



Asian Forum on Information and Communication Technology Policies and e-Strategies

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Brunei Darussalam – Country Report



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BACKGROUND

Brunei Darussalam is situated on the north-west coast of the island of Borneo. It has a total area of 5765sq km and an estimated population of 330,000. The GDP per capita is B\$21,570.00 (2002).

As a small country strategically located in the fast growing region, there are huge opportunities and prospects for Brunei. ICT is an important economic sector that supports the growth of industries such as manufacturing and financial services.

INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM

There are currently two main bodies playing main roles in ICT development namely AiTi and BITC. AiTi or The Authority for Info-communications Technology Industry of Brunei Darussalam was established by the Authority for Info-communications Technology Industry Order, 2001 also known as the AiTi Order. AiTi has commenced operations on 1st January 2003. AiTi is a statutory body and responsible for regulating and developing Brunei's ICT industry and answerable to the Minister of Communications. The functions and duties of AiTi are stated under Section 6 of the AiTi Order.

BITC (Brunei Information Technology Council) on the other hand, serves to advise His Majesty's Government on policy matters pertaining to IT and communications development in Brunei Darussalam. The Council is chaired by the Minister of Communications, with the Deputy Minister of Finance as Deputy Chairman, and Council members comprising of Permanent Secretaries, Senior Officers, High Level representatives from the private sector, the academia, and a Secretariat. The BIT Council plays a leading role in the implementation of the goals underlying the National IT Strategic Plan - IT 2000 and Beyond.

The BIT Secretariat was set up in January 2001 to facilitate the operational, administrative and activities of the BIT Council. The Secretariat is tasked to provide its supporting role in the implementation of the following:



- e-Government (E-Government Programme Executive Committee). This is the body responsible for the implementation of e-Government initiative based on the e-Government Strategic Framework. A significant amount of funding has been allocated by the Government under its 8th National Development Plan 2001-2005 to implement a significant number of e-Government projects in Brunei Darussalam; and
- e-Business (E-Business Programme Executive Committee). This committee comprises of selected representatives of the local Industry Sector and selected representatives of relevant Government Agencies. The committee has developed an e-Business Strategic Framework for the approval of the BIT Council. This will serve as a guiding framework for e-business uptake for SMEs and local business sector in Brunei Darussalam; and
- e-Brunei (e-Society). This is a holistic approach to address issues that could contribute to a nationwide adoption of e-culture to all citizens of Brunei Darussalam; from a paperless to information society, and ultimately the Knowledge Economy of Brunei Darussalam.

INFOCOMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Currently there are two telecommunications infrastructure providers in Brunei Darussalam and they are Jabatan Telekom Brunei/Telecommunications Department (JTB) and DST Communications Sdn Bhd (DST). JTB is the fixed line provider and DST provides GSM services. JTB which is under the Ministry of Communications will be corporatized to become Telekom Brunei Bhd (TelBru).

The Government of Brunei Darussalam has invested heavily in building Brunei's National Information Infrastructure. In this aspect, Brunei has achieved the following:

- a telephone household penetration of almost 100%. The national telephone-switching network has long been 100 per cent digital with the recent upgrade to SDH technology;
- a significant growth of cellular subscribers. By July 2003, the number of mobile subscribers including pre-paid subscribers is estimated at 164,000, growing from 50,096 in 1998;



- with the development of RaGAM 21, one of the recent developments in telecommunication infrastructure is the investment in a rural telecommunication network, capable of providing Internet access. With this infrastructure, all rural and remote areas have access to telephone and the Internet.

International connectivity through fibre-optic submarine cables such as the Brunