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dot-GOV, which is implemented by Internews Network and is part of USAID's DOT-COM Alliance, works with USAID Missions and Bureaus to promote competitive policy and regulatory reforms in telecommunications and e-commerce to enhance economic and social development, and to attain universal access to information and communications technologies (ICTs).

dot-GOV: Open, Secure, and Affordable Telecommunications and Internet

For socio-economic development in the twenty-first century, developing nations require access to open, affordable, and secure information and communications technologies (ICTs).

Advances in ICTs have lowered costs and improved services, opening up economic possibilities of providing communications access to every corner of the world. Digital convergence of ICTs means that telecom policy reform must occur for ICTs to be able to improve people's lives (especially women's), stimulate economic growth, and foster civil society. Guiding principles include:

- Private investment, competition and universal access policies are central to meeting the accelerating demand for ICTs.

- Constructive policies open the door for the equitable use of telecommunication tools. Competition among providers expands the range and scope of services.

- Effective, independent regulatory agencies are critical to establishing business confidence in a competitive market.

- Ministries responsible for ICTs need to assure universal access and cyber-security.

NetTel@Africa builds regional capacity and cooperation of African telecoms regulators through online learning, workshops and university programs.
NetTel@Africa (Africa-wide)

Solutions to Key Telecommunications Policy Challenges

dot-GOV helps build the context-specific, needs-based policy and regulatory environment needed to promote private investment, competition and affordable ICT access, especially for rural and low-income populations. dot-GOV provides technical assistance to: draft laws pertaining to telecommunications and the Internet and cyber-crime; build regulatory capacity; promote an open and secure Internet; remove policy barriers to e-commerce; and formulate e-government strategies. Illustrative examples include:

- *Helping African Universities:* Helping African universities upgrade their knowledge with on-line learning, research, and professional networking through the NetTel@Africa project. Through long-term projects in Rwanda, Romania, and within the Southern African Development Community, strengthening regulators' ability to operate transparently to stimulate a more competitive telecommunications market.

- *E-Commerce:* Demonstrating how policies directly affect small and medium-sized ICT businesses. Sharing methods to improve business practices, attract investment, develop e-business strategies, and use e-marketing to help increase revenue and encourage policy change in Mexico, Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines, Cambodia. A model law for Southern African countries helps regulators encourage e-commerce.

- *Cyber-Crime and Cyber-Security:* Improving cyber-crime enforcement in Romania, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, SE Europe, and SE Asia. Guiding the revision of laws pertaining to cyber-crime. Building greater awareness of security approaches to protect ICT infrastructure to increase confidence for investment and e-commerce.

- *Universal Service Obligations (USO):* Demonstrating how USO provides greater access through pilot telecenters and revising law in Romania. Helping government and private sector shape USO in Namibia and Nigeria. Informing regulators on applications of USO through the NetTel@Africa project.

- *Global and Regional Telecommunications and ICT Accords:* Promoting adherence to global telecommunications and ICT policy accords through model laws and bilateral assistance for telecommunications officials in Southern Africa, Egypt, Middle East, Vietnam, and Afghanistan.

- *E-Government:* Providing support to government in developing and applying policies that encourage better government services and greater citizen participation in Macedonia and Romania.

- *Gender Equity:* Providing scholarships to women for study at Cisco Academies to diversify the ICT workforce in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Mongolia, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco.

Afghani women proudly display their certificates from the Cisco Networking Academy, a dot-GOV Resource Partner in Kabul, where the women learn to install and maintain computer networks.

What is DOT-COM?

dot-GOV is one of three pre-competed Cooperative Agreements (CAs) launched by USAID to meet development objectives through the use of ICTs under a mechanism called the Digital Opportunity through Technology and Communication Partnerships, or DOT-COM Alliance. The other two CAs focus on increasing access to ICTs (dot-ORG) and on improving education and learning systems (dot-EDU).

Internews Network implements the dot-GOV CA through an alliance of public, private, university and NGO partners, including: the Center for Democracy and Technology (CDT), the Kenan Institute, Booz Allen and Hamilton, Washington State University, the University of Maryland, ARD Inc., Computer Frontiers Inc., the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association (NTCA), Cisco Systems, the Institute of International Education (IIE), the Asia Foundation, GeekCorps, and the Federal Communications Commission.

The Process

As a pre-competed award, dot-GOV staff, consultants, and Resource Partners are available to assist USAID in developing concepts for potential dot-GOV activities. New dot-GOV activities are initiated through a buy-in process, which can be activated by USAID Bureaus and Missions by contacting either the USAID Cognizant Technical Officer for dot-GOV, Laura Samotshozo, or dot-GOV Program Director, Sarah Tisch.

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