



Evaluation Report
of UNDP Armenia ICT- for-Development Programme:
e-Governance System for Territorial Administrations (ARM/02/012)
Support to Information Society and Democratic Governance (ARM/01/001)
International Assistance Database for Armenia (ARM/99/005)

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Abbreviations

BPA	– Business Process Analysis
CIS	– Commonwealth of independent States
CIC	– Community Information Centers
CPAP	– Country Programme Action Plan
CPD	– Country Programme Document
e-GSTA	– e-Governance System of Territorial Administration
GIPI	– Global Internet Policy Initiative
IADA	– International Assistance Database for Armenia
ICTs	– Information and Communication Technologies
ICTD	– Information and Communication Technologies for Development
IS	– Information Society
ITDSC	– IT Development Supporting Council
OAM	– Output Assessment Matrix
MFA	– Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MTA	– Ministry of Territorial Administration
NAS	– National Academy of Sciences
NISP	– National Information Society Policy
PIAP	– Public Internet Access Point
PPPs	– Public-Private Partnerships
RRF	– Regional Resource Facility
PRSP	– Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SDC	– Swiss Development Cooperation
TOR	– Terms of Reference
UNDP	– United Nations Development Programme
WSIS	– World Summit on the Information Society

Executive Summary

UNDP and Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) have initiated the independent evaluation of UNDP projects in the area of ICT-for-Development (ICTD), one of which is co-financed by the Swiss Government.

Scope of Evaluation

UNDP in support of Armenia has initiated a number of initiatives over the past three years intended to utilize additional development benefits offered by Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to promote democratic governance and Information Society (IS) through the accelerated progress toward e-governance. UNDP has accomplished these purposes by developing and implementing a *second generation of ICTD projects¹ focused on the demonstration of convincing results of how ICTs can be used for public good* by (i) expanding affordable access to the Internet through Freenet and PIAPs' services; (ii) creating the Armenian language Web domain; (iii) integrating e-governance into the public sector management at central and regional levels through e-GSTA and e-Visa; (iv) advocating enabling Information Society and telecommunication policies; (v) developing and putting into practice effective partnerships with private sector through ArCa e-Payment; (vi) encouraging peer-to-peer online networking among professionals and population groups; (vii) expanding the use of the Armenian language on the Internet and widen the Armenian Web content; (viii) improving external assistance management system in the government via online instruments.

The main UNDP projects supporting these objectives have been the following:

1. ***ARM/02/012 'e-Governance System for Territorial Administration'*** (funded by the Swiss Government and UNDP; implemented by the Ministry of Territorial Administration, 2002-2004)
2. ***ARM/01/001 'Support to Information Society and Democratic Governance'*** (funded by UNDP and implemented by the National Academy of Sciences, 2001-2004)
3. ***ARM/99/005 'International Assistance Database for Armenia – IADA'*** (funded by UNDP and implemented by the Prime Minister's Office, 1999-2000)

The first two active projects have one common *Development Outcome 'Accelerated progress toward e-governance'*, which has been the main subject of the evaluation. A different evaluation method has been applied to the third IADA project ended almost four years ago. Therefore, the post-completion ownership and sustainability of the project output has been evaluated instead.

Method of Evaluation

The evaluators have been guided in their work by the evaluation principles of UNDP and SDC that have a common focus on the achieved results and development impacts. Specifically, the evaluation team has gathered *evidence to assess the accomplishment of the project outputs that are the key milestones in understanding broader development outcomes and impacts* in UNDP technical assistance programmes. To specify the evaluation findings, the evaluators have answered a *set of detailed questions* typically used in the review of SDC programmes.

¹ The first generation of ICTD projects were implemented during 1996-2000.

Key Findings of Evaluation

Accomplishment of the Development Outcome

The gathered evidence reflects **positive changes** that have occurred in certain areas of Information Society and democratic governance. This validates the **accomplishment of the accelerated progress toward e-governance** – the projects' Development Outcome. These areas are:

- expanded choices for citizens and businesses to access and use ICTs;
- improved conditions in the public sector management at central and regional levels to add new value to public services and make administrative authorities more open through the use of e-government and e-democracy instruments;
- enhanced capacity, knowledge, competencies and skills to design and implement complex inter-sectoral initiatives;
- increased awareness in the government, professional and civil society groups, and the private sectors about the public benefit of ICTs;
- improved image of Armenia as a country using ICTs to modernize itself.

The observed positive changes have occurred within the project life of about three years. Therefore, the progress can be described as accelerated.

Contribution to democratic governance and an Information Society.

The contribution has been substantial making **regional governance practices more democratic** through **greater openness** of regional authorities and the **ICT-enabled citizen-centered public services** they started to provide since 2001. The contribution has been especially significant to the progress of building an Information Society in Armenia through the expansion of the Armenian Freenet and the implementation on a larger scale of comprehensive e-government (regional e-GSTA and MFA's e-Visa) and e-commerce initiatives (ArCA e-Payment and e-Shop), with full-cycle (two-way) transactional features.

As a result, at present **Armenia is among the leaders in the CIS in introducing the full-featured e-governance system – e-GSTA** at regional level and probably also at central. UNDP has been the key player in this process providing a truly catalytic input and should stay in ICTD further to turn its input into impact, in partnership with other bilateral and multilateral donors, especially Switzerland that has been supporting UNDP in ICTD for the past two years. Armenia is moving in the right direction but is still at an early stage of the Information Society.

The input of UNDP in the area of e-Governance may lie close to a development impact. The latter is possible to achieve within the next few years if:

- consistency in approach and focus is further strengthened;
- sufficient financial resources – external and domestic – allocated to generate economies of scale; and
- realistic national pro-active policies and enabling legal framework formulated, adopted and implemented in the area of information society and telecommunications.

Main Conclusions of Evaluation

Programme

The accomplishment of the projects' Development Outcome allows to **answer positively** to main broader **question 'Whether the latest generation of ICTD projects have contributed to the**

progress of Armenia towards the Information Society and democratic governance? formulated by UNDP and SDC and put before the evaluation mission in its Terms of Reference (TOR).

Management

The projects professionally managed under the leadership of Programme Manager highly respected by project counterparts and beneficiaries. The team receives strong support and guidance from UNDP country office. ***The ICTD team is small (Project Coordinator, Project Associate, ICT Specialist, e-Government Specialist, Logistic Clerk/Driver, and an outposted System Administrator) but efficient, friendly, knowledgeable and focused on results.*** With All the personnel is national with the total admin costs being maximum 10-15% against the managed programme resources. Project documentation is in proper order. Especially impressive is reporting, with all progress reports since 2001 and other major documents publicly posted on the Web.

Main Recommendations

National Information Society and Telecommunications Policy

- Advocate and lobby for a change in the national telecommunications policy for true and open competitiveness.
- Re-establish UNDP as a leader in the formulation of NISP; initiate an annual e-governance/Information Society conference and an annual report on e-governance; develop a system of monitoring and evaluation through policy benchmarking².
- Initiate and support the formulation of a visionary National Information Society Policy (NISP), including e-Governance Strategy and corresponding annualized Action Plans.

Public access

- Continue expanding Freenet's public Internet services until telecommunications policies have improved to reduce connectivity costs.
- Expand services to citizens and local businesses provided by e-GSTA PIAPs.
- Initiate an annual meeting of all organizations running and financing PIAPs for exchange of experience and networking.

Programming

- Develop a comprehensive Programme Approach-based framework of the third generation of ICTD projects under the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP); ensure strong linkages with other CPD and CPAP outcomes and outputs; strengthen the ICTD team with additional professionals as necessary.
- Develop a set of ICTD services for other UNDP project based on an internal ICTD Mainstreaming Strategy; explore formulation of a programme on online information management within specific sectors;
- Formulate the next phase of the e-GSTA project as the core project within the ICTD framework and request SDC to continue providing financial support with focus on:
- Expand new e-services for citizens and local business;

² EU Information Society policy benchmarking indicators could be used to adapt to the Armenian context

Regional e-Governance

- Develop in partnership with all stakeholders, especially local authorities, a national e-Governance Strategy as an integral part of the National Information Society Policy or, alternatively, as a stand-alone document if no NISP would be possible to develop.
- Develop further e-GSTA's features to deeper integrate ICTs into the work of regional administrations by optimizing internal work processes, communication and information flows, and functions among civil servants.
- Expand e-GSTA to the municipal level; design a flexible and easily replicable model to gradually cover more municipalities within regions.
- Continue funding the regional level e-GSTA until it's deeply integrated into local governance management and communication practices and achieve on that basis a sufficient degree of sustainability.
- Conduct regularly end-user surveys and studies and public awareness campaigns.
- Prepare for the PRSP mid-term review in 2005.

Central e-Governance

- Formulate an e-Government Action Plan for central-level state bodies as part of a National e-Governance Strategy under NISP.
- Support further e-Visa and fully operationalize e-Consulate; explore opportunities for a regional e-Visa initiative.
- Use e-Visa success as a convincing advocacy evidence for expanding e-Consulate services.

Introduction

UNDP in Armenia has been active in ICT-for-Development area since mid-90s, with its flagship Freenet project³, which paved the way of the Internet development and adoption in Armenia. Another project initiated in late 90s targeted the capacity of the Armenian Government to manage and coordinate external assistance⁴. Since then UNDP's development work in Armenia is firmly associated with ICTs and their use for public good⁵.

The second generation of ICTD projects started in 2001, with the approval of the Freenet's successor project ARM/01/001 'Support to Information Society and Democratic Governance' (mostly funded by UNDP). The project built on the Freenet's success and aimed at the use of ICTs in all main sectors of the Armenian society including the government to strengthen democratization and information society in Armenia. At the end of 2002, UNDP received a significant contribution of \$525,000 from the Government of Switzerland for a new ICTD project ARM/02/012 'e-Governance System for Territorial Administration' to replicate the regional e-governance system piloted in Lori under ARM/01/001 in all other nine regions.

As the both projects are scheduled to be completed at the end of 2004, UNDP and the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) Office in Armenia have undertaken to evaluate these two inter-linked projects externally to determine to what extent the projects' objectives have been accomplished, what lessons can be learned from the implementation of these projects and what recommendations can be made for future. The ARM/99/005 project 'International Assistance Database for Armenia' (IADA) finished in 2000 was included into the evaluation as well.

An evaluation team composed of two experts undertook this evaluation during the period of 6-15 September 2004. In addition to the meetings held in Yerevan with beneficiaries, government counterparts and other partners, the evaluators visited two cities of Shirak and Vayots Dzor representing two regions out of nine where the regional e-Governance System of Territorial Administration has been or is being installed and operationalized.

The evaluators made all the effort to meet as many people as possible and study as many documents⁶ as it was feasible during the mission. Recommendations provided in the report aim at strengthening the impact of ICTs on the government's openness and effectiveness, successful decentralization and public sector reform, as well as on the country's image as a society being modernized. Specific recommendations are provided in the report to help design a third generation of ICTD projects for UNDP Armenia within the framework of a new Country Programme 2005-2009.

Purpose and scope of the evaluation

The overall purpose of the evaluation (review) is described in its TOR (annexed to the report), which requested the evaluation team to determine (i) to what extent the projects' stated outcome⁷ 'Accelerated progress toward e-governance' has been accomplished, and if so (ii) how the outcome contributed to Armenia's advancement in democratic governance and Information Society. Such a strategic approach is fully in line with the UNDP latest Monitoring and Evaluation

³ Project ARM/96/002 "National Information Infrastructure for Sustainable Development" (1996-2000)

⁴ Project ARM/99/005 'International Assistance Database for Armenia – IADA'

⁵ Principal conclusions of the evaluation of the Freenet project undertaken in 2000 confirm this statement.

⁶ An overview of the main documents that were made available by UNDP is annexed to the report; the evaluators benefited a lot from the many documents posted on the project website, especially progress reports since 2001.

⁷ Viewed as a positive change in development situation

Guidelines that underscore the importance of the Outcome evaluation, which means in other words the evaluation of a change in the development situation.

Additional set of questions (summarized below⁸) was suggested by SCD to reflect greater detail. Complete answers are presented in the report as a separate chapter. The questions are as follows:

- Whether the management of the projects has been successful and effective?
- Whether the projects' outputs have produced expected results?
- Whether the projects' strategy has been successful?
- Whether the projects have selected the right partners and beneficiaries?
- Whether the projects' results are sustainable?
- Whether the projects' objectives have been realistically formulated?
- Whether the projects are relevant to the Armenian context and contribute to the country's broader development agenda?
- Whether the projects need extension and/or reorientation?
- What are main lessons learned?
- What are the recommendations for a possible next phase and generation of ICTD projects?

The following projects have been evaluated:

- Project ARM/02/012 'e-Governance System for Territorial Administration' (funded by the Swiss Government and UNDP; implemented by the Ministry of Territorial Administration (MTA; ongoing, 2002-2004)
- Project ARM/01/001 'Support to Information Society and Democratic Governance' (funded by UNDP and implemented by the National Academy of Sciences; ongoing, 2001-2004)
- Project ARM/99/005 'International Assistance Database for Armenia' (IADA; funded by UNDP and implemented by the Prime Minister's Office; completed, 1999-2000)

Projects' specific objectives addressed (i) expanding affordable access to the Internet through Freenet and PIAPs' services; (ii) creating the Armenian language Web domain; (iii) integrating e-governance into the public sector management at central and regional levels through e-GSTA and e-Visa; (iv) advocating enabling Information Society and telecommunication policies; (v) developing and putting into practice effective partnerships with private sector through ArCa e-Payment; (vi) encouraging peer-to-peer online networking among professionals and population groups; (vii) expanding the use of the Armenian language on the Internet and widen the Armenian Web content; (viii) improving external assistance management system in the government via online instruments.

Whereas two first two projects have the same Development Outcome 'Accelerated progress toward e-governance', the third IADA project completed a few years ago was evaluated differently – from the point of view of post-implementation ownership and sustainability. That is the evaluators have tried to understand what happened to the IADA database, how it's been managed since the project completion and what is the IADA's future.

Evaluation method

Collection of quantitative or qualitative evidence helping to analyze the accomplishment of the projects' outputs has been the main method of the evaluation. The principal source of such

⁸ Listed in full in the TOR

evidence has been (a) available documentation – progress reports, project documents, minutes, audit reports, budgets; and (b) meetings and interviews held during the evaluation period. The present report contains Output Assessment Matrices (OAM) representing a summarized overview of the collected evidence per each output (including listed activities under outputs).

The evaluators used a standard approach of conducting interviews by asking four main questions: (1) How the situation has changed as a result of the implementation of UNDP projects? (2) Have UNDP projects been successful or not? (3) Should UNDP continue its presence in future? (4) What can be recommended for UNDP to improve performance?

It should be noted that since 2000 UNDP has undergone a profound change towards becoming a result-based organization. This also resulted in the simplified project format with the focus shifted from inputs (activities) to results (outputs). In this connection the project document format has been changing, especially that of ARM/01/001 becoming significantly shorter and more strategically focused on outputs instead of activities.

The latest significant change that has affected the both projects under evaluation was caused by the introduction of Atlas⁹ in 2004, which institutionalized a new simplified project document and its new budget structure under the output-based philosophy. That has led the consolidation of projects activities at a higher aggregation level. The ARM/01/001 project document has undergone the most serious change in project design and contents being significantly better focus on results. It was not only a consequence of simplification and result-orientation but also a need to review the project objectives substantially (substantial project revision was undertaken in 2003) and more realistically, as well as to reflect on the progress made since 2001. Such positive changes have complicated somewhat direct comparisons of ‘early’ and ‘late’ versions of the project documents.

The ARM/02/012 did not undergo such profound changes as its implementation started in late 2002 when a new project format was already in force. Yet during migration to Atlas-compatible format in August 2004 its structure changed. The project itself became an output in the larger programme tree, which also led to a reduction of key activities from twelve as of November 2002 to more sensible four in August 2004.

As a result of the changed outputs, the evaluators have reviewed budgets and delivery rates of at the level of projects rather outputs.

⁹ PeopleSoft’s project-based Enterprise Resource System (ERP) used to manage resources both assets (financial, human and material) and project management processes.

PART I: Assessment of Policy Frameworks and Legal Environment Governing ICTD

Overview

Policy

The Government and the President of the Republic of Armenia have stated that the development and use of ICTs are the priority areas for Armenia, and are encouraged in every possible way by the political leadership of the country. Highly qualified professionals in software and microelectronics development make Armenia attractive for investment. In 2001, an ICT Master Strategy was developed with the technical assistance provided by the World Bank and USAID. In spite of the incorporation of some ICT- related tasks into the Government's subsequent Action Plan 2001-2004, no clear vision and viable strategy have been designed since the presentation of the Master Strategy to support the Action Plan. Actually, the role should be the opposite – Action Plan should support Vision.

At the time of the evaluation the only official visionary document available was the Concept Paper on the Development of Information Technologies in the Republic of Armenia approved by the Government of Armenia¹⁰ (protocol of the cabinet session No 18 of March 3 2001). In 2001 in accordance with the Presidential Order No 896 of July 2001, the IT Development Supporting Council (ITDSC) was created to establish permanent communication between the government, IT industry and interested civil society groups. In spite of the fact that ITDSC is chaired by the Prime Minister, it has a status of advisory body and can not significantly influence state policies due to the absence of an officially adopted strategy and also because of poor coordination among ministries of the present coalition government.

