USAID funded is completed.

IV. PROJECT DIRECTOR FINAL NOTES

After climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb.
Nelson Mandela

Out of the original estimated obligation of \$3,994,987 for the project the amount of \$2,909,091 has been obligated to date for NetTel; of which \$2,288,658 has been spent as of February 2005. The question is “What results have been achieved with the obligated USAID funds thus far?” At the outcome level this can be summarized as follows:

- Eight institutions within the Southern African region plus 12 institutions beyond Southern Africa now have capacity to teach ICT/telecommunications policy and regulation;
- Four regional regulatory associations are engaged in peering activities with each other and other national and international organizations;
- Research on ICT policy is being carried out by Africans;
- Four South African institutions have demonstrated use of ICTs for teaching and learning at the university level regarding ICTs for development (KELPs).
- An online learning management system based on open source and open code is being used by 20 African institutions.

Counting the number of institutions that have enhanced their capacity to work with ICT policy and regulatory issues (with a total of 20), USAID investment per African institution is about \$114,433 over the past two years and nine months.

- About 850 regulators have gone through short five day courses in policy and regulation.
- About 75 students have started their degree programs.

In July 2005, if all 20 universities start offering the degree programs and at a modest enrolment projection of ten students each, there will be at least 200 students enrolled in the degree programs. If the number of students is increased to twenty per institution, there will be at least 400 students. But considering the potential hiccups, it would be more prudent to move from the pilot year to the more modest projections in enrollment.

For its innovative way of networking the various institutions through an integrated program, NetTel is to receive an ADEC Excellence in Distance Education Honorable Mention award (along with two other US institutions for different projects) on 26-28 April 2005 (see Attachment 2 for the NetTel nomination final).

Approval of the no cost-time extension request will allow the NetTel partners to shift from building blocks (broadening the number of key players, including policy-makers, regulators, academic and NGO activists who can speak about ICT/telecommunications policy and regulation) towards determining outcomes in the telecommunications sector. We remain convinced that long-term capacity building is best for the sector and that capacity building in the sector has beneficial consequences for development. By building capacity to open up the telecommunications market and encourage competition, USAID can contribute to closing the digital divide and provide the policy environment that makes access to telephones, the Internet and ICT tools possible in rural areas. As for the as yet un-obligated funds of \$722,715, these funds could go a long way towards allowing the NetTel project to complete its original project

goals and solidify the relationships upon which long-term sustainability of NetTel and its component activities were designed.

**Attachment 1: 19 Feb
Participants List**

Twenty eight participants showed up for the first academic board meeting representing 19 academic institutions from 11 countries. The agenda included considering proposals on effective local academic management: Program management; Developing local instructor capacity; Examination processes, procedures, and deadlines (Paper 1.5); proposals on the job description, qualifications, terms of service, and method of identifying the Academic Coordinator (Paper 1.6); proposals for the Academic calendar (Paper 1.7). These documents which reflect the decisions made at the meeting are available at <http://www.nettelafrika.org>

ACADEMIC BOARD MEETING - 19 FEBRUARY 2005 - UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN CAPE

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