

**Ministry of Information and Communications**  
**Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu**

**Information and Communications Technology**  
**(ICT) Policy for Bhutan**

*A White Paper*

**October 2003**

# Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Policy for Bhutan – A White Paper

## 1 Introduction

The explosive development of information and communications technologies (ICT)<sup>1</sup> and their applications are changing the way people live, learn, work and interact. Enhanced access to information and knowledge is rapidly becoming a potent tool for individuals and communities everywhere in their quest for new opportunities, for dignity and for a better life. Clearly underscoring the paramount role placed on and desired of the ICT sector, the Royal Government of Bhutan has established the Ministry of Information and Communications.

However, Bhutan faces a number of challenges in harnessing the benefits of ICT, including difficult terrain, dispersed population and limited private sector activities. A coordinated policy approach is the first step to ensuring that Bhutan does not miss out on the opportunities of the information revolution.

Notwithstanding the achievements we have made and the many ICT activities carried out in the last couple of years, with the new Ministry in place, it is timely to take stock of what we have accomplished as well as look forward, and to effect a clear, focused and a collective policy alignment. The Ministry has taken this opportunity to create this White Paper<sup>2</sup>, which states the Royal Government's ICT Vision, Strategic Components, and Future Direction, aiming to guide the ICT sector in the long run.

## 2 ICT Vision

**With people at the center of development, Bhutan will harness the benefits of ICT, both as an enabler and as an industry, to realize the Millennium Development Goals and towards enhancing Gross National Happiness.**

## 3 Strategic Components

Based on the Vision, the Royal Government of Bhutan is committed to work towards:

### 3.1 Infrastructure

Deploying a reliable, sustainable, appropriate and affordable ICT infrastructure to achieve universal access and global connectivity through liberalization and co-ordination between infrastructure providers.

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<sup>1</sup> ICT includes Information & Communications Technologies and Media.

<sup>2</sup> The “ICT Policy for Bhutan – A White Paper” is produced by the ICT Working Group under the patronage of His Excellency, Lyonpo Leki Dorji, Minister for Information & Communications. Feedback received, on the widely circulated draft ICT White Paper, from stakeholders, and subsequent inclusive consultative processes served as valuable inputs to producing this paper.

### **3.2 Human Capacity**

Ensuring institutions and curricula to provide ICT skills at all levels, from technical, professional and entrepreneurial skills for industry and government to basic ICT literacy for all.

### **3.3 Policy**

Creating a legislative and regulatory framework, which is adaptable, comprehensive, transparent, inclusive and forward-looking, and building effective institutional capacity to implement it.

### **3.4 Enterprise**

Creating an enabling business environment that helps to generate employment, attracts local and foreign investments, enhances access to local and global markets, improves business processes, stimulates domestic demand and fosters research and development.

### **3.5 Content and Applications**

Promoting widespread creation of content and applications that are accessible, relevant, appropriate and useful, in particular, the development of applications for public services.

## **4 Future Direction**

Recognizing that ICT can have an immense impact on virtually all aspects of our lives, the Royal Government of Bhutan owns this Vision and declares a strong commitment to developing and implementing a National ICT Strategy and Action Plan, based on the ICT Vision.

The Strategy and Action Plan shall build on all current ICT activities, identify linkages and complementarities between development approaches, as well as identify new areas of intervention. The ICT Vision, Strategy and Action Plan shall also secure the participation and commitment of all stakeholders.

The White Paper is the basis for an inclusive and consultative process for formulating a new strategic framework for ICT in Bhutan.