Yet, some policy-related problems pertaining to the IT industry and broader issues of Information Society have been successfully resolved by the ITDSC members. It demonstrates a good potential of this advisory body. Nevertheless, the key cabinet-level position of Chief Information Officer (CIO) recommended in ICT Master Strategy has not been created and state policies remain undefined.

e-Commerce

A significant progress has been made in area of electronic commerce and business. The government has developed a draft law on the 'digital signature', which was submitted to the National Assembly (Parliament) in June 2004. In parallel, the Central Bank of Armenia has issued several regulations regarding the use of electronic payments. With support of USAID in 2003, the Central Bank and ten commercial banks have established a national e-payment system *ArCa* and a credit cards processing center. In 2004, Armenia has become, with UNDP's support, the first CIS country to introduce its national online payment system. The progress in area of electronic commerce has been possible mainly due to a joint effort of donors, banking industry, IT sector and individuals. The impact of e-commerce could have been more significant if the government would have adopted a national e-commerce action plan and promoted electronic commerce in rural areas.

e-Government

The introduction of e-government in Armenia has been developing rather spontaneously, without coordination from the state. Similarly, the progress should be attributed to initiatives of select donors, ICT professionals, civil society and select public authorities. The regional e-Governance System of Territorial Administration first successfully piloted in Lori has been successfully

¹⁰ Protocol of the Cabinet session No 18 of 3 March 2001)

extended to five other regions, with the remaining four regions joining until the end of 2004. This is a very positive development, which should be thoroughly studied and lessons should be learned. However, the evaluators believe that major nation-wide initiatives need to be supported by the state's enabling policies. Therefore, a realistic but forward-looking e-Governance Strategy within NISP, which would also include a central-level e-Government Action Plan is crucial as it involves the public sector management and almost entirely depends on the government's priorities and respective budgetary allocations. Also, the key issue of inter-agency coordination can be effectively addressed also only centrally. Putting ICTs on the government priority list would send an important signal to other actors, especially from the private sector, which will inevitably lead to a rapid increase of the scope and volume of development in this area, as the experience of other ICT-advanced countries suggests¹¹.

The absence of an agreed and doable Action Plan which would also promote public-private partnerships (PPPs) creates additional barriers for agencies and organizations that implement e-government initiatives. The attempts to coordinate different initiatives in area of ICT development within the IT Development Supporting Council have failed due not so much because of its advisory status¹² but rather due to the lack of priorities and implementation strategy. Currently, EU Tacis is implementing an e-government initiative aimed at the creation of a pilot e-government system at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the development of an e-government rollout plan. However, the evaluators gather from the meetings that in the absence of well articulated priorities and coordination mechanisms this good initiative could not be successfully accomplished and afterwards replicated in other ministries unless informal commitments of the Armenian government are translated into formal enabling legal frameworks and the demonstrated strong political commitment (which the Action Plan would normally reflects).

Telecommunications

However, the main problem of the development of IT industry and information society in Armenia remains the issue of connectivity or rather its lack, which hampers wider and deeper penetration of ICTs¹³. In 1997, the Armenian government privatized Armenian Telecommunications Company (Armentel) and granted is an exclusive license for the provision of basic electronic telecommunications services. However, the privatization has not led to any significant investment to modernize the country's weak telecommunication infrastructure. Such short-sighted policy ignores a developmental importance of fast technology adoption by the government, people and businesses.

Armentel's, which owns the entire telecommunication infrastructure in Armenia, implements an extremely counter-productive policy and does not really contribute to the development of telecommunications services in the country. As a result, the cost of the broadband Internet connectivity in Armenia is unacceptably high and simply unaffordable for the general public and non-for-profit organizations, especially outside the capital city and other urban centers. During the last two years the Armenian government has been making attempts to improve the situation in the telecommunications sector but so far without any significant progress. Unfortunately, non-for-profit (educational and scientific) networks that partially could solve the problem of connectivity

¹¹ All such countries have their national ICT/Information Society Policies and Strategies in different form, supported by respective Action Plans

¹² Many countries have one

¹³ There is a well-established perception that high penetration rates are closely correlated with the country's wellness, which is generally true but not entirely – the case of a relatively poor Estonia proves the opposite; with only one-third of the EU's average GDP its Internet penetration rate of almost 50% surpasses that of some more affluent EU member states (EU eEurope+ Final Evaluation Report); this case teaches that good, realistic policies supported by main stakeholders matter most.

are not well-developed in Armenia and no appropriate policy has been adopted till now to foster their development¹⁴.

Development outcome

The gathered by the evaluators evidence suggests positive changes in the accomplishment of the projects' Development Outcome 'Accelerated progress toward e-governance'. The most noticeable changes have are associated with:

- expanded choices for citizens and businesses to access and use ICTs in their personal advancement and economic competitiveness;
- improved conditions in the public sector management at central and regional levels to add new value to public services, raise performance and efficiency of civil servants, and make administrative authorities more open through the use of e-government and e-democracy instruments;
- enhanced capacity, knowledge, competencies and skills to design and implement complex initiatives on the cross-road of economy, technology, management, and society;
- increased awareness within the governmental authorities, professional and civil society groups, and the private sectors about the potential of ICTs as a public benefit available to all;
- improved image of Armenia as a country using ICTs to modernize itself.

Three-and-a-half years that have passed since the start of the ARM/01/001 project and two-and-a-half years – for the project ARM/02/012. These are rather short time frames for development assistance projects and therefore the evaluators rate progress toward e-governance as accelerated.

Contribution to democratic governance

The contribution has been substantial in making regional governance practices more democratic through greater openness of regional authorities and the ICT-enabled citizen-centered public services they started to provide since 2001.

Contribution to the Information Society

The contribution has been especially significant to the progress of building an Information Society in Armenia through the expansion of the Armenian Freenet and the implementation on a larger scale of comprehensive e-government (regional e-GSTA and MFA's e-Visa) and e-commerce initiatives (ArCA e-Payment), with full-cycle (two-way) transactional features. As a result, today Armenia is among the leaders in the CIS in introducing the full-featured e-governance system – e-GSTA at regional level and probably also at central¹⁵. UNDP has been the key player in this process providing a truly catalytic input and should stay in ICTD further to turn its input into impact, in partnership with other bilateral and multilateral donors, especially Switzerland that has been supporting UNDP in ICTD for the past two years. Armenia is moving in the right direction but is still at an early stage of the Information Society.

¹⁴ An important contribution of the NATO's science programme (Virtual Silk Road) and the EU in the form of satellite connectivity to the educational and scientific sector of Armenia is not fully realized due to various local organizational and institutional issues; potentially, that could be a good source of improved connectivity and associated services to serve development objectives better.

¹⁵ Evaluators' opinion based on the openly available information on other CIS countries

Conclusion

Without a clear mid- to long-term National Information Society Policy (NISP) and an attached to it a detailed short-term Action Plan the government's informal commitment is not sufficient for the sustainable advancement of Armenia technologically, and that basis socially and economically. In these less-than-encouraging circumstances any initiatives supported by various groups and organizations, including those from the international community, will suffer from the lack of vision and poor coordination, which will ultimately prevent from the fast replication of best practices and successful projects across different sectors and as a result form creating for economies of scale. It all is exacerbated by bad telecommunication policies of Armentel.

The evaluators realize that the observed improvements vary in intensity, spread and sustainability within each of the above-described area of change. The evaluation team is also aware that making progress in specific fields of democratic governance does not mean that Armenia has become more democratic since 2001 – as elsewhere, it depends on a complex combination of existing policies and infrastructures, as well as on prevailing practices, attitudes, competencies and behaviours in many other areas of the public and private sector. Nonetheless, advances in the Information Society in general and e-governance in particular help further strengthen democracy through many public benefits facilitated by the use of ICTs such as access to the state-held information, transparency and accountability of authorities at all levels of governance; freedom of expression through peer-to-peer digital networks and government-citizen communication means; provision of electronic public services and re-engineered work processes in the public sector to eliminate a possibility of corruption, etc. On the other hand, strong commitment to democracy across all levels of the Armenian governance levels including that of civil servants will secure steady development of the Information Society.

PART II: Evaluation of projects

Project ARM/02/012 ‘e-Governance System for Territorial Administration’ (funded by the Swiss Government and UNDP; implemented by the Ministry of Territorial Administration (MTA); ongoing)

Delivery

The delivery rate is high, which is an indicator of good project management practices and financial discipline. According to the latest expenditure data available as of early September 2004, the project delivered 79% (\$302,503 of the total joint UNDP-SDC programmed 2004 budget¹⁶ of \$382,802). There are also some funds that may remain unspent at the end of the year. It is proposed to rephrase these funds to or to use for the formulation of e-GSTA-2. There are no spare resources for piloting e-GSTA at the local municipal level.

Enabling factors

The evaluation team rates this project as highly successful. To the best knowledge of the evaluators, this is a Best Practice regionally – Armenia is probably the only country of the former Soviet Union (except Estonia) that may have soon a fully functional nation-wide e-governance system covering the whole country through regional administrations. This is a result of the following enabling factors.

One is the right policy choice to target regional (sub-national) territorial level as the primary entry point of introducing e-governance to public management. It was a correct choice because the capacity and capability of central and regional authorities to adapt technology are far higher than those at the local level. This diminishes the risk of failure substantially.

The second factor is the UNDP’s strategic decision to design a balanced e-governance system combining the effectiveness of public management with the responsiveness to citizens and businesses. A responsiveness component included e-services to address people’s needs in their interaction with regional authorities, as well as affordable access to the Internet through the Public Internet Access Points (PIAPs), which are integrated with e-GSTA technologically and placed in the regional administration premises with easy physical access. That allowed people to start using the Web almost immediately and to adopt the new technology quickly.

The next factor has been the important role of the PIAP staff, especially that of the e-GSTA Regional Coordinator, who became the main driving force of change (strongly supported by Regional Governors and Chief of Staff). The e-GSTA Regional Coordinators perform de facto the role Chief Information Officers (CIO) in regional administrations. The evaluators suggest considering to institute the position of CIO in the administration’s staffing table but not necessarily as a civil servant position in order to allow flexibility in providing competitive compensation packages¹⁷. Strong support provided by the Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration was the fourth success factor who in person advocated with Regional Governors and Chiefs of Staff to roll out the system.

Very important for success was an early focus on the needs of end-users – e-GSTA’s clients, with clear focus on real needs of people or businesses. Raising public awareness and training has been the main tool of knowing the end-users’ needs to respond to these quickly. There is evidence, for example, that online advertising has helped a local wine industry in Vayots Dzor to increase the sale of their wine and other products manifold. The sixth success factor is a common platform for

¹⁶ Excluding UNDP’s 3% of overhead costs

¹⁷ Even though UNDP should still provide for one-two years a salary supplement as an incentive given a highly qualified nature of their work.

all regional e-GSTAs with the same set of public services and with one common entry point through the Central Portal enabling horizontal linkages between regions. This is a first step in creating a basis for integrated services that would be available regardless of level this service is generated. And, finally, productive partnerships developed with practically all main actors working in e-governance in Armenia such as the USA (IREX/IATP, Harmony Project), OSI, Eurasia Foundation, have helped to succeed.

Linkage with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)

There are direct references to e-governance in the PRSP's – sub-chapter 6.3.1 'Public administration and judicial system reforms'. Two paragraphs—number 176 and 177—foresee that all laws are available electronically and that the deployment of e-governance technologies will create more trustful attitudes toward authorities through better public service delivery; e-governance also is increasingly seen as an anti-corruption tool. For example, electronic systems of registration and licensing (a PRSP objective) in business will not only create a better environment but will potentially prevent corruption through the elimination of direct contacts with public official. The projects under evaluation have already created a very good initial basis—human competency and technical infrastructure—to accomplish these and other PRSP objectives. The forthcoming mid-term review of PRSP in February 2005 should be used by UNDP to publicize its work in e-governance.

Summary conclusions

The advantage of the regional government is in its specific location between the central and local levels, with a reasonably small number of units that should be initially covered. Whereas the central government level is attractive in terms of the availability of qualified human resources and expertise, the local level is in larger need but is comprised of too many administrative units to be covered within relatively short period of time. It is therefore suggested to build capacities first at the regional level and then move to local communities.

In addition, local municipalities did not have in 2002 and still don't have now enough decentralized powers, as well as financial means for true self-governance. The regional level will remain for a long time a main venue where authorities interact with citizens and businesses and where ICTs could be most effectively applied to facilitate such interaction and service delivery. Also, it is a good level for expansion as and when needed both upstream in the direction of the central government and downstream closer toward the grass-root level.

In the present circumstances the regional administrations are not able yet to maintain and develop e-GSTA further entirely on their own although there is a certain degree of sustainability already in-built through the link to the work of the administration. The meetings with the Chiefs of Staff and e-GSTA Regional Coordinators at PIAPs in Shirak and Vayots Dzor confirm this. Moreover, the Chiefs of Staff and well the Deputy Minister of the Territorial Administrations requested the extension. If the project would stop then the previous valuable investment in the infrastructure and people's knowledge could be lost. UNDP and SDC are uniquely well positioned to make a real difference in few years. In reality, the project implemented in 2003-2004 is de facto only the first phase of the full-fledged integration of e-governance into the public sector management at regional and local levels, which is especially important with regard to the planned roll-out of the decentralization process in Armenia. The project needs in additional financing can be estimated at the annual level of some \$300,000 to 500,000¹⁸.

¹⁸ Two million dollars for three years would be the correct estimate of the financial needs in order to move to the local level needs once the regional level is fully implemented.

Summary recommendations

The evaluators strongly recommend extending the project for another two-three years to:

- to complete the full operationalization of all regional e-GSTA;
- to develop more services through the e-GSTA portals, with special focus on personalized social services for the most needy and vulnerable (women, the elderly);
- to train PIAPs personnel in effective Web-based business, socio- economic and d environmental information management; competency in the specialized sectoral information management on demand will be the key to the sustainability of e-GSTAs;
- establish strong and healthy partnership and cooperation agreements, between PIAPs and educational and research institutions, professional associations and the private sector (telecommunications operators, IT industry, media – print and broadcasting, banks, software developers, etc); this will be critical for bringing to the regional authorities and common people the best knowledge available with other institutions in a format acceptable for local use;
- develop strategy and approaches to move services to more local communities as long as e-GSTA get matured and possess sufficient capacities to expand downstream; piloting around select regional administrations (the most strong) will be the first step which should ultimately lead in 5-7 years to a complete coverage of Armenia with a flexible layer of a national e-governance system integrating central, regional and local levels with integrated and interoperable services;
- participate pro-actively in the mid-term review of PRSP in 2005.

Assessment of Outputs

Output 1 Web-based e-Governance system for territorial Administration (e-GSTA) customized, tested and operational in nine districts (marz) of Armenia

Status of accomplishment (achievements, failures)

Fully accomplished. The project component aimed at development and introduction of web-based content for the territorial administration of the Republic of Armenia has been implemented in accordance with the project proposal and the timetable. Web-content tool was created by Center for Information Technologies (CIT) on sub-contracting basis. This is reliable software with a very convenient interface and instruments for tracking attendance of the web-based resource and evaluation of the efficiency of the content. The web sites are well structured and include information on:

- internal structure of the territorial administration bodies;
- contacts of relevant authorities;
- contacts of the offices of other governmental bodies located on the territory of the district;
- orders (regulations) issued by the governors;
- information on private, non-governmental and educational organizations of the district.

The interactive instruments of the web content publishing tools provide web site visitors with the opportunity to submit their opinion concerning the decision of district authorities and online registration for meeting with district officials. The web sites also contain different application forms (for social cards, social assistance, etc) and information about the application procedures. News about the activities of the administration and the district community are regularly published on the web site. At the time of the evaluation web content entry was completed in five regions and the others were in progress.

Conclusions

The part of the project aimed at creation of the web-based content of district administration should be assessed as successful. The web-content tools are designed in a way to provide users with flexibility and user friendly interface. Powerful instruments of the web content tools are easy in day-to-day use and do not require special knowledge and long-term training. It is important that the web content management tools include tracking tools that enable the resource owner (the administration itself and the ministry as a supervisory body) to evaluate the web published resources to meet information needs of the visitors.

It is worth mentioning that the structure and configuration of the web-content tools are flexible and could be easily customized by users. Additional pages and interactive tools could be added by district administration web masters and in future the web-content generation platform could be modified for the use by the local-administration bodies (communities). The use of open source software is a reasonable choice, which preferably should be incorporated into overall policy of the Armenian government in area of e-governance and public information resources.

Recommendations

The project Output 1 (creation and establishment of e-governance web-content tools) is implemented efficiently and with high level of probability will be completed by the end of the project. No future funding would be necessary for sustaining web-content tool. Given the limited number of web programmers in the district cities some customer support service will be needed during the first year after the end project for normal use of web tools by district administration staff and, if necessary, customization for the needs of local-self administration bodies.

Output 2 Infrastructure and legal frameworks for improved interactions between the public and the territorial administrations are in place

Status of accomplishment (achievements, failures)

Fully accomplished in infrastructure and partially accomplished in the area of legal frameworks, with all preparations done. According to the project proposal UNDP envisaged to establish public access points in the buildings of nine regional territorial administration bodies. The institutional framework was not limited to technical only. At the time of the evaluation the process of the establishment of the institutional framework for e-government systems in the offices of territorial administration has been successfully completed in five of nine planned regions. The evaluation of the institutional framework of territorial administration e-government systems has been carried in districts of Shirak and Vayots Dzor. The visited territorial administration bodies have been equipped with local area networks connecting the officials' workstations with the network and web servers. The commendable fact is that the project team has not merely created technical facilities, but also assisted authorities to design new work processes in the light of new technologies. Relevant training has been carried out for the officials responsible for the generation of the web content including training in general administration of information resources.

Public access points have been established in five of nine target regions and three more PIAPs have been opened by the time of reporting. The role of the hired Regional Coordinators cannot be overestimated in each region in assisting both the officials and general public in the use of e-GSTA including training, i.e. gradual learning how to use e-government system and how to benefit from the official web content. Though the Regional Coordinators are not employees of regional administrations they work in close cooperation with the administration staff. According to Mr. Khachatour Pogosyan, Chief of Staff of Shirak Territorial Administration in future Regional Coordinators should become members of the administration staff. Technical staff

(assistants) also could become public employees and administer communication and computer facilities of the administrations.

However, according to the Chiefs of Staff of Shirak and Vayots Dzor districts the decision concerning the establishment of information officers' position should be taken at the national level (decision of Civil Service Council, development of position passports, allocation of budget funds) and might take one or two years.

E-government initiatives usually require formation of relevant legal and regulatory framework. Prior to introduction of e-GSTA the project team has carried out detailed study of legal and regulatory framework of e-government. The assessment has been carried out by Global Internet Policy lawyers on sub-contracting basis. Legal notice has been developed to ensure proper use of the content and protect the content developers from the third parties claims. However, the main part of the legal work aimed at development of the recommendations concerning the adoption of legal regulations fostering the development of e-government at the level of central and regional territorial administrations. These materials have been discussed during the workshop on legal framework of e-government in Armenia and the objectives of the government and civil society initiatives that would foster development of e-government in the country. One of the outputs of the component aimed at development of legal framework of e-government in Armenia was to better understand the difference between e-governance and e-administration that are often mixed by policy-makers.

Conclusions

The part of the project aimed at the establishment of institutional and legal framework of e-GSTA has been implemented successfully. The established institutional framework created a basis for operation of the e-government systems and provides an opportunity for citizens to benefit from the web content published by territorial administration bodies.

It is difficult to underestimate the role of public access points which are the only opportunity for the population to use Internet and e-mail services in some regions. Apparently, once created PIAPs centers will continue their operations in future providing populations with access to e-government content and web resource in general. However, the access to Internet strongly depends on the ability of territorial administration bodies to cover cost of connectivity. At the moment no administration could afford broad band Internet connectivity.

The project was primarily focused on the implementation of e-government rather than promotion of e-government policy, therefore part of the project related to legal and regulatory framework of e-government could not go further than development of general recommendations and ensuring legitimacy of the established system. Further reforms of relevant legal and regulatory framework are needed to promote legislation fostering the development of e-government in the country.

Recommendations

The institutional component of e-GSTA is well established and provides both the territorial administration bodies and the public with opportunity to use the web content created within the project framework. However, the cost of Internet connectivity will remain an issue of the sustainability of the project results. To ensure sustainability of the project results external funds will be needed. Evaluation mission recommends considering possible continuation of funding to cover the cost of the connectivity of the administration and public access centers.

The operation of newly established e-GSTA also strongly depends on the work of regional coordinators and their assistants. The introduction of the position of chief information officers in all governmental bodies is currently discussed by ITDSC and relevant recommendation would be shortly submitted to the government. However this process could take at least one year and will

require additional budget allocations and structural changes. Taking into account the importance of the work of regional coordinators at the initial phase of operation of e-GSTA the evaluation mission recommends to consider possible continuation of funding of the activities of project staff.

Both the issues of connectivity and the establishment of an institute of Information Officer require developing relevant policies. Though, the current project addresses somewhat ICT policy issues, more efforts are needed on the part of all stakeholders including key donors. In future, the project should pay more attention to policy issues including, but not limited to:

- strengthening political leadership in area of ICT and Information Society ensuring better coordination of different initiatives and development of NISP;
- development of legal and regulatory framework of e-government and Information Society in general;
- development of a strategy addressing the issues of connectivity through the expansion of non-for-profit telecommunication infrastructure.

Output 3 Improved capacity of the regional administration of the country, including big urban and rural municipalities, to provide online information and services to the public

Status of accomplishment (achievements, failures)

Expected to be fully accomplished the end of 2004. Establishment of e-government systems at the territorial administration bodies has substantially improved the accessibility of information about the activities of the administration, as well as public access to regulations issued by regional authorities. According to Mr. Levon Galstyan, Executive Director of E-Armenia Foundation the e-GSTA web sites are the most informative among other official sites (E-Armenia has recently carried out survey of official web sites and assessment of the official web content in Armenia). Unlike many official web sites the sites of the regional administration bodies contain more practical content such as application forms, regulations, contacts and other information that citizens and businesses need in their everyday life. The opportunities of using interactive tools on the sites of the territorial administration are also wider as compared with the web sites of the other governmental institutions.

However, the most important difference between the web sites of territorial administration and other official Armenian sites is the content generation mechanism. The content of the majority of the Armenian official web sites is generated by public relations departments and in some cases even by an individuals (usually one or two persons working for public relations department). E-GSTA is the first e-government system where content is generated directly by officials themselves and validated by a person responsible for final publishing. E-GSTA is innovative system which radically changes the overall work style of governmental officials and make them feel more responsible when communicating with the public without intermediaries. According to the officials of the territorial administration the introduction of e-GSTA has substantially reduced the volume of routine work such as answering phone and paper inquiries. According to Mr. Khachatur Pogosyan, Chief of Staff of Shirak territorial administration, e-governance changed the role of the civil servants and turned their work to policy task solution rather than performing routine paper work.

The introduction of e-GSTA has also improved the communication between the Ministry of Territorial Administration and regional territorial administration bodies as well as communication with relevant local-self administration bodies (communities). Though electronic communication services are not accessible for some communities, those e-GSTAs available in the cities have produced substantial benefits for all. Some of communities' staff members have attended trainings organized within the project framework and learned about the newly created web tools. Ability to use ICT applications varies from place to place, but some local self-administration bodies have

achieved great results in application of ICT in community administration including the use of ICTs in communication with the public. One of the best examples is the community of Hrazdan city where ICTs applications are used in utilization and planning of communal services, tax collection, budget planning and inquiry processing. However, as in many cases Hrazdan community has achieved high level of utilization of ICTa due to the personal commitment of the local authorities, enthusiasms of the community staff and support of donors. Development of national level policy and action programs remains the main problem in the widespread use of ICTs in public administration.

Conclusions

Judging from different accounts (administration, communities and the ministry), introduction of e-GSTA has significantly improved working conditions of the administration staff including the public communication, inquiry processing, and communications between different departments within the administration, as well as between the administration and local communities.

It should be noted that the introduction of e-governance system is radically changing the role of regional and community officials, i.e. re-focusing their work from routine processing of inquiries to task solution and policy development. This is well-understood and appreciated by the administrations' leadership and the Ministry. The project has great importance in sense of the promotion of relevant public policy, as it demonstrates the advantages of e-government. The success of the project should be used for promotion of national policy in area of e-governance and adoption of relevant legal and regulatory framework.

The project output has been fully achieved resulting in e-GSTA being in place and the system being relatively self-sustainable (as it was mentioned the cost of the connectivity and supporting staff remains an issue) and might be able to operate without substantial external funding in a few years but not immediately – there is still a lot to be done both in terms of new service applications and capacity building. However, project results should be considered as an achievement of a pilot initiative which should be supported and expanded to other areas of state governance and local administration. Special attention should be paid to development of enabling national policies, which is an important precondition for the sustainability of e-governance infrastructure and services.

Recommendations

Taking into account the fact that e-GSTA project is a pilot initiative which has a great political importance for the future development of e-government in Armenia the evaluation mission recommends the following:

- consider possibilities of future funding of the Internet Public Access Point connectivity and operation costs (staff and basic supplies), preferably through partnerships;
- consider possibilities of funding a number of pilots with local communities to demonstrate possibilities of e-governance at the level of local self-administration.

To achieve better result in the above mentioned areas the future projects aimed at development of e-government in Armenia should include substantial policy component. Coordination with other donors and common policy-oriented initiatives are also critical for sustainability.

Output 4 Increased awareness and capacity of the public to use the new medium of interaction with the administration

Status of accomplishment (achievements, failures)

Expected to be fully accomplished the end of 2004. The level of the utilization of the web resources of regional administrations has been evaluated using web content monitoring tools. The web site visits tracking tools demonstrated positive and constant growth of visitors' number. It is important to note that the number of visitors has substantially increased after the implementation of public awareness campaign carried out by the E-Armenia Foundation on sub-contracting basis. Public awareness campaign included distribution of brochures describing e-governance system of the territorial administration bodies, organization of press conferences in the target districts involving project coordinators, territorial administration officials and project team members, as well as production and broadcasting of informational and promotional videos.

According to the statistic data recorded by web resource visiting tools the most frequently visited resources are laws and regulations, state budget allocations and budgets of local self administration bodies. Attendance of those pages demonstrates the importance of e-government systems as a tool, which increases the administration's transparency. Other category of frequently used web contents is the information on social benefits and relevant application procedures. Though electronic inquiries have been recorded in the both visited regions, overall the interactive tools are not used as frequently as the above mentioned categories of web content. This is typical for countries where Internet penetration is relatively low and most of users have a sort of psychological barrier for the use of interactive tools. Meanwhile, according to the regional coordinators the number of public access users asking for assistance to manage interactive tools is slowly growing. Normally, major group of the public access users are young (18-28 years-old) people. However, according to the regional coordinators the number of middle age (30-38) people is growing, but not very fast. The most active users are students and businessmen.

Conclusions

As it was found from the web site visits tracking and statistics collection tools, the number of web site visitors is rapidly growing. Well-organized public awareness campaign has significantly increased the number of e-GSTA web site visitors. In future less massive public awareness campaign, such as, for examples, training for target group of population (teachers, businessman, NGO leaders and journalists) focused on specific e-governance tools (online public discussions, e-learning tools) might be useful.

Recommendations

In case of future funding the role of regional coordinators in educating users of public access point is extremely high. The services provided by the regional coordinators could be extended. In particular regional coordinators could carry out subject specific trainings for some categories of the populations.

Project ARM/01/001 'Support to Information Society and Democratic Governance' (funded by UNDP and implemented by the National Academy of Sciences, 2001-2004)

Delivery

As of the mission date, the delivery rate was almost 90% (\$143,632 delivered out of the budgeted \$160,240 within a larger project with Anti-corruption and Lobbying outputs that are not part of the evaluation). There are two activities, namely, e-Consulate and IS Assessment, that have been budgeted but not yet started and could be implemented next year.

Summary description

The project (approved in January 2001 with a programmable budget of \$525,540) has undergone since its approval significant changes in design and contents, which was reflected in the first substantive revision in May 2003. The project outputs and activities were constructed around three main objectives – (1) to establish a National ICT Centre and Regional Resource Facilities utilizing and further expanding Web-based and online services, connectivity and other functionalities of the Freenet, as well as developing necessary applications and ICT tools, mainly for online interactions; (2) to strengthen through the use of ICTs governance capacities of (a) central government bodies, (b) local self-governing bodies, (c) civil society organizations via the ‘electronic’ thematic groups (e-groups), and (3) to help formulate a national ICT strategy.

The above three objectives were split into ten outputs with over six dozens activities, which was difficult implement in dull. Nonetheless, in spite of the ambitious goals, the project has accomplished a lot, for example, the National ICT Centre was established (as planned); Regional Resource Facility along with the Public Access Point was successfully established in Lori (not in two regions as planned) which formed a full-fledged e-Governance System; Freenet Club was successfully developed as planned to serve new population groups; a draft national ICT strategy was developed as planned; thematic e-gropes established and operationalized as planned; various online tools developed and applied as planned as well. The Output Assessment Matrices (OAM) that annexed to the report provide a detailed overview of the project accomplishments.

The next project revision encompassed three main objectives broken down into fewer outputs (six) and much fewer activities (20 against 60 in the previous project’s version). The focus of the revised project objectives has shifted towards (a) promotion of the use of the Armenian-language web resources, (b) support to Community Information Centers in libraries (together with Eurasia Foundation), (c) continued support to the National ICT Centre in Yerevan, and (d) entirely new areas of e-Visa (jointly with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and e-Commerce (with the Association of Armenian Banks). The e-GSTA component received an additional external funding and grew into a stand-alone project ARM/02/012 (reviewed separately).

Key findings and lessons learned

Based on the available progress reports, project documents, interviews with public officials, partners and the project management, the evaluators conclude that the majority of the outputs have been accomplished.

Key recommendations

The evaluators support all the activities that have been implemented over the past year-and-a-half and recommend continue supporting them in 2005 as well. This concerns first of all e-Consulate (important as mentioned above in terms of personalized services), Information Society Assessment (this is rather short activity), and Freenet. The latter needs to be still supported by UNDP until the telecommunication policies have positively changed making access to the Internet more affordable. As practice shows, even with the elimination of the telecommunication monopoly the status quo may still last for one or two more years. UNDP may think to discuss closer partnership with the NATO’s Virtual Silk Road programme to benefit from their satellite connection, especially at the local level.

The participation of Armenia in the Universal Networking Language imitative¹⁹ could be continued too but a clearer exit strategy will be needed to this end. The mission support the continued assistance to the National ICT Centre which performs an important function providing

¹⁹ UN University in Tokyo

affordable access to many people, especially young. The National Academy of Sciences provides the maximum of in-kind input to host the Centre but it won't be able to maintain it yet on its own, again until cost of telecommunication services and infrastructure drops significantly. Yet, the Centre should start developing its business strategy to recover some costs by developing a range of new pay services, for example to organizations rather than citizens benefiting from its excellent location and the quality premises.

Finally, UNDP should not withdraw from the National ICT Strategy formulation process but instead take a lead and reinvigorate the process+. For example, the evaluators suggest to approach major stakeholders to organize an event in December commemorating the first meeting of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) held in Geneva one year ago under a some catchy title like 'One year after Geneva: What has been done and which way to go' put in the context of the WSIS Plan of Action and Declaration of Principles.

Assessment of Outputs

Output 1.1 National Centre for ICT and Democratic Governance (CICT) established and operational (2001-2003)

Output 2 ICT Centre open to public (2003-2004)

Output 2 ICT Centre open to public (2004)

Status of accomplishment (achievements, failures)

This Output is a continuation of the Output 1.1 under Objective 1 of the same project before the substantial revisions of May 2003. The Centre at the National Academy of Sciences was officially opened on November 11, 2003. The Centre is fully operational. Financial support was provided by the Local Soros Foundation and the Project Harmony to procure equipment. Fully accomplished.

Conclusions

The Centre is playing an important role in consolidating UNDP's effort in the advocacy of e-governance and public access to ICTs. This awareness raising and advocacy role can be most important if a stronger networking will be encouraged between regional PIAPs and e-GSTAs. Management of social and business information to meet informational needs in the regions and later in communities may become a main pillar of the Centre's future business Strategy.

Recommendations

The mission support the continued assistance to the National ICT Centre, which performs an important function providing affordable access to many people, especially young and also asserts its reputation as a venue of ICTD-focused meetings and training. The National Academy of Sciences provides the maximum of in-kind input to host the Centre but it won't be able to maintain it yet on its own until the cost of telecommunication services and infrastructure drop significantly. Yet, the Centre should start developing its business strategy to recover some costs by developing a range of new pay services, for example to organizations rather than citizens in the area of knowledge and information management in different sectors. The Centre can benefit more from its excellent central location and the quality equipment.

Output 1.2 Regional Resource Facilities (RRF), based in partnership arrangement, established and operationalized in selected regions (2001-2003)

Output 1 Web-based e-Governance system for territorial administration (e-GSTA) customized, tested and operational in 9 regions (Project ARM/02/012, 2002-2004)

Output 1 *'of Project ARM/02/012, 2002-2004) is reviewed separately under ARM/02/012.*

Status of accomplishment (achievements, failures)

Under Output 1.2 two Regional Resource Facility (RRF) were originally planned for establishment. In the first quarter 2001, the Governor of Lori passed a decision to allocate for the RRF two rooms in the Regional Administration premises (70 square metres). The bigger room was designated to be an Internet public access site (in cooperation with IREX/IATP); the Regional Administration of Lori covered 20% of renovation costs.

The Additional Protocol to the Memorandum of Understanding between IREX and UNDP (September 2000) was signed by the IATP Regional Coordinator in March 2001. The Additional Protocol specified the scope of inputs and responsibilities of both parties concerning the Lori public access site to be established at the RRF. A total of 12 PCs were installed (five provided by IREX). The renovation of the premises for the Lori RRF was accomplished in August 2001. Connectivity was provided through partnership arrangements with the Project Harmony of the USA government. Freenet dialup pool was extended to the Lori RRF, which served as a basis for the Lori e-GSTA – a more advanced model that has been replicated in nine more regions thanks to the support of SDC.

Fully accomplished initially in Lori and afterwards gradually in all regions (four will be ready at the end of 2004) in the form of e-GSTA.

Conclusions

The Armenian Association of Psychologists surveyed in 2003 local communities in Lori for assessing the main effective channels of information dissemination; its final evaluation was conducted in April-June 2004 and recommendations made to amend the regional portals and relevant maintenance policies. A survey report that was produced presents people's views about the use of ICTs but also links the e-governance system installed in the regional administration with citizen's needs in interaction with local authorities (self-government bodies). For example, 35% of the surveyed in different urban locations confirm either their need to contact local authorities but the number of those who had actually approached them over the past six months is less (27%), which may apparently mean lack of communication channels or other difficulties. It appears that social services on general and those related to employment are the key issues of people's contacts with authorities.

There was a tendency to approach the Head (*Marzpet*) in person, which according to the report demonstrates lack of trust in the capacity and capabilities of specialized units to deliver the sought service. Interesting that educated women contact authorities more often than men (60 to 40 ratio). Over 70% of the surveyed approved the use of ICTs to facilitate communication and other interaction between authorities and people even though that less than 20% use email and Internet. Important that the percentage of people who can use computers is almost 40%, which means that there is a competency gap in Internet literacy rather than a computer one (important for fine-tuning training and awareness campaign programmes).

Recommendations

The evaluators agree with report to undertake a deeper structural and functional analysis of the work of the regional administration's units and re-engineering thereof to take full advantage of ICT potential. A need in wider and regular training and awareness is another conclusion of the report. The evaluation team fully supports these important conclusions.

Output 1.3 *Freenet Club access sites established, for facilitating public access to Web-based information and knowledge (2001-2003)*

Output 1 Further development of the Armenian Freenet and Armenian language Internet tools (2004)

Status of accomplishment (achievements, failures)

Fully accomplish for Freenet; good progress in moving forward with the Armenian language Internet tools. Output 1 is a continuation of the Output 1.3 under Objective 1 of the same project before the substantial revisions of May 2003. In addition to the Freenet-related activities, additional components were added after the revision concerning the use the Armenian language in the Internet resources.

Freenet connectivity and hosting capacities were constantly growing during 2001-2003; the number of communication and Web services through Freenet Webmail interface for end-users was rapidly increasing as well. Some connectivity problems were successfully solved after lobbying Armentel. In May 2001, the Freenet Club was endowed with an entirely new and attractive web mail platform: email.freenet.am. An SMTP connection was established with the Freenet mail serves. Besides, it became possible to log into any POP server. The default language was Armenian, with English available

The Freenet Club activities saw an unprecedented boost in 2001. The overall number of <freenet.am> e-mail addresses exceeded 15,000. The number of the UN House Internet public site attendees was over 750. (Today, the respective numbers are: 24,500 and 4,500). A quality daily technical online support to the Freenet users is being provided; discussions are planned about exit strategy.

Universal Networking Language (UNL) is a global initiative of the UN University in Tokyo. In cooperation with the National Academy of Sciences and its Institute of Automation Problems the following has been accomplished: attribute sets for the Armenian language; morphological, syntactic and semantic attributes, as well as all possible flexions and their grammatical descriptions; preliminary plans for dictionaries with up to 5,000 words and rules of morphological and syntactic analyses; dictionary entries for different parts of speech; rules of morphological analysis; database for the dictionary and rules of analyses. By mid-December all the foreseen activities of the first phase were accomplished.

Conclusions

It is hard to overestimate the role of the Armenia Freenet in the 90s to make the Internet more affordable and available. This is still the case today and will last until the telecommunication service improves significantly and the connectivity cost drops enough to transfer this service to other organization(s).

The UNL initiative is at present at a more academic and research stage than in the actual practical use. But the evaluators consider such research into the Internet important as long as it eventually leads to concrete applications with high public good potential, which the evaluators believe is the case.

Recommendations

As practice shows that even with the elimination of the telecommunication monopoly the status quo may still last automatically for one or two more years. UNDP may think to discuss closer partnership with the NATO's Virtual Silk Road science programme to benefit from its satellite connection, especially for the benefit at the local level.

The participation of Armenia in the Universal Networking Language initiative²⁰ should be continued to see the first results but a clearer exit strategy should be developed in relation to how it's going to be put in practice from the end-user perspective, what will be the scope of its application and how its use will contribute to the formation of the Armenian Information Society. The involvement of NAS into cooperation with the UN University is another positive moment, which the evaluation team would like to support provided there are sufficient resources to continue the research. The evaluators suggest reviewing progress regularly in terms of the above-listed criteria.

Output 1.4 Software, applications and different ICT tools designed and put in use (2001-2003)
Output 4 e-Visa system fully in use, training and PR campaign carried out (2004)

Status of accomplishment (achievements, failures)

Any application and any software developed under other Outputs (e-GSTA, e-groups, Freenet, UNL, e-Visa, e-Payment) could qualify for Output 1.4 as well. The evaluation mission have take account of a lot of strong evidence of actually very well working online and Web-based tools to say that this Output is fully accomplished.

e-Visa initiative was innovatively developed and applied to attract to the country the Armenian Diaspora but not only. E-Visa software is fully completed. The FoxPro Database engine has been installed and configured to comply with the requirements of the consular department of the MFA. The software is now capable of accepting applications over the internet and record the collected data within the central e-Visa database. The project objectives have been fully accomplished with the currently available impressive opportunity to obtain Armenian visa electronically without ever visiting a consulate. Thousands of applications have been sent to MFA and thousands e-visas issued making the entire cycle fully transactional. There has been the most favorable feedback from those who have obtained their Armenian entry visa online without any hassle. This is a full-fledged e-government service demonstrating how much could be achieved with rather low cost if a service is on demand and there is sufficient interest and political will to do it.

Having practically fully completed e-Visa, the Armenian MFA would like to make a next step and regionalize it so that to attract more tourists and businesses not only to Armenia but to all the countries of the Southern Caucasus as tourists usually travel further to other countries of the Caucasus and beyond. The evaluators consider this idea interesting and promising and suggest exploring its possible inter-country implementation.

Building on the e-Visa success, a new initiative has been started together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – e-Consulate. The first phase of e-Consulate started with digitization of all application forms used by the population to request various services from the Ministry. E-Visa system also has showed the need be expanded to other, more comprehensive, e-consular services, for example making consular forms accessible to the public through the Internet and special kiosks installed in the Ministry's lobby. The forms, posted on a sub-site of the Ministry's website, would be downloadable with a possibility of completing online and printing out. By the end of December, a certain number of forms were tested on the provisional website, which will be accessible also from an Internet kiosks. Its implementation will further expand the range and scope of full-fledged e-government services available at the level of central government targeting this time not only expatriates but also a domestic audience.

e-Commerce component – e-Payment system – that was launched in February in partnership with ArCa, the association of local banks, an effective public-private partnership resulted in an online payment system to pay securely for utilities, telephone pre-paid cards, etc. e-Payment system is

²⁰ UN University in Tokyo

well functioning, useful and friendly. A new e-Shop is to be operationalized shortly. Clearly a Best Practice.

Conclusion

These two initiatives are a good example of how one success leads to another, which is so important in e-governance to have economies of scale. This success shows high level of capacity and available knowledge to succeed in e-governance and strengthen confidence of success. It is also an indication of the importance of political will in implementing e-government initiatives. Marketing was crucial – PR campaigns have been intensive during April-September 2004 through Armenian international periodicals (AIM, Nouvelles d'Arménie), websites and online media. Also a sense of a modern image is important to keep in mind.

e-Payment system was realized during a very short period of time. This is also a good lesson that successful e-initiatives are always expensive, too complex or too long. Actually, this is a preferred way of work through small-scale initiatives, especially at the beginning.

Recommendations

Complete e-Visa in 2005 by adding new features such as a tracking online system and the online processing of requests are is being put in place. The system possibly can be implemented at any border-crossing provided that there is Internet connectivity and sufficient computer literacy. Support e-Consulate until fully implemented.

UNDP should expand its issue-focused PPP platforms. For example, to use achievements in e-Commerce to promote it further and wider via a) public awareness campaign about the opportunities of e-commerce, b) training opportunities for the representatives of “traditional” businesses on how they can use e-commerce, and especially how to use ArCa payment system in e-GSTA (identification of users and payment of state duties for different type of services provided by the government).

Output 1.5 Sustainability of project achieved through resource mobilization and cost recovery schemes (2001-2003)

Status of accomplishment (achievements, failures)

There have been many examples of successful partnership and of actual mobilization of resources from SDC, Eurasia, Soros. There have been many cases of contributions in kind governed by many MoU and Cooperation Agreements with third parties initiated and effected by the project. There is at least one partner in each ICTD initiative. Especially good partners relations have emerged with the USA Harmony project, Soros Foundation, and of course with the main donor – SDC. In 2002, an agreement was achieved with the Swiss government to start a new e-GSTA project and implement a model piloted in Lori in all other eight regions of Armenia. The sustainability potential of e-GSTA is high and can be ensured within a few next two years but to make it happen more additional financial resources are needed for e-GSTA-2.

For all projects under evaluation all local counterparts and beneficiaries always provide contributions in kind to meet local costs and thus reduce UNDP financial input.

Conclusions

The project is on the right track and should continue partnership-focused strategies for greater sustainability.

Recommendations

Built into co-financed projects clearer sustainability benchmarks and milestones. Negotiate with SDC and other donors financing of a second phase of e-GSTA.

Output 2.1 Enhanced capacities for civil society organizations (CSOs) in the selected regions through the use of ICT for networking, knowledge sharing, and access to development opportunities (2001-2003)

Status of accomplishment (achievements, failures)

Significantly accomplished through rather innovative e-groups of professionals and population groups (digital peer-to-peer networks). This pilot indicative successfully established and operationalized several online communities – or thematic e-groups – representing different areas of human development concerns.

Initial meetings was held in March 2001 with future online community representatives who expressed strong interest. Other online communities were established in the following areas: Human Rights, Environment, Gender, Political Parties, Culture, with Small Business (jointly with ITC/UNCTAD), Human Development and AIDS joining at a later stage. Facilitators were recruited and trained by an international expert in facilitation and community building; a site www.forum.am was revamped; plans of action developed; photo gallery, chat room and bulletin board set up.

Initially, the created online community on average consisted of some two dozens members; the degree of ownership was different, for example, with a gender one being rather passive, while the environmental e-group was among the most active;

Also, there were some problems in the use of new technologies by people who used to work offline (Human rights group); to overcome adaptation problems face-to-face meetings were combines with online tools which included documents retrieval, voting, discussion of policy documents with the result of the debate posted on the Forum site. In March 2002, the pilot period was completed.

On the eve of the presidential elections, new online community emerged in mid 2003 – Youth, Modern Literature, Libraries, and Young Leaders which confirmed that UNDP catalytic input in this area was in demand and could be maintained without direct support from its initiator.

Conclusions

Interesting initiative which deserves further attention, especially as new e-GSTA-based tools emerge. There A valuable experience in peer-to-peer interaction online was accumulated which is important for any future activates in the area of e-democracy. More lessons should be learned why some communities worked better than the others.

Recommendations

Explore using e-GSTA platform for self-organized e-groups in similar development areas.

Output 2.2 Enhanced capacities for local self-governing bodies (LSGB) in the selected regions through the use of ICT networking, knowledge sharing, and access to development opportunities (2001-2004)

Output 3 Maintenance provided to Community Information Centers established in regional libraries (2002-2003)

Output 3 Maintenance provided to Community Information Centers established in regional libraries (2004)

Status of accomplishment (achievements, failures)

Accomplished through Community Information Networks (CIN) established and operationalized in 6 regional libraries. Funding was received from the Eurasia Foundation for establishing Community Information Networks at libraries in Vanadzor, Gyumri, Kapan, Armavir, and Noyemberian. The CINs were connected to the Armenian Freenet and constituted small centres for the community members to share information and knowledge on the urgent issues of community life. A regional monitor was hired who ensured the Internet connectivity between each of the libraries and the Freenet, prepared a generic web site that was further customized by the libraries themselves, and provided minimum training to the libraries.

In May 2003, CINs established their own online community of Library CINs and held discussions. Websites were improved; UNDP continued supporting CINs until the end of 2003. This Output is a continuation of the Outputs 2.1 and 2.2 of the same project (under Objective 2) before the substantial revisions of May 2003.

Conclusions

More experience in e-democracy. No special initiative was launched similar to e-GSTA at the community level (apparently the regional e-GSTA took a lead, which was a right decision).

Recommendations

None

Output 2.3 Performance of selected central and regional government agencies (CRGA) in providing public goods and services, is enhanced (2001-2003)

Output 4 e-Visa system fully in use, training and PR campaign carried out (2004)

Described above under other Outputs; some of them repeating.

Output 3.1 National ICT strategy and policies to promote the use of ICT for democratic governance and development based on participatory dialogue (2001-2003)

Status of accomplishment (achievements, failures)

Though no UNDP-advocated policies have been adopted, the evaluators believe that UNDP has done a lot to make it happen. There is a lot of evidence of the UNDP's constant effort to provide leadership via various initiatives, including preparations for the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva (December 2003). Some of them were successfully implemented but it did not influence rather complex political situation in this area and as a result Armenia does not have even today its formally approved NISP as many ICT advanced countries do. Political will of the country's leadership and often vested interest of major stakeholder from the government side appeared to be the weakest part of the equation. The government's IT Council was not able to fulfill its role in the formulation and adoption of national ICT strategy.

Main activities took place from mid-2001 and throughout 2002. UNDP initiated in June 2001 an ICT Consultative Group, with bilateral and multilateral members supporting the country in ICT-related issues (EU, DfID, USIAD, WB, OSI, Eurasia Foundation, Internews, IREX/IATP) and Government. As an informal mechanism this Groups ensured information sharing and

consultations between its members. The meetings were regularly held and a website set up www.ict.am/CG to exchange opinions through the ICT Forum.

In 2002, donor coordination follow-up meeting on ICT was held on February to discuss topics of common interest (training/educational, e-governance/government, ICT for SMEs, national ICT strategy or policy framework); an ICT matrix as a coordination tool was developed and discussed online.

The Group chaired by the Project, continued to be the main forum for advocacy and coordination of ICT initiatives, especially with regard to the country's participation in the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS); the ICT Matrix was regularly updated and a concept paper on ICT was prepared by the Project for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Conclusions

UNDP has done a lot but even more should be done. The task is what are the best way to it now when UNDP has behind it such successful projects as e-GSTA, e-Visa, e-Payment which must give a certain degree of clout to be more successful the next time.

Recommendations

UNDP should not withdraw from the National ICT Strategy formulation process but instead take a lead and reinvigorate the process+. For example, the mission suggest to come up with a proposal to all main stakeholders and organize an event in December commemorating the first meeting of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) held in Geneva one year ago under a catchy title like 'One year after Geneva: What has been done and which way to go' the context of the WSIS Plan of Action and Declaration of Principles.

Project ARM/99/005 'International Assistance Database for Armenia' (IADA; funded by UNDP and implemented by the Prime Minister's Office)

General: Post-implementation status

The project helped establish in 1999-2000 a system of external aid assistance www.iada.gov.am (both LAN and online versions). It also includes database which was filled in by 80% in 2000. The main client is the government and its analytical units. There hundreds if registered users. Last year the system was transferred to the Department of Finance of the Ministry of Economy and Finance. At the moment the system is being updated. However the main problem in the department (which is new) is lack of staff – at least 10 new staff are needed including for the system's management. It may take according to Head of Department about 1.5 years that the staffs are recruited and the system is fully operational.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the system is a good tool and the government would benefit from it a lot. However, over the past three years the system has not been working as it could work and has never been fully filled in with the information. Change of government structures has been delaying to make the system fully operational. In addition, it is always difficult to collect information about donor projects. It may take at least one or more years when it happens, which would be almost five years after the completion of the project. This raises a question about effectiveness of the investment made. Nonetheless the mission believes that the system could still be put at its full use and the government shows strong commitment to use it – the very fact that it has been maintained confirms its importance.

Recommendations

Should initiative brainstorming how the IADA data base could life (though it never died). There should be some workable options.

Management arrangements

The projects professionally managed under the leadership of Programme Manager highly respected by project counterparts and beneficiaries. The team receives strong support and guidance from UNDP country office. The ICTD team is small (Project Coordinator, Project Associate, ICT Specialist, e-Government Specialist, Logistic Clerk/Driver, and an outposted System Administrator) but efficient, friendly, knowledgeable and focused on results. With All the personnel is national with the total admin costs being maximum 10-15% against the managed programme resources. Project documentation is in proper order. Especially impressive is reporting, with all progress reports since 2001 and other major documents publicly posted on the Web. Audit reports are good though one of the projects has not been edited – recommended to do soonest. Also the evaluators suggest organizing urgently a meeting of the e-GSTA Steering Committee as the last one was some time ago.

PART III: Answers to the questions put in the TOR

The overall key conclusions are as follows:

Managerially:

- ICTD framework is needed to
 - inter-link all ICTD projects
 - inter-link ICTD projects with other UNDP programme under CPAP
 - establish ICTD service lines to other UNDP programme
 - formulate ICTD mainstreaming strategy to accomplish the above
- Produce additional outputs in the CPAP to reflect the above
- Train other UNDP staff and projects on ICTD and possible services

Programmatically:

- Information society project – good progress but policy issues need to be still addressed, new ways should be sought; e-Visa is most successful and innovative.
- e-Governance project – very successful and needed; needs to be extended for two-three more years (e-GSTA-2); so far, only the foundation has been created while then very building is yet to be finished and fully populated. This is only the first phase de-facto.
- Increased focus on public service delivery (through e-services) and closer linked to public administration reform and decentralization processes, especially in light of strengthening participatory democracy; the right balance is needed between effectiveness and responsiveness of regional authorities
- Increased emphasis on advocacy, awareness and capacity building, especially through of civil servants.
- Increased focus on policy issues to balance upstream and downstream activities; an event is suggested in December – One year after Geneva Summit.

In relation to (A) management of ongoing projects:

Is the project well on track according to its work plan (effectiveness)?

YES, delivery over 80% with expected 95-100% by year-end

How efficient is the project management (accountability and cost effectiveness)?

Accountability:

Yes -- ensured by the preparation of regular Notes to the File on all the changes and decisions taken and posting all the progress reports on the Website. Good team spirit.

Cost-effectiveness:

Yes -- Six staff manage two projects with the total cost of over 1 million dollars and extensive regional coverage, with two in the UNDP office and four in the project unit. Tasks are combined – e.g. finance and admin functions. Project office premises provided.

Is the project implementation sufficiently monitored and documented (monitoring)?

Yes – minutes of the meetings, Notes to the Files, quarterly progress reports, audit reports are available and kept in order. However, M&E needs to be strengthened as per the Guidelines.

Is the steering appropriate (steering)?

Generally Yes but the Steering Committee for e-GSTA could have met more often

In relation to (B) outputs of all three projects:

How do the results obtained compare with the expected ones?

ARM/01/001 – Generally corresponds taking into account two substantive revisions made; the main lesson is that the project was formulated in 2001 with too many outputs and activities (old UNDP format); in 2003 it was corrected – the project between became more manageable. There was also good consistency between the revised prodocs. Overall the projects have produced results they were expected to produce.

ARM/02/012

Fully correspond

To what extent is IADA used by the Government; for budgeting; by the donors; for determining ODA, etc.?

The database was kept alive but not really used over the past few years (caused by the structural changes in the government); the unit in charge is understaffed and not clear whether the full potential of the system. The government is interested in the system but its real commitment to use remains to be seen (more staff will be a good indicator). However, the mission believes that it can be used for PRSP and MDG monitoring.

To what extent the public access sites are used by the population in Yerevan and in the regions. How have they contributed to the development of the Information Society in Armenia? What has been the role of the Armenian Freenet in the same context?

Public Acces Points in Yerevan – is used well researchers and students but impact is limited within these categories. Very important is it's free. In the regions – very important as an introduction to the new technologies and knowledge. Well used. Impact will be higher when they will deploy many other services in addition to the access itself. National policies will determine the real impact to this end, especially in the telecommunications. Freenet contribution was enormous and crucial and UNDP should be further involved.

To what extent the *Universal Networking Language – Armenian* will be used for the development of the Armenian Internet?

At the moment it's still being developed and its application side should be further explored.

What has been the impact of e-Visa (e-Consulate)? To what extent has it contributed to the development of e-governance in Armenia?

Impact is big, most successful initiative and such pioneering experience has paved the way for much wider implementation of e-government services in other sectors. Very good feedback from those who obtained visa online. This has impact on the country's image as a country under modernization.

What has been the impact of the e-payments system? To what extent has it contributed to the development of e-commerce in Armenia?

Impact is not yet big but is growing and will be big in due time; it has created a full-fledged platform for e-banking and e-commerce, changed people's attitudes and cultures, and good experience of cooperation and partnership with the private sector. Really catalytic input.

To what extent the e-GSTA is used by the population in the regions? What has been its role in facilitating contacts between the population and the authorities? What has been the role of e-GSTA in providing for the population access to public information? To what extent has the e-GSTA contributed to the effectiveness of regional authorities?

Very positive on the all accounts. The system is being used by the population though the scale is still limited but growing – more services for people in social field are needed for greater use. The role is in expanding choices and opportunities in contacting authorities, access to government-held information increased (budgets, courts rulings). The effectiveness has increased as far as government-citizen communication is concerned, some functions and responsibilities of the staff have been streamlined. Cultural change in using technology and change in mindsets and attitudes is occurring and is most important.

Who uses and how regularly: IADA, public access sites, the Armenian Freenet, e-visa/consulate system, e-payment system, e-GSTA? What are the trends?

Different users. Freenet is the most and widely used by various categories; IADA – not clear, most likely by select donors and government units; PIAPs are well used and the time is usually reserved in advance; e-Visa is well used by diaspora and foreigners; e-GSTA is used by regional administrations and people but still at initial phase, its greater use will depend on the availability of online social actual services, capacity building, marketing and awareness, and monitoring; the trend is that e-governance is accepted by all and demand is growing especially when introduced.

Where there any (foreseen/unforeseen) external factors which particularly influenced the projects' work (positively or negatively)?

Negative -- Telecommunications situation is an obstacle (Armentel is a difficult partner for socially important initiatives complicated by lack of sound state regulation policies); lack of the overall national information society policies supported by all stakeholders.

Positive – strong support for e-government and e-commerce services from population, regional authorities, select ministries and the private sector.

In relation to (C) approaches and actors/partners

Does the approach chosen by the project implementing organisation reveal appropriate (Is this approach well suiting the specific context)?

Yes, but for future it is recommended to have a Programme Approach via the comprehensive ICTD framework under the new CPAP with more focus on mainstreaming services.

Do the projects collaborate with the right actors/partners?

Yes, the project pursues partners and actors pro-actively and the choice of the partners was very appropriate.

Does the selection of beneficiaries appear appropriate?

Yes, especially with regional administrations as the primary beneficiaries.

What are possible strengths/weaknesses in view of an institutional sustainability of the projects?

Institutional sustainability will fully depend on the policies that govern development of the information society at the national level in general and e-government strategy specifically. While there is strong commitment and partly ownership from regional authorities, many national policy-related activities are of an ad-hoc nature and the progress of the regional e-governance initiative will depend ultimately on the national policies. Also institutional sustainability will be better secured if regional administrations will introduce a position of Chief Information Officers, a new cadre of professionals to deal with the impact of technology on public sector management. Success or failure of public administration and decentralization reform will be another factor of whether the project results are institutionally sustainable. A National Information Society Policy and Action Plan are badly needed.

In relation to (D) relevance and context for each ongoing project:

Did the project context go through major changes since beginning of the project?

ARM/01/001 – Yes

ARM/02/012 - No

Are the impact hypotheses formulated at the time of the project planning still valid?

'Yes' – the information society is still a challenge and will stay for the years to come

Are the answers brought by the project to the needs and challenges identified still appropriate?

'Yes'

Does the project ensure sufficient coordination among stakeholders in the region of implementation (including local/national authorities)?

'Yes' but such a tool of project coordination as the Steering Committee established for ARM/02/012 should be fully implemented on a quarterly basis)

Are the project objectives (if achieved) expected to make a significant contribution to the realisation of the domain objectives?

'Yes'

Are the project objectives realistically going to be achieved in the foreseen lifespan of the project?

Mostly 'Yes', the objectives are achievable provided that the e-Governance project ARM/02/012 will be extended for another 2-3 years under the new CPAP and with new ICTD projects and services.

What will be the contribution of the project to the unfinished "transition agenda"?

Strengthening of participatory democracy and openness of authorities

In relation to (E) recommendations (based on the findings above), for each project:

Which are the main assets of the project?

Right and valid objectives addressing critical development challenges (closely linked to PRSP); strong support from the counterparts; wide partnership base, including the private sector; good project management under the leadership of project manager; cost-effectiveness.

Which are the project major shortcomings?

Information society policy issues have been pro-actively addressed but not still resolved

Is there a need for a major reorientation? If yes, in which direction?

No, but more mainstreaming of ICTD services in other sectors is advisable, as well as , AIDS, etc..., as well as in information management strategies indifferent sectors – business, social sector, environment...

Which are the main elements to be particularly taken into consideration during the planning of the next phase?

National policy issues and ICTD mainstreaming; more focus on public service delivery (e-services), training and awareness, and emphasis on community/municipality level, web information management, policy benchmarking and monitoring

Which are the major conditions (external factors) that are to be fulfilled if the next phase is to be successful?

Government's political will to formulate and implement a national information society policy and action plan agreed by all stakeholders, including addressing telecommunication issues (especially for developing community networks)

ANNEXES

Annex 1. Terms of Reference

Annex 2. List of persons met

Annex 3. Mission programme

Annex 4. Review of major documents

Annex 5. Output Assessment Matrices

Annex 1. Terms of reference

Terms of reference for the UNDP/SDC Joint External Evaluation/Review of the UNDP ICT for Development outcome, including its SDC-funded component *e-Governance System for Territorial Administration (EGSTA)*

The outcome to be evaluated—‘*accelerated progress towards e-governance*’—covers the period 2000-2004 and comprises the following component projects:

- International Assistance Database for Armenia (IADA)
- Support to Information Society and Democratic Governance (SISDG)
- E-Governance System for Territorial Administration (EGSTA)

IADA was funded by UNDP; SISDG was predominantly funded by UNDP and small cost-sharing contributions from the Eurasia Foundation (EF), the Project Harmony (PH), and the Open Society Institute Armenia Foundation (OSI); EGSTA was predominantly funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), under the auspices of its *Swiss Programme South Caucasus 2002-2006*, and a small contribution from UNDP.

Ongoing operations to be evaluated/reviewed

PROJECT NUMBER	PROJECT TITLE	EXECUTING AGENCY
ARM/01/001 (00011255)	Support to Information Society and Democratic Governance	National Academy of Sciences
7F-02348.01 (SDC) ARM/02/012 (00011260) (UNDP)	E-Governance System for Territorial Administration	Ministry of Territorial Administration

Associated finished projects:

ARM/99/005	INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE DATABASE FOR ARMENIA	PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE
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Overall purpose of the evaluation/review

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to determine to what extent the outcome has contributed to the positive change in the development situation of Armenia in the sphere of democratic governance and participation, particularly through e-Governance systems.

Evaluation/Review Team

The Evaluation/Review Team (ERT) will consist of an independent expert from Armenia, contracted by SDC, and one representative from UNDP.

- Mr. David Sandukhchian, Country Coordinator, Global Internet Policy Initiative, Head of legal department, Internews-Armenia
- Mr. Yuri Misnikov, ICTD Regional Programme Coordinator, UNDP

During the course of the evaluation/review, whether in the field or while the report is being drawn up, the members of the team must demonstrate common sense as well as independence of judgment, of SDC and UNDP. They must provide precise and direct answers to all points in the terms of reference, while avoiding the use of theoretical or academic language.

Objectives of the evaluation/review

The objectives of the review are the following:

- to assess the **management** of the projects;
- to quantify or qualify their **outputs**;
- to analyse the projects' **approaches** and the selection of **actors/partners**;
- (in relation to SDC's mid term strategy in the region) to check its **relevance** and the changes in its **context**;
- (based on the previous findings) to formulate precise and concrete **recommendations** for SDC and UNDP in view of a possible next phase.

Main questions to be reviewed

The evaluation report must cover the questions hereafter:

In relation to (A) management of ongoing projects:

- Is the project well on track according to its work plan (effectiveness)?
- How efficient is the project management (accountability and cost effectiveness)?
- Is the project implementation sufficiently monitored and documented (monitoring)?
- Is the steering appropriate (steering)?

In relation to (B) outputs of all three projects:

-
- How do the results obtained compare with the expected ones?
- To what extent is IADA used by the Government; for budgeting; by the donors; for determining ODA, etc.?
- To what extent the public access sites are used by the population in Yerevan and in the regions. How have they contributed to the development of the Information Society in Armenia? What has been the role of the Armenian Freenet in the same context?
- To what extent the Universal Networking Language – Armenian will be used for the development of the Armenian Internet?
- What has been the impact of e-Visa (e-Consulate)? To what extent has it contributed to the development of e-governance in Armenia?
- What has been the impact of the e-payments system? To what extent has it contributed to the development of e-commerce in Armenia?
- To what extent the e-GSTA is used by the population in the regions? What has been its role in facilitating contacts between the population and the authorities? What has been the role of e-GSTA in providing for the population access to public information? To what extent has the e-GSTA contributed to the effectiveness of regional authorities?
- Who uses and how regularly: IADA, public access sites, the Armenian Freenet, e-visa/consulate system, e-payment system, e-GSTA? What are the trends?
- Where there any (foreseen/unforeseen) external factors which particularly influenced the projects' work (positively or negatively)?

In relation to (C) approaches and actors/partners for the ongoing projects:

- Does the approach chosen by the project implementing organisation reveal appropriate (Is this approach well suiting the specific context)?
- Do the projects collaborate with the right actors/partners?
- Does the selection of beneficiaries appear appropriate?
- What are possible strengths/weaknesses in view of an institutional sustainability of the projects?

In relation to (D) relevance and context for each ongoing project:

- Did the project context go through major changes since beginning of the project?
- Are the impact hypotheses formulated at the time of the project planning still valid?
- Are the answers brought by the project to the needs and challenges identified still appropriate?
- Does the project ensure sufficient coordination among stakeholders in the region of implementation (including local/national authorities)?
- Are the project objectives (if achieved) expected to make a significant contribution to the realisation of the domain objectives?
- Are the project objectives realistically going to be achieved in the foreseen lifespan of the project?
- What will be the contribution of the project to the unfinished "transition agenda"?

In relation to (E) recommendations (based on the findings above), for each ongoing project:

- Which are the main assets of the project?
- Which are the project major shortcomings?
- Is there a need for a major reorientation? If yes, in which direction?
- Which are the main elements to be particularly taken into consideration during the planning of the next phase?
- Which are the major conditions (external factors) that are to be fulfilled if the next phase is to be successful?

Should these Terms of reference reveal too demanding, the members of the evaluation/review team should always keep in mind the "red line" expressed by the basic questions hereafter:

- "Do we do the right thing?"
- "What lessons can we learn from the way we are doing it now?"
- "Are we using the project outcomes the right way?"

Working methods

To accomplish the task, the members of the evaluation/review team shall make use of information available at SDC and UNDP headquarters and offices in the region and in the country. They will travel in the country and interview staff from both organisations, groups of beneficiaries, main actors and partner organisations, local/national authorities and local/international non governmental organizations.

The team will analyze the information and incorporate it in a coherent report that responds to the objectives of the evaluation.

Management of evaluation/review

The evaluation/review team will receive logistical and organisational support from SDC headquarters and regional/country offices and the UNDP Country Office and UNDP ICTD programme implementation Unit (PIU).

SDC HQ will provide necessary SDC's documents, assist the visa procedures in Switzerland, and support organising the international flights to and in the region (for SDC representative).

UNDP PIU and SDC regional & country offices will provide logistical support in the country, i.e. local transport and interpreters, if necessary. Generally, PIU is responsible for organising all interviews and meetings with the organisations/actors/beneficiaries that are requested by the evaluation/review team. In special cases (i.e. when an interviewee might be biased if the PIU organises the meeting, this will be indicated by the evaluation/review team), the SDC country office will organise the appointments. A first list of interviewees will be sent by the review team to UNDP PIU and SDC beforehand.

UNDP PIU and SDC organise and make available office working places for the team members.

Timetable (tentative dates)

By Sept. 6	Preparation: Review of documents, development of leading questions, elaboration of list of interviewees in Yerevan and regions ERT Provision of documents (upon request of ERT)	– –PIU
By Sept. 6	Organisation of meetings for ERT	–PIU
Sept. 6	Common preparation session for the team members in Yerevan	–SDC/UNDP
Sept. 6	Briefing with SDC and UNDP PIU staff SDC/UNDP	–
Sept. 6-12	Review/Interviews in Yerevan and regions (programme to be established in details by September 6)	
Sept. 14	Debriefing by the ERT	
Sept. 20	Elaboration of draft review report	–ERT
Sept. 25	Comments from SDC and UNDP to draft review report SDC/UNDP	–
Sept. 30	Elaboration of final review report ERT	–

The evaluation/review will begin on September 6, 2004 and end with the submission to and acceptance of the final report by SDC and UNDP, respectively.

Report

After presentation of their findings and recommendations to the main stakeholders during the debriefing session of September 14 (?), the reviewers will elaborate a draft **Evaluation/Review report** in English, including a "review abstract". This draft **Evaluation/Review report** will be sent to SDC and UNDP for comments not later than September 20 (?). All comments shall be sent to the team leader by September 25 (?) the latest. The final **Evaluation/Review report** is expected by SDC and UNDP on September 30 (?). This **Evaluation/Review report** will be handed out in three originals. As it represents a very important tool for SDC and for UNDP in the preparation of a possible next phase, it is crucial that the report follows the structure as below:

Cover page

- title of the evaluation report: “. . . (partner, country, sector)”,
- period of the review mission,
- name of the reviewers,
- indication that the report was produced at the request of SDC/UNDP, and that the comments contained therein reflect the opinions of the consultants only.

Table of contents

- Review abstract (3 pages maximum)
- implementing organisations,
- purpose of the projects reviewed,
- number(s) of the project agreement(s),
- country of implementation,
- length of the projects' phase,
- aim and length of the review,
- method used: documents analyzed, visits realized, timetable of meeting, etc.
- principal findings and recommendations, including “lessons learned”, in order of priority and self-explanatory.

Report main body

The main body of the report must start with a description of the method used and should be structured in accordance with the "Main questions to be reviewed" formulated here above.

Annexes

terms of references,

- documents consulted,
- list of people interviewed and sites visited,
- abbreviations,
- (map of the operation areas),
- other relevant documents.
- The report shall be submitted also in electronic format in Microsoft Word format.

SDC/UNDP, September 6, 2004

Annex 2. List of persons met

1. Vache Terteryan, Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration
2. Yuri Shukuryan, Vice-President of the National Academy of Sciences
3. Salpi Ghazarian, Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs
4. Shahen Hovhannissyan, Executive Director of the *Armenian Card*
5. Mher Hayryan, Chief of the International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Finance and Economy
6. Larisa Minasyan, OSI Armenia Foundation Executive Director
7. Levon Galstyan, E-Armenia Foundation Executive Director
8. Mr. Samvel Adamyanyan, Chief of Staff of the Regional Administration
9. Vahe Aghabegians, Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs

The mission has interviewed representatives of territorial administrations staff in Shirak and Vayots Dzor, as well as occasional users of public access points.

Annex 3. Mission programme

(C=confirmed)			Location
Monday, September 6, 2004			
C	11:30—13:00	Briefing with SDC & UNDP Common preparation session: Finalization of the TOR	ICT Centre
C	16:00—17:00	Meeting with Mr. Vache Terteryan, Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration	MTA
Tuesday, September 7, 2004			
C	10:00—11:00	Meeting with Mr. Yuri Shukuryan, Vice-President of the National Academy of Sciences	NAS
C	12:00—13:00	Meeting with Ms. Salpi Ghazarian, Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	MFA
C	15:00—16:00	Meeting with Mr. Shahen Hovhannissyan, Executive Director of the <i>Armenian Card</i>	ArCa
C	17:00—18:00	Meeting with Ms. Lise Grande, UN RC, UNDP RR	UNDP
Wednesday, September 8, 2004			
C	10:00—11:00	Meeting with Mr. Mher Hayryan, Chief of the International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Finance and Economy	MFE
C	12:00—13:00	Meeting with Ms. Larisa Minasyan, OSI Armenia Foundation Executive Director	OSI
C	15:00—16:00	Meeting with Mr. Levon Galstyan, E-Armenia Foundation Executive Director	ADA
Thursday, September 9, 2004			
			Field visit to Gyumri
	9:00	Departure	
C	10:30—12:00	Meeting with the Regional Administration of Shirak ➤ Mr. Khachatur Poghosyan, Chief of Staff of the Regional Administration	
Friday, September 10, 2004			
			Field visit to Yeghegnadzor
	9:00	Departure	
C	11:00-12:00	Meeting with the Regional Administration of Vayots Dzor ➤ Mr. Samvel Adamyan, Chief of Staff of the Regional Administration	
Saturday, September 11, 2004			
C	10:00—11:00	Meeting with Mr. Vahe Aghabegians, Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Marriott
Sunday, September 12, 2004			
Monday, September 13, 2004			
C	10:00—11:00	Meeting with Ms. Zara Allahverdyan, Senior National Programme Officer, SDC	SDC
Tuesday, September 14, 2004			
C	16:00—17:00	Debriefing by the Evaluation/Review Team for SDC and UNDP	UNDP (RR's Office)

Annex 4. Review of major documents

The mission has benefited significantly from a large number of documents pertinent to the projects under review. The mission observed that all the documents are well written, kept in good order and properly filed. The review has revealed that UNDP has Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation Agreements present a substantial part of the project-related documentation, which is good evidence of UNDP's pro-practice partnership strategy to reduce costs and increase impacts. The project management was not only able to enter into productive partnership relations in 2002 but, most importantly, to maintain them and further develop over the next three years of the implementation process.

Memoranda of Agreement/Understanding

MoA between the Armenian Research and Educational Networking Association (ARENA Foundation) and UNDP, 2002.

Important document enabling the ICT Centre in Yerevan (created under the ARM/01/001 project) benefit from virtually free access to the Internet via ARENA²¹ at the required bandwidth, which is very important for the project successful implementation in the environment of monopolistically high prices on communication services in Armenia maintained at the moment by Armentel. In addition, the MoA allows UNDP be part of ARENA's decision making process through the Foundation's membership (UNDP pays an annual membership contribution of \$100 which is a negligible cost given the benefits available to the project). The MoA is valid until April 2005.

Cooperation Agreement and MoU on cooperation with Project Harmony-Armenia (PH-A)²² and UNDP²³, 2001-2004

First Cooperation Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding have been prepared and signed in 2001 to formalize cooperation with PA-H project aimed at creating Computer Centers in Armenian schools and connecting these to the Internet. The purpose of cooperation with PA-A was to accomplish objectives of UNDP ISSHD and ICT for Democracy projects at lower costs by providing Internet connectivity for UNDP recipients in Lori and other locations through the access to fibre optic wires for the latter project and creating Internet and Computer Centers in the schools rehabilitated with the former project. The purchase and lease of UNDP vehicle to PH-A was a cost-effective deal to accomplish the project's objectives. In 2003 the Cooperation Agreement was extended to reflect a cost-sharing contribution of \$17,510 from PH-A to purchase workstations for the ICT Centre in Yerevan. The mission has found this cooperation beneficial for UNDP, which ultimately resulted in additional resources. In February 2004, a new Cooperation Agreement was concluded with the purpose to expand connectivity to other UNDP ICT Centers.

MoA between the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia and UNDP on the creation of ICT Centre, 2002.

The Center was established within the framework of Support to Information Society project (ARM/01/001) and the MoU governs the Centre's on-going and future operations for better sustainability. For example, the government counterpart pledged to maintain the same standards of the Center functioning for at least ten years after the project ends. *The mission noticed, with satisfaction, that UNDP properly consulted with the UNDP headquarters regarding various legal issues prior to entering into the MoU.*

²¹ ARENA's connectivity to the Internet is financed by the NATO 'Virtual Silk Road' project, which UNDP helps implement by hosting and maintaining the satellite dish.

²² Funded by the US Department of State

²³ Involving initially also 'Integrated Support to Sustainable Human Development (ISSHD)' project, in addition to 'Support to Information Society and Democratic Governance (ICT for Democracy)' project

MoU between the International Research and Exchange Board (IREX) and UNDP, 2000-2002

UNDP entered into cooperation with the IREX's Internet and Training Programme (IATP) to decrease costs of Internet connectivity for UNDP's beneficiaries through sharing of the Internet channel costs and for better overall coordination in this and related areas, for instance in purchasing equipment for access centers. Three additional Protocols to the MoU were signed afterwards to reflect on sharing the expenses within the ARM/01/001 project activities in Vanadzor and Lori.

Project documents, budgets and Atlas impact

For ARM/01/001 and ARM/02/012), 2001-2004

Project documents are kept in good order, with budget revisions made regularly, and UNDP rules and procedures concerning project document format followed. The mission understands that the introduction of Atlas has been relatively smooth, with all the all two projects under review now being entered into Atlas. For example, the project ARM/01/001 and ARM/02/012 have been transformed into Atlas project ID 00011255 and ID 11260 respectively. The former has undergone substantive changes due to the introduction of the programme approach and associated output budgeting principles, as well as introduction of a new component on Information Society Assessment with related increase in budget (the latest budget revision is dated as of June 2004, the project substantive revision²⁴ was approved in May 2003). The latter has remained unchanged in its scope and budget (the latest budget revision dated 9 August 2004).

The transition to Atlas with its new format of project and activity presentation has led to a certain consolidation of the projects. It has been done mainly through re-formulation substantively the same pre-Atlas outputs and activities (contained in the Project Results and Resources Framework), which has been a positive development in the mission's view. For example, 12 activities pertaining to four outputs of the "old" project ARM/02/012 have been replaced with only four key activities (including a separate one on Monitoring and Evaluation which should be praised) under the Atlas Annual Work Plan; the 'old-new activity ratio' for the project ARM/01/001 is 7 to 21. In addition, the Atlas output-oriented budgeting philosophy provides for far better opportunity for results monitoring as apposed to the pre-Atlas input-budgeting system.

In the mission view, the merger of the previous outputs and activities into present Atlas AWP key activities within just one output being now tantamount to the project itself has been the most optimal solution both from the results management and operational points of view. The projects' history shows that there must be a certain degree of flexibility in project implementation and objective-setting, particularly in such a new and dynamic field as ICT and its impact in society and governance.

Monitor whether the key activities are formulated at the best level of aggregation to support the expected outcome and whether the key outputs are not too complex (substantively and managerially or in implementation terms) to become a separate output.

Cost-sharing agreements

With OSI Assistance Foundation (OSIAF), 2003

²⁴ Caused by the introduction of two new components (e-Visa and library-based Community Information Centers in partnership with Eurasia Foundation) and the transformation of the e-governance system for territorial (regional) administrations into a stand-alone Swiss-funded project ARM/02/012.

A small but useful contribution of \$8,150 was made by OSIAF to purchase ten computers of the ICT Center at the National Academy of Sciences). The mission believes that it was worthwhile to do in order to strengthen partnership with one of the major actor in ICT in Armenia in spite of possibly high transaction and reporting costs due to low amount of the contribution.

With the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), 2002

A significant and very important contribution from the Swiss government that has allowed UNDP to expand its activities beyond ARM/01/001 to focus more on the use of the e-governance in the region, drawing on the valuable and successful piloting experience in Lori. The contribution of \$525,000 has enabled to introduce the system in six regions as of the mission date, with all other regions to be covered by the end of 2004. The Swiss government's input has helped to create de-facto a national e-governance system for good governance at the regional level.

Minutes and other records

Minutes of the project ARM/02/012 Steering Committee meetings that took place in March and October 2003. These meetings provided an important for main stakeholders to guide the project implementation at its most crucial phases. The main points, for example, of the October 2003 meeting were: 1) the expansion of the ICT Public Access Points to other regions, 2) the sustainability of the positions of e-Governance System Administrators after the expiration of its contract with UNDP, 3) public awareness of the system, with a need for cooperation with PH-A stressed to this end (e.g. educating school teachers by e-Governance Coordinators). The mission considers the discussion substantive and strategically important. Also, a decision was taken to review the project.

The Project manager has developed a good habit of drafting Notes to the File informing the projects staff and UNDP country office about decisions taken and discussions held. This is particularly useful to reflect on some important ongoing changes in workplans such as, for example, a decision taken in 2002 to include in the project of ARM/01/001 a new e-Visa component and allocate appropriate funds or the Note regarding a partnership with e-Armenia Foundation (in 2004). The mission has been able to find the Notes to the File documenting all major changes in the workplans. The mission recommends continuing a good managerial practice of preparing Notes to the File and keep records of the important meetings held for future references.

Audit reports

The mission takes a note, with satisfaction, that project ARM/01/001 has been independently audited on an annual basis. The audit reports are favorable, which confirms the mission's opinion about the project good management. Project ARM/02/012 has not been yet edited, and the mission urges to do it ASAP in order to report to the donor how effectively UNDP administers its cost-sharing contribution. **ARM/02/012 should be audited.**

Advocacy materials

The project management pays due attention to raising awareness about project results, locally and internationally, working with media, issuing press-releases, preparing articles, printing guides, calendars, etc. For example, the mission has come across of the Press-release announcing the launch of the on-line forums in 2001; articles in the UNDP global editions: one in *Newsfront* entitled "Armenia boasts access to Internet and e-governance" (2003) and two in *Choices*— "Free e-mail service creates online community in Armenia" (2003) and "Armenia will use information technology to promote democracy" (2001); the

opening of the ICT Center was well publicized with reports in local media (Nov 2003); Armenia was featured in the UNDP regional ICTD Best Practice publication with the article “A Browsing Democracy: Supporting Information Society and Democratic Governance in Armenia” describing the both projects ARM/01/001 and ARM/02/012.

Cooperation with the E-Armenia Foundation just recently selected to build awareness about the e-GSTA has already resulted in a manual in Armenian about the use of the regional e-Governance system (can be used for both self-learning and group training). The mission is also aware about other advocacy materials. In addition, the mission understands that there have been two publications about e-Visa in prominent international media in the USA.

This area of project implementation is most important and should be even further strengthened. For instance, annual reports, newsletters, survey and monitoring results, users' feedback could be produced and widely disseminated. The mission reviewed two annual project reports (APR) of ARM/02/012 'e-Governance system for territorial administration' (2003) and ARM/01/001 'Support to Information Society and Democratic Governance' (2002). These two APRs vary in length, format and detail due to the changes in UNDP corporate Monitoring & Evaluation reporting but provide generally good overview of the project accomplishments in terms of its outputs and activities. However the mission believes that a public and less formal version could be produced for the general public as well, with supporting evidence and success stories. A special dissemination strategy should be prepared as well to increase impact of the publication.

Results monitoring materials

Increase the coverage and frequency of awareness, training and monitoring activities, especially for e-GSTA project (ARM/02/012). The mission also recommends establishing a better link between workplans and status monitoring as the one of June 4, 2003 in which project components were monitored in terms of their current status and supplemented by a useful description of the status of ongoing and forthcoming activities. As mentioned above under 'Advocacy materials', it is advisable to supplement UNDP formal M&E procedures with public annual reports in printing form containing specific cases, stories and lessons learned from the project implementation.

Annex 5. Output Assessment Matrices

SUPPORT TO INFORMATION SOCIETY AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE PROJECT (ARM/01/001)

IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE 1: CREATE A NATIONAL CENTRE FOR ICT AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND REGIONAL RESOURCE FACILITIES

ASSESSMENT OF THE OUTPUTS 2001-2003 – **OUTPUT 1.1 OF 1.5**

Output	Activity	Evidence and Status of Accomplishment	Perspectives of completion
<p>Output 1.1 National Centre for ICT and Democratic Governance (CICT) established and operational</p>	<p><i>Activity 1.1.1</i> Prepare institutional framework for CICT operationalization (network architecture, organizational structure, legal status)</p> <p><i>Activity 1.1.2</i> Operationalize CICT</p>	<p>Fully accomplished – in 2003.</p> <p>→ The Centre was established in the first quarter of 2003 in the premises provided by the National Academy of Sciences (with the LAN installed).</p> <p>→ Officially, the Center was inaugurated in November 2003, with participation of the President of the National Academy of Sciences and Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Centre is fully operational.</p> <p>→ Financial support was provided by the Local Soros Foundation and the Project Harmony to procure equipment.</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>Output 1.2 Regional Resource Facilities (RRF) , based in partnership arrangement, established and operationalized in selected regions</p> <p>Output 1.3 Freenet Club access sites established, for facilitating public access to Web-based information and knowledge</p> <p>Output 1.4. Software, applications and different ICT tools designed and put in use</p> <p>Output 1.5. Sustainability of project achieved through resource mobilization and cost recovery schemes</p>			

SUPPORT TO INFORMATION SOCIETY AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE PROJECT (ARM/01/001)

IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE 1: CREATE A NATIONAL CENTRE FOR ICT AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND REGIONAL RESOURCE FACILITIES

ASSESSMENT OF THE OUTPUTS 2001-2003 – OUTPUT 1.2 OF 1.5

Output	Activity	Evidence and Status of Accomplishment	Perspectives of completion
<p>Output 1.2 Regional Resource Facilities (RRF) , based in partnership arrangement, established and operationalized in selected regions</p>	<p>Activity 1.2.1 Prepare institutional framework for RRF operationalization (network architecture, organizational structure, legal status) Activity 1.2.2 Prepare and conclude Terms of Partnerships for RRFs Activity 1.2.3 Operationalize RRFs (select premises, procure equipment, select staff, connect RRFs and project equipment centre)</p>		
<p>Output 1.3 Freenet Club access sites established, for facilitating public access to Web-based information and knowledge Output 1.4. Software, applications and different ICT tools designed and put in use Output 1.5. Sustainability of project achieved through resource mobilization and cost recovery schemes</p>			

SUPPORT TO INFORMATION SOCIETY AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE PROJECT (ARM/01/001)

IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE 1: CREATE A NATIONAL CENTRE FOR ICT AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND REGIONAL RESOURCE FACILITIES

ASSESSMENT OF THE OUTPUTS 2001-2003 – OUTPUT 1.3 OF 1.5

Output	Activity	Evidence and Status of Accomplishment	Perspectives of completion
<p>Output 1.1 National Centre for ICT and Democratic Governance (CICT) established and operational</p> <p>Output 1.2 Regional Resource Facilities (RRF) , based in partnership arrangement, established and operationalized in selected regions</p>	<p>Activity 1.3.1 Select partners and premises for regional and local Freenet Club public access sites</p> <p>Activity 1.3.2 Conclude partnership agreements with other international organizations</p> <p>Activity 1.3.3 Procure and install software and hardware for regional access sites</p>	<p>Fully accomplished. Freenet connectivity and hosting capacities were constantly growing during 2001-2003; the number of communication and Web services through Freenet Webmail interface for end-users was rapidly increasing as well. Some connectivity problems were successfully solved after lobbying Armentel.</p> <p>→ The Freenet Club activities saw an unprecedented boost in 2001. The overall number of freenet.am e-mail addresses exceeded 15,000. The number of the UN House Internet public site attendees was over 750. (Today, the respective numbers are: 24,500 and 4,500).</p>	<p>N/a</p>
<p>Output 1.3 Freenet Club access sites established, for facilitating public access to Web-based information and knowledge</p>	<p>Activity 1.3.4 Establish connectivity for regional access sites</p> <p>Activity 1.3.5 Expand ICT services provided to Freenet Club members through public access and dial-up (establish dialup access points at RRFs). Expand dialup capacities to project equipment centre, develop and expand ICT services via dialup)</p>	<p>→ In May 2001, the Freenet Club was endowed with an entirely new and attractive web mail platform: email.freenet.am. An SMTP connection was established with the Freenet mail serves. Besides, it became possible to log into any POP server. The default language was Armenian, with English available.</p> <p>→ In 2001, the Armenian Freenet site was revamped adding addition user-friendly tools.</p> <p>→ At the beginning of 2003, two more lines E1 were added to the Freenet dial-up pool thus bringing capacity of simultaneous connections up to 90, with almost 20,000 users.</p>	
<p>Output 1.4. Software, applications and different ICT tools designed and put in use</p> <p>Output 1.5. Sustainability of project achieved through resource mobilization and cost recovery schemes</p>			

SUPPORT TO INFORMATION SOCIETY AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE PROJECT (ARM/01/001)

IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE 1: CREATE A NATIONAL CENTRE FOR ICT AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND REGIONAL RESOURCE FACILITIES

ASSESSMENT OF THE OUTPUTS 2001-2003 – **OUTPUT 1.4 OF 1.5**

Output	Activity	Evidence and Status of Accomplishment	Perspectives of completion
<p>Output 1.1 National Centre for ICT and Democratic Governance (CICT) established and operational</p> <p>Output 1.2 Regional Resource Facilities (RRF) , based in partnership arrangement, established and operationalized in selected regions</p> <p>Output 1.3 Freenet Club access sites established, for facilitating public access to Web-based information and knowledge</p>	<p>Activity 1.4.1 Identify specific needs of e-groups (thematic groups) in ICT tools and applications</p> <p>Activity 1.4.2 Design and test applications and tailored ICT tools (intranets, discussion groups, web-pages)</p> <p>Activity 1.4.3 Prepare training kits for the use of the designed applications and ICT tools</p>	<p>Fully accomplished initially for Lori and afterwards where the Regional Resource Center was established with various Web-based communication and information services. On that basis, new software system and applications were developed allowing to interact regional administration of Lori with the general public. Other applications were developed for e-groups as well.</p> <p>→ A new web-based e-governance system for territorial administration was developed for the Regional Administration of Lori;</p> <p>→ With the new content developed, a new e-governance system for territorial administration was launched in the Region of Lori in December 2002. The system facilitated the interaction between the regional authorities and the population, and enhanced provision of information and services to the public through modern technology.</p>	<p>N/a</p>
<p>Output 1.4. Software, applications and different ICT tools designed and put in use</p>	<p>Activity 1.4.4 Prepare guidelines and manuals on ICT tools</p> <p>Activity 1.4.5 Prepare online training modules</p> <p>Activity 1.4.6 Train RRFs and e-group members in the use of designed applications and ICT tools</p>	<p>→ In 2003, under the new Swiss-funded project, technical description of e-GSTA software was developed and approved by the Project Steering Committee for replication in other regions of Armenia</p>	
<p>Output 1.5. Sustainability of project achieved through resource mobilization and cost recovery schemes</p>			

SUPPORT TO INFORMATION SOCIETY AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE PROJECT (ARM/01/001)

IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE 1: CREATE A NATIONAL CENTRE FOR ICT AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND REGIONAL RESOURCE FACILITIES

ASSESSMENT OF THE OUTPUTS 2001-2003 – **OUTPUT 1.5 OF 1.5**

Output	Activity	Evidence and Status of Accomplishment	Perspectives of completion
<p>Output 1.1 National Centre for ICT and Democratic Governance (CIGT) established and operational</p> <p>Output 1.2 Regional Resource Facilities (RRF) , based in partnership arrangement, established and operationalized in selected regions</p> <p>Output 1.3 Freenet Club access sites established, for facilitating public access to Web-based information and knowledge</p> <p>Output 1.4. Software, applications and different ICT tools designed and put in use</p>	<p><i>Activity 1.5.1</i> Design and implement selected web-based advocacy tools for resource mobilization</p> <p><i>Activity 1.5.2</i> Document and disseminate successful experiences to mobilize resources</p> <p><i>Activity 1.5.3</i> Promote information on the successful use of ICT in strengthening governance from regional and global perspectives</p>	<p>Fully accomplished – in 2002, an agreement was achieved with the Swiss government to start a new project and implement a model piloted in Lori in all other eight regions of Armenia. The sustainability of the project was ensured for the next two years and more additional financial resources were made available to strengthen sustainability.</p> <p>→ The Swiss Government provided financial support in the amount of USD 525,000 to start a new project ARM/02/012 ‘e-Governance system for territorial administration’ (2002-2004) through the Swiss Agency of Development and Cooperation (SDC); under review of the mission as well.</p>	<p>100% of completion is expected by the end of 2004</p>
<p>Output 1.5. Sustainability of project achieved through resource mobilization and cost recovery schemes</p>	<p><i>Activity 1.5.4</i> Design, establish and gradually introduce cost-recovery schemes for all services provided by the project</p>	<p>→ Though the mission does not view cost-recovery an important issue as long as additional resources were successfully mobilized, nonetheless some costs were recovered through partnering with various organizations which covered the cost of equipment (IREX, Soros, Project Harmony, for example) or regional administrations and the National Academy of Sciences providing input in kind (premises, water, electricity, heating) and participating in renovation costs (such as the regional administration of Lori).</p>	

SUPPORT TO INFORMATION SOCIETY AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE PROJECT (ARM/01/001)

IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE 2: STRENGTHEN GOVERNANCE CAPACITY OF CIVIL ORGANIZATIONS, LOCAL SELF-GOVERNING BODIES, REGIONAL AND CENTRAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS THROUGH THE USE OF ICT

ASSESSMENT OF THE OUTPUTS 2001-2003 – **OUTPUT 2.1 OF 2.4**

Output	Activity	Evidence and Status of Accomplishment	Perspectives of completion
<p>Output 2.1 Enhanced capacities for civil society organizations (CSOs) in the selected regions through the use of ICT for networking, knowledge sharing, and access to development opportunities</p> <p>Output 2.2 Enhanced capacities for local self-governing bodies (LSGB) in the selected regions through the use of ICT networking, knowledge sharing, and access to development opportunities</p> <p>Output 2.3 Performance of selected central and regional government agencies (CRGA) in providing public goods and services, is enhanced</p> <p>Output 2.4 Relevant initial content for the discussion forums, Intranets, web-pages and newsletters prepared and introduced to the thematic groups</p>	<p>Activity 2.1.1 Identify and select CSOs which will constitute e-groups at central and regional levels</p> <p>Activity 2.1.2 Establish connectivity between participating CSOs and respective RRF or project central communication unit</p> <p>Activity 2.1.3 Train participating CSOs for a gradual and effective use of ICT tools</p> <p>Activity 2.1.4 Establishment of thematic e-groups interacting through e-mail</p> <p>Activity 2.1.5 Create discussion forums for participating CSOs by thematic groups</p> <p>Activity 2.1.6 Develop intranet systems for participating CSOs by thematic groups for increased exchange information and knowledge</p> <p>Activity 2.1.7 Support the use of ICT through creation of Webpages for participating CSOs to “export” information, including for marketing purposes</p> <p>Activity 2.1.8 Support to CSOs thematic groups for the creation of newsletters</p> <p>Activity 2.1.9 Develop national e-network of CSOs leading to a possible formation of a national association</p>	<p>Significantly accomplished through the relatively successful pilot initiative that established and operationalized several online communities – or thematic e-groups – representing different areas of human development concerns. A valuable experience of peer-to-peer interaction online was accumulated which is important for any future activates in the area of e-democracy.</p> <p>→ Initial meetings held in March 2001 with future online community representatives who expressed strong interest;</p> <p>→ The online communities were established in the following areas: Human Rights, Environment, Gender, Political Parties, Culture, with Small Business (jointly with ITC/UNCTAD), Human Development and AIDS joining at a later stage;</p> <p>→ Facilitators were recruited and trained by an international expert in facilitation and community building; a site www.forum.am was revamped; plans of action developed; photo gallery, chat room and bulletin board set up;</p> <p>→ Initially, the created online community on average consisted of some two dozens members; the degree of ownership was different, for example, with a gender one being rather passive, while the environmental e-group was among the most active;</p> <p>→ Also, there were some problems in the use of new technologies by people who used to work offline (Human rights group); to overcome adaptation problems face-to-face meetings were combines with online tools which included documents retrieval, voting, discussion of policy documents with the result of the debate posted on the Forum site.</p> <p>→ In March 2002, the pilot period was completed.</p> <p>→ On the eve of the presidential elections, new online community emerged in mid 2003 – Youth, Modern Literature, Libraries, and Young Leaders which confirmed that UNDP catalytic input in this area was in demand and could be maintained without direct support from its initiator.</p>	<p>n/a</p>

SUPPORT TO INFORMATION SOCIETY AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE PROJECT (ARM/01/001)

IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE 2: STRENGTHEN GOVERNANCE CAPACITY OF CIVIL ORGANIZATIONS, LOCAL SELF-GOVERNING BODIES, REGIONAL AND CENTRAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS THROUGH THE USE OF ICT

ASSESSMENT OF THE OUTPUTS 2001-2003 – **OUTPUT 2.2 OF 2.4**

Output	Activity	Evidence and Status of Accomplishment	Perspectives of completion
<p>Output 2.1 Enhanced capacities for civil society organizations (CSOs) in the selected regions through the use of ICT for networking, knowledge sharing, and access to development opportunities</p>	<p><i>Activity 2.2.1</i> Identify and select LSGBs which will constitute e-groups at the local level</p> <p><i>Activity 2.2.2</i> Establish connectivity between participating LSGB and respective RRF</p> <p><i>Activity 2.2.3</i> Train participating LSDB staff for a gradual and effective use of different ICT tools</p>	<p>Generally accomplished through Community Information Networks (CIN) established and operationalized in 6 regional libraries. The mission understands that to a large extent this as well Outputs 2.3 and 2.4 were replaced by the e-governance system piloted in the region of Lori and scaled up to other regions within a stand-alone project funded by the SDC, with many activities initially planned under this output actually to a large extent implemented under ARM/02/012.</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>Output 2.2 Enhanced capacities for local self-governing bodies (LSGB) in the selected regions through the use of ICT networking, knowledge sharing, and access to development opportunities</p>	<p><i>Activity 2.2.4</i> Establishment of thematic e-groups of rural and urban LSGBs interacting through e-mail</p> <p><i>Activity 2.2.5</i> Create discussion forums for participating LSGBs by thematic groups</p> <p><i>Activity 2.2.6</i> Develop intranet systems for participating LSGBs by thematic groups for increased exchange information and knowledge</p>	<p>→ Funding was received from the Eurasia Foundation for establishing Community Information Networks (CIN) at six libraries in Vanadzor, Gyumri, Kapan, Armavir, and Noyemberian. The CINs were connected to the Armenian Freenet and constituted small centres for the community members to share information and knowledge on the urgent issues of community life.</p>	
<p>Output 2.3 Performance of selected central and regional government agencies (CRGA) in providing public goods and services, is enhanced Output 2.4 Relevant initial content for the discussion forums, Intranets, web-pages and newsletters prepared and introduced to the thematic groups</p>	<p><i>Activity 2.2.7</i> Support the use of ICT through creation of Webpages for participating LSGBs to promote transparency and e-governance on the local level</p> <p><i>Activity 2.2.8</i> Support to LSGB thematic groups for the creation of newsletters</p> <p><i>Activity 2.2.9</i> Develop national e-network of LSGBs leading to a possible formation of national associations of rural and urban LSGBs</p>	<p>→ A regional monitor was hired who ensured the Internet connectivity between each of the libraries and the Freenet, prepared a generic web site that was further customized by the libraries themselves, and provided minimum training to the libraries.</p> <p>→ In May 2003, CINs established their own online community of Library CINs and held discussions; Websites were improved; UNDP continued supporting CINs until the end of 2003.</p>	

SUPPORT TO INFORMATION SOCIETY AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE PROJECT (ARM/01/001)

IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE 2: STRENGTHEN GOVERNANCE CAPACITY OF CIVIL ORGANIZATIONS, LOCAL SELF-GOVERNING BODIES, REGIONAL AND CENTRAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS THROUGH THE USE OF ICT

ASSESSMENT OF THE OUTPUTS 2001-2003 – **OUTPUT 2.3 OF 2.4**

Output	Activity	Evidence and Status of Accomplishment	Perspectives of completion
<p>Output 2.1 Enhanced capacities for civil society organizations (CSOs) in the selected regions through the use of ICT for networking, knowledge sharing, and access to development opportunities</p> <p>Output 2.2 Enhanced capacities for local self-governing bodies (LSGB) in the selected regions through the use of ICT networking, knowledge sharing, and access to development opportunities</p>	<p>Activity 2.3.1 Identify and select CRGAs for joining e-groups</p> <p>Activity 2.3.2 Establish connectivity between selected CRGAs and respective RRF</p> <p>Activity 2.3.3 Train participating CRGA staff for a gradual and effective use of different ICT tools</p> <p>Activity 2.3.4 Join the selected CRGAs to the existing e-groups of CSOs and LSGBs including the discussion forums and respective intranets</p> <p>Activity 2.3.5 Develop regional web-based databases that provide access for the general public to information on development programmes and opportunities to enhance transparency and accountability</p> <p>Activity 2.3.6 Support the use of ICTs through the creation of web pages for participating CRGAs to improve provision of public goods and services, promote transparency and e-governance on the regional and national levels</p>	<p>Generally accomplished through the e-governance system piloted in the region of Lori and scaled up to other regions within a stand-alone project funded by the SDC, with many activities planned initially under this output actually to a large extent implemented under ARM/02/012. In addition, the Web-based external assistance database (IADA) was established in the government.</p> <p>IADA provided information about external aid to Armenia (both technical assistance and loans/credit) which is of interest of both the government and donors; the database management is shared between the Prime Minister’s office and the Ministry of Finance and Economy which created certain problems of ownership.</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>Output 2.3 Performance of selected central and regional government agencies (CRGA) in providing public goods and services, is enhanced</p>			
<p>Output 2.4 Relevant initial content for the discussion forums, Intranets, web-pages and newsletters prepared and introduced to the thematic groups</p>			

SUPPORT TO INFORMATION SOCIETY AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE PROJECT (ARM/01/001)

IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE 2: STRENGTHEN GOVERNANCE CAPACITY OF CIVIL ORGANIZATIONS, LOCAL SELF-GOVERNING BODIES, REGIONAL AND CENTRAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS THROUGH THE USE OF ICT

ASSESSMENT OF THE OUTPUTS 2001-2003 – **OUTPUT 2.4 OF 2.4**

Output	Activity	Evidence and Status of Accomplishment	Perspectives of completion
<p>Output 2.1 Enhanced capacities for civil society organizations (CSOs) in the selected regions through the use of ICT for networking, knowledge sharing, and access to development opportunities</p> <p>Output 2.2 Enhanced capacities for local self-governing bodies (LSGB) in the selected regions through the use of ICT networking, knowledge sharing, and access to development opportunities</p> <p>Output 2.3 Performance of selected central and regional government agencies (CRGA) in providing public goods and services, is enhanced</p>	<p><i>Activity 2.4.1</i> Identification of problems, challenges and priorities for each thematic groups</p> <p><i>Activity 2.4.2</i> Continuous preparation and update of content under different ICT tools for the thematic e-groups</p> <p><i>Activity 2.4.3</i> Training of selected representatives from the thematic e-groups in formalizing content for different ICT tools to ensure sustainability of the process</p>	<p>Generally accomplished through the Output 2.1 and 2.3.</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>Output 2.4 Relevant initial content for the discussion forums, Intranets, web-pages and newsletters prepared and introduced to the thematic groups</p>			

SUPPORT TO INFORMATION SOCIETY AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE PROJECT (ARM/01/001)

IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE 3: ENHANCE THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE THROUGH POLICY DEVELOPMENT

ASSESSMENT OF THE OUTPUTS 2001-2003 – OUTPUT 3.1 OF 3.1

Output	Activity	Evidence and Status of Accomplishment	Perspectives of completion
<p>Output 3.1 National ICT strategy and policies to promote the use of ICT for democratic governance and development based on participatory dialogue</p>	<p><i>Activity 3.1.1</i> Initiate dialogue within the networks of CSOs to support the government in developing national policies and creating an enabling environment for the promotion of CSOs <i>Activity 3.1.2</i> Initiate dialogue within the networks of LSGB to support the government in developing national policies on local governance and development <i>Activity 3.1.3</i> Initiate dialogue within the networks of CRGA in developing national to improve production and provision of public goods and services <i>Activity 3.1.4</i> Consultations with all stakeholders for the conceptualization of the ICT strategy <i>Activity 3.1.5</i> Elaboration of the scope of and elements of the ICT strategy <i>Activity 3.1.6</i> Identification and engagement of expertise for design of ICT strategy <i>Activity 3.1.7</i> Make a study of the ICT sector and prepare recommendations for ICT strategy promoting democratic governance <i>Activity 3.1.8</i> Prepare draft ICT strategy promoting democratic governance <i>Activity 3.1.9</i> Prepare and organize workshop to finalize and endorse the draft ICT strategy</p>	<p>Partly accomplished in terms of advocating and leading the process of shaping up a national ICTD policy. The mission has a lot of evidence of UNDP’s constant effort to provide leadership via various initiatives, including preparations for the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva (December 2003). Some of them were successfully implemented but it did not influence rather complex political situation in this area and as a result Armenia does not have its formally approved national information society policies as many ICT advanced countries do. Political will of the country’s leadership and often vested interest of major stakeholder from the government side appeared to be the weakest part of the task. The government’s IT Council was not able to fulfil its role in the formulation and adoption of national ICT strategy.</p> <p>→ Main activities took place from mid-2001 and throughout 2002. UNDP initiated in June 2001 an ICT Consultative Group, with bilateral and multilateral members supporting the country in ICT-related issues (EU, Dfid, USIAD, WB, OSI, Eurasia Foundation, Internews, IREX/IATP) and Government. As an informal mechanism this Groups ensured information sharing and consultations between its members. The meetings were regularly held and a website set up www.ict.am/CG to exchange opinions through the ICT Forum.</p> <p>→ In 2002, donor coordination follow-up meeting on ICT was held on February to discuss topics of common interest (training/educational, e-governance/government, ICT for SMEs, national ICT strategy or policy framework); an ICT matrix as a coordination tool was developed and discussed online.</p> <p>→ The Group chaired by the Project, continued to be the main forum for advocacy and coordination of ICT initiatives, especially with regard to the country’s participation in the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS); the ICT Matrix was regularly updated and a concept paper on ICT was prepared by the Project for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.</p>	<p>Not in 2004; efforts should be resumed in 2005</p>

SUPPORT TO INFORMATION SOCIETY AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE PROJECT (ARM/01/001) – FIRST SUBSTANTIAL REVISION
OUTCOME: PROGRESS TOWARDS E-GOVERNANCE

ASSESSMENT OF THE OUTPUTS 2003-2004 – **OUTPUT 1 OF 4**

Output	Activity	Evidence and Status of Accomplishment	Perspectives of completion
<p>Output 1. Further development of the Armenian Freenet and Armenian language Internet tools.</p>	<p><i>Activity 1.1</i> Upgrade of dial-up capacities <i>Activity 1.2</i> Upgrade of the website and its components <i>Activity 1.3</i> Maintenance of services <i>Activity 1.4</i> Establishment and registration of the legal status <i>Activity 1.5</i> Preparation of the linguistic model <i>Activity 1.6</i> Programming <i>Activity 1.7</i> Preparation of web interface <i>Activity 1.8</i> Preparation of dictionary <i>Activity 1.9</i> Programming <i>Activity 1.10</i> Provision of equipment</p>	<p>Being accomplished. This Output is partly a continuation of the Output 1.3 under Objective 1 of the same project before the substantial revisions of May 2003. In addition to the Freenet-related activities, additional components were added after the revision concerning the use the Armenian language in the Internet resources.</p> <p>→ Universal Networking Language (UNL), a global initiative of the UN University in Tokyo. In cooperation with the National Academy of Sciences and its Institute of Automation Problems the following has been accomplished: attribute sets for the Armenian language; morphological, syntactic and semantic attributes, as well as all possible flexions and their grammatical descriptions; preliminary plans for dictionaries with up to 5,000 words and rules of morphological and syntactic analyses; dictionary entries for different parts of speech; rules of morphological analysis; database for the dictionary and rules of analyses. By mid-December all the foreseen activities of the first phase were accomplished.</p> <p>→ Freenet – a quality daily technical online support to the Freenet users is being provided; discussions are plan about exit strategy. Over 20,000 users benefit from the Armenian Freenet.</p>	<p>100% of completion is expected by the end of 2004; however, UNDP should not leave Freenet without support in 2005.</p>
<p>Output 2. ICT Centre open to public Output 3. Maintenance provided to Community Information Centers established in regional libraries Output 4. e-Visa system fully in use, training and PR campaign carried out</p>			

**SUPPORT TO INFORMATION SOCIETY AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE PROJECT (ARM/01/001) – FIRST SUBSTANTIAL REVISION OUTCOME:
PROGRESS TOWARDS E-GOVERNANCE**

ASSESSMENT OF THE OUTPUTS 2003-2004 – OUTPUT 2 OF 4

Output	Activity	Evidence and Status of Accomplishment	Perspectives of completion
<p>Output 1. Further development of the Armenian Freenet and Armenian language Internet tools.</p>		<p>Fully accomplished. This Output is a continuation of the Output 1.1 under Objective 1 of the same project before the substantial revisions of May 2003.</p> <p>→ The ICT Centre for Democratic Governance at the National Academy of Sciences was officially opened on November 11, 2003 by the President of the National Academy of Sciences, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the UNDP Resident Representative in the presence of many representatives from the Government, the international community, civil society and mass media.</p>	<p>100% of completion is already achieved</p>
<p>Output 2. ICT Centre open to public</p>	<p><i>Activity 2.1</i> Renovation of premises <i>Activity 2.2</i> Security installations <i>Activity 2.3</i> Furnishing the Centre <i>Activity 2.4</i> Equipping the Centre <i>Activity 2.5</i> Establishing connectivity</p>		
<p>Output 3. Maintenance provided to Community Information Centers established in regional libraries Output 4. e-Visa system fully in use, training and PR campaign carried out</p>			

**SUPPORT TO INFORMATION SOCIETY AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE PROJECT (ARM/01/001) – FIRST SUBSTANTIAL REVISION OUTCOME:
PROGRESS TOWARDS E-GOVERNANCE**

ASSESSMENT OF THE OUTPUTS 2003-2004 – OUTPUT 3 OF 4

Output	Activity	Evidence and Status of Accomplishment	Perspectives of completion
<p>Output 1. Further development of the Armenian Freenet and Armenian language Internet tools. Output 2. ICT Centre open to public</p>		<p>Fully accomplished. This Output is a continuation of the Outputs 2.1 and 2.2 of the same project (under Objective 2) before the substantial revisions of May 2003.</p>	<p>100% of completion is expected by the end of 2004</p>
<p>Output 3. Maintenance provided to Community Information Centers established in regional libraries</p>	<p><i>Activity 3.1</i> Establishing connectivity <i>Activity 3.2</i> Revamping websites</p>		
<p>Output 4. e-Visa system fully in use, training and PR campaign carried out</p>			

SUPPORT TO INFORMATION SOCIETY AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE PROJECT (ARM/01/001) – FIRST SUBSTANTIAL REVISION
OUTCOME: PROGRESS TOWARDS E-GOVERNANCE

ASSESSMENT OF THE OUTPUTS 2003-2004 – **OUTPUT 4 OF 4**

Output	Activity	Evidence and Status of Accomplishment	Perspectives of completion
<p>Output 1. Further development of the Armenian Freenet and Armenian language Internet tools. Output 2. ICT Centre open to public Output 3. Maintenance provided to Community Information Centers established in regional libraries</p>		<p>Fully accomplished. This is one of the most successful e-government initiatives in Armenia, as well as regionally and globally. The fact that it was implemented within a rather short period of time points at high level of capacity and knowledge available to succeed with other initiatives alike.</p> <p>→ E-Visa System has been implemented on a really large scale with thousands of visas obtained online, with excellent cooperation with and support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The latter indicates how important is political will in e-government initiatives;</p> <p>→ E-Visa software is fully completed. The FoxPro Database engine has been installed and configured to comply with the requirements of the consular department of the MFA. The software is now capable of accepting applications over the internet and record the collected data within the central e-Visa database.</p>	<p>100% of completion is expected by the end of 2004</p>
<p>Output 4. e-Visa system fully in use, training and PR campaign carried out</p>	<p>Activity 4.1 Provision of equipment Activity 4.2 Software development Activity 4.3 Training Activity 4.4 Carrying out PR campaign</p>	<p>→ Tracking online system and the online processing of requests are is being put in place. The system can be implemented at any border-crossing provided that there us Internet connectivity and sufficient computer literacy.</p> <p>→ PR campaign was ongoing during April-September 2004 through Armenian international periodicals (AIM, Nouvelles d'Arménie), websites and online media.</p> <p>→ Building on the e-Visa success, a new component has been started together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – e-Consulate. The first phase of e-Consulate started with digitization of all application forms used by the population to request various services from the Ministry. E-visa system also showed the need of expanding it to other, more comprehensive, e-consular services, for example making consular forms accessible to the public through the Internet and special kiosks installed in the Ministry's lobby. The forms, posted on a sub-site of the Ministry's website, would be downloadable with a possibility of completing online and printing out. By the end of December, a certain number of forms were tested on the provisional website, which will be accessible also from an Internet kiosks.</p>	

SUPPORT TO INFORMATION SOCIETY AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE PROJECT (ARM/01/001) – SECOND SUBSTANTIAL REVISION (current Atlas project ID 000011255)

OUTCOME: PARTICIPATORY POLICY MAKING AMONG TARGETED GROUPS IS PROMOTED

ASSESSMENT OF THE OUTPUTS 2004 – OUTPUT 1 OF 4

<p>Output 1. Further development of the Armenian Freenet and Armenian language Internet tools.</p>	<p><i>Activity 1.1</i> Upgrade of dial-up capacities <i>Activity 1.2</i> Upgrade of the website and its components <i>Activity 1.3</i> Maintenance of services <i>Activity 1.4</i> Establishment and registration of the legal status <i>Activity 1.5</i> Preparation of the linguistic model <i>Activity 1.6</i> Programming <i>Activity 1.7</i> Preparation of web interface <i>Activity 1.8</i> Preparation of dictionary <i>Activity 1.9</i> Programming <i>Activity 1.10</i> Provision of equipment</p>	<p>Freenet - Fully accomplished → Freenet connectivity and hosting capacities were constantly growing during 2001-2003; the number of communication and Web services through Freenet Webmail interface for end-users was rapidly increasing as well. Some connectivity problems were successfully solved after lobbying Armentel. → In May 2001, the Freenet Club was endowed with an entirely new and attractive web mail platform: email.freenet.am. An SMTP connection was established with the Freenet mail serves. Besides, it became possible to log into any POP server. The default language was Armenian, with English available → The Freenet Club activities saw an unprecedented boost in 2001. The overall number of freenet.am e-mail addresses exceeded 15,000. The number of the UN House Internet public site attendees was over 750. (Today, the respective numbers are: 24,500 and 4,500). A quality daily technical online support to the Freenet users is being provided; discussions are planned about exit strategy.</p> <p>UNL – expected to be accomplished. Universal Networking Language (UNL) is a global initiative of the UN University in Tokyo. In cooperation with the National Academy of Sciences and its Institute of Automation Problems the following has been accomplished: attribute sets for the Armenian language; morphological, syntactic and semantic attributes, as well as all possible flexions and their grammatical descriptions; preliminary plans for dictionaries with up to 5,000 words and rules of morphological and syntactic analyses; dictionary entries for different parts of speech; rules of morphological analysis; database for the dictionary and rules of analyses.</p> <p>→ By mid-December all the foreseen activities of the first phase were accomplished.</p>	<p>100% of completion is expected by the end of 2004</p>
<p>Output 2. ICT Centre open to public Output 3. Maintenance provided to Community Information Centers established in regional libraries Output 4. e-Visa system fully in use, training and PR campaign carried out</p>			

SUPPORT TO INFORMATION SOCIETY AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE PROJECT (ARM/01/001) – SECOND SUBSTANTIAL REVISION (current Atlas project ID 000011255)

OUTCOME: PARTICIPATORY POLICY MAKING AMONG TARGETED GROUPS IS PROMOTED

ASSESSMENT OF THE OUTPUTS 2004 – OUTPUT 2 OF 4

Output	Activity	Evidence and Status of Accomplishment	Perspectives of completion
<p>Output 1. Further development of the Armenian Freenet and Armenian language Internet tools.</p>		<p>Fully accomplished</p> <p>→ This Output is a continuation of the Output 1.1 under Objective 1 of the same project before the substantial revisions of May 2003.</p>	<p>100% of completion is expected by the end of 2004</p>
<p>Output 2. ICT Centre open to public</p>	<p><i>Activity 2.1</i> Renovation of premises <i>Activity 2.2</i> Security installations <i>Activity 2.3</i> Furnishing the Centre <i>Activity 2.4</i> Equipping the Centre <i>Activity 2.5</i> Establishing connectivity</p>	<p>→ The Centre at the National Academy of Sciences was officially opened on November 11, 2003. The Centre is fully operational.</p> <p>→ Financial support was provided by the Local Soros Foundation and the Project Harmony to procure equipment. Fully accomplished.</p>	
<p>Output 3. Maintenance provided to Community Information Centers established in regional libraries Output 4. e-Visa system fully in use, training and PR campaign carried out</p>			

SUPPORT TO INFORMATION SOCIETY AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE PROJECT (ARM/01/001) – SECOND SUBSTANTIAL REVISION (current Atlas project ID 000011255)

OUTCOME: PARTICIPATORY POLICY MAKING AMONG TARGETED GROUPS IS PROMOTED

ASSESSMENT OF THE OUTPUTS 2004 – OUTPUT 3 OF 4

Output	Activity	Evidence and Status of Accomplishment	Perspectives of completion
<p>Output 1. Further development of the Armenian Freenet and Armenian language Internet tools. Output 2. ICT Centre open to public</p>		<p>Fully accomplished for 6 regions</p> <p>Accomplished through Community Information Networks (CIN) established and operationalized in 6 regional libraries.</p> <p>Funding was received from the Eurasia Foundation for establishing Community Information Networks at libraries in Vanadzor, Gyumri, Kapan, Armavir, and Noyemberian.</p>	<p>100% of completion is expected by the end of 2004</p>
<p>Output 3. Maintenance provided to Community Information Centers established in regional libraries</p>	<p>Activity 3.1 Establishing connectivity Activity 3.2 Revamping websites</p>	<p>The CINs were connected to the Armenian Freenet and constituted small centres for the community members to share information and knowledge on the urgent issues of community life.</p> <p>A regional monitor was hired who ensured the Internet connectivity between each of the libraries and the Freenet, prepared a generic web site that was further customized by the libraries themselves, and provided minimum training to the libraries.</p>	
<p>Output 4. e-Visa system fully in use, training and PR campaign carried out</p>			

SUPPORT TO INFORMATION SOCIETY AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE PROJECT (ARM/01/001) – SECOND SUBSTANTIAL REVISION (current Atlas project ID 000011255)

OUTCOME: PARTICIPATORY POLICY MAKING AMONG TARGETED GROUPS IS PROMOTED

ASSESSMENT OF THE OUTPUTS 2004 – OUTPUT 4 OF 4

Output	Activity	Evidence and Status of Accomplishment	Perspectives of completion
<p>Output 1. Further development of the Armenian Freenet and Armenian language Internet tools.</p> <p>Output 2. ICT Centre open to public</p> <p>Output 3. Maintenance provided to Community Information Centers established in regional libraries</p> <p>Output 4. e-Visa system fully in use, training and PR campaign carried out</p>	<p>Activity 4.1 Provision of equipment Activity 4.2 Software development Activity 4.3 Training Activity 4.4 Carrying out PR campaign</p>	<p>Fully accomplished.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → e-Visa initiative developed and applied; software is fully completed → FoxPro Database engine has been installed and configured to comply with the requirements of the consular department of the MFA. → Applications for visa can be accepted via the internet and record the collected data within the central e-Visa database. → Thousands of applications have been sent to MFA and thousands e-visas issued making the entire cycle fully transactional. → a new e-Consulate initiative is being prepared with more and diverse online functionality; → Started with digitization of all application forms used by the population to request various services from the Ministry (e-consular services, for example making consular forms accessible to the public through the Internet and special kiosks installed in the Ministry’s lobby) 	<p>100% of completion is expected by the end of 2004</p>

SUPPORT TO DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE PROJECT (ARM/02/012, Atlas project ID 00011260)

OUTCOME: ACCELERATED PROGRESS TOWARDS E-GOVERNANCE

ASSESSMENT OF THE OUTPUTS 2002-2004 – OUTPUT 1 OF 4

Output	Activity	Evidence and Status of Accomplishment	Perspectives of Completion
<p>Output 1. Web-based e-Governance system for territorial administration (e-GSTA) customized, tested and operational in 9 regions</p>	<p><i>Activity 1.1</i> Customization of interlinked e-GSTA for 9 regions, with account of the type of administration (regional or local)</p> <p><i>Activity 1.2</i> Systematization and input of relevant content into the system</p> <p><i>Activity 1.3</i> Creation of mechanisms and procedures for the regular update of the contents</p>	<p>Fully accomplished for 5 regions -- e-GSTA is fully functional in Shirak, Kotyak, Vayots Dzor, Syunik, Lori. In the remaining five regions of Tavush, Artashat, Aragatsotn, Armavir, and Gegharkunik all necessary preparations have been done and the operationalization of the e-GSTA is in good progress.</p> <p>→ technical description of e-GSTA software developed and approved by the Project Steering Committee early in 2003;</p> <p>→ e-GSTA software improved by adding more features to ensure access with regional and central portals; e-GSTA system installed; all regional governors are connected to the intranet of MTA with special messaging application connecting two Deputy Ministers, two experts and central e-GSTA coordinator developed and operationalized;</p> <p>→ Public Access Points established and personnel hired and trained;</p> <p>→ inter-Portal linkages established via access from regional and central portals;</p> <p>→ MTA's and all five online regional portals were continuously updated; hundreds of first instance court rulings available online on the e-GSTA regional portals; in 2004, a new section on draft laws related to regional administrations was added to the MTA portal and regularly updated since then; application forms related to social issues were selected and posted online for download (first in Lori and afterwards in the other four regions where e-GSTA is functional) and use to improve access of citizens to public services provided by regional administrations;</p> <p>→ regional e-GSTA coordinators hired to take charge of content development; regional administration staff trained to use e-GSTA;</p> <p>→ cooperation agreement concluded with the Council of Court Chairmen and an expert assigned to post regularly the rulings for all criminal cases of the region's first instance courts;</p> <p>→ the Armenian Association of Psychologists surveyed in 2003 local communities in Lori for assessing the main effective channels of information dissemination; its final evaluation was conducted in April-June 2004 and recommendations made to amend the regional portals and relevant maintenance policies; the statistical subsystem of Lori portal was set up to evaluate the impact of the portal online functionalities on the actual use of e-GSTA.</p>	<p>100% of completion is expected by the end of 2004</p>
<p>Output 2. Infrastructure and legal framework for improved interactions between the public and the administration are in place</p> <p>Output 3. Improved capacities of the regional administration, including big urban and rural municipalities, to provide online information and services to the public</p> <p>Output 4. Increased awareness and capacity of the public to use the new medium of interaction with the administration</p>			

SUPPORT TO DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE PROJECT (ARM/02/012, Atlas project ID 00011260)

OUTCOME: ACCELERATED PROGRESS TOWARDS E-GOVERNANCE

ASSESSMENT OF THE OUTPUTS 2002-2004 – OUTPUT 2 OF 4

Output	Activity	Status and Evidence of Accomplishment	Perspectives of Completion
<p>Output 1. Web-based e-Governance system for territorial administration (e-GSTA) customized, tested and operational in 9 regions</p>		<p>Fully accomplished in 5 regions – Infrastructure and Public Access Points created and operational in Shirak, Kotyakh, Vayots Dzor, Syunik, Lori; in the remaining five regions of Tavush, Artashat, Aragatsotn, Armavir, and Gegharkunik all necessary preparations have been done and the establishment of Access Points is in good progress. Partially accomplished for legal frameworks – preparatory work done.</p>	<p>100% of completion is expected by the end of 2004 as far as infrastructure component is concerned; legal framework needs further attention through other Policy work</p>
<p>Output 2. Infrastructure and legal framework for improved interactions between the public and the administration are in place</p>	<p><i>Activity 2.1</i> Creation of Internet public access sites in the territorial centers as access points to the E-GSTA</p> <p><i>Activity 2.2</i> Support to the preparation and adaptation of the necessary relevant laws related to the use of E-GSTA (digital signature and digital documents)</p>	<p>→ premises for Public Access Points identified and allotted by regional administrations; equipment procured; Public Access sites renovated and furnished;</p> <p>→ LANs and e-GSTA systems installed;</p> <p>→ four e-GSTA regional coordinators, a central coordinators and two regional technical assistants were selected and hired for each region (in 2003);</p> <p>→ linkages with the central portal and other regional portals established; all regional governors are connected to the intranet of MTA;</p> <p>→ there have been some delays in establishing Access Points in Gyumri and Hrazdan due to technical reasons;</p>	
<p>Output 3. Improved capacities of the regional administration, including big urban and rural municipalities, to provide online information and services to the public</p> <p>Output 4. Increased awareness and capacity of the public to use the new medium of interaction with the administration</p>		<p>→ Global Internet Policy Institute (GIPI) in Armenia prepared at request of UNDP the Legal Notice to govern the e-GSTA, with specific recommendations made to change legal frameworks for better use if e-GSTA such as:</p> <p>-- defining responsibilities of state and governmental bodies in respect of those publications, -- mandatory online publication of laws, regulations, officially circulating draft laws and regulations,</p> <p>-- re-publishing by regional and central governmental bodies have a right to legal acts of general character,</p> <p>-- mandatory information on the structure, responsibilities, activities and the working programme of governmental institutions;</p> <p>→ GIPI concluded that the information published in e-GSTA can be considered as official information; GIPI will continue working with UNDP to further develop legal and regulatory framework supporting the creation and introduction of effective e-government systems in Armenia;</p> <p>→ a joint UNDP-GIPI-OSI round-table on e-Governance legal framework in Armenia was held at the Yerevan ICT Centre in March 2004 in cooperation with the e-Armenia Foundation; the meeting recommended have similar discussions among the major stakeholders on a regular basis in future;</p>	

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OUTCOME: PARTICIPATORY POLICY MAKING AMONG TARGETED GROUPS IS PROMOTED

ASSESSMENT OF THE OUTPUTS 2004 – **OUTPUT 3 OF 4**

Output	Activity	Evidence and Status of Accomplishment	Perspectives of completion
<p>Output 1. Further development of the Armenian Freenet and Armenian language Internet tools. Output 2. ICT Centre open to public</p>		<p>Fully accomplished for 6 regions</p> <p>Accomplished through Community Information Networks (CIN) established and operationalized in 6 regional libraries.</p> <p>Funding was received from the Eurasia Foundation for establishing Community Information Networks at libraries in Vanadzor, Gyumri, Kapan, Armavir, and Noyemberian.</p>	<p>100% of completion is expected by the end of 2004</p>
<p>Output 3. Maintenance provided to Community Information Centers established in regional libraries</p>	<p>Activity 3.1 Establishing connectivity Activity 3.2 Revamping websites</p>	<p>The CINs were connected to the Armenian Freenet and constituted small centres for the community members to share information and knowledge on the urgent issues of community life.</p> <p>A regional monitor was hired who ensured the Internet connectivity between each of the libraries and the Freenet, prepared a generic web site that was further customized by the libraries themselves, and provided minimum training to the libraries.</p>	
<p>Output 4. e-Visa system fully in use, training and PR campaign carried out</p>			

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ASSESSMENT OF THE OUTPUTS 2004 – OUTPUT 4 OF 4

Output	Activity	Evidence and Status of Accomplishment	Perspectives of completion
<p>Output 1. Further development of the Armenian Freenet and Armenian language Internet tools.</p> <p>Output 2. ICT Centre open to public</p> <p>Output 3. Maintenance provided to Community Information Centers established in regional libraries</p> <p>Output 4. e-Visa system fully in use, training and PR campaign carried out</p>	<p>Activity 4.1 Provision of equipment Activity 4.2 Software development Activity 4.3 Training Activity 4.4 Carrying out PR campaign</p>	<p>Fully accomplished.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → e-Visa initiative developed and applied; software is fully completed → FoxPro Database engine has been installed and configured to comply with the requirements of the consular department of the MFA. → Applications for visa can be accepted via the internet and record the collected data within the central e-Visa database. → Thousands of applications have been sent to MFA and thousands e-visas issued making the entire cycle fully transactional. → a new e-Consulate initiative is being prepared with more and diverse online functionality; → Started with digitization of all application forms used by the population to request various services from the Ministry (e-consular services, for example making consular forms accessible to the public through the Internet and special kiosks installed in the Ministry’s lobby) 	<p>100% of completion is expected by the end of 2004</p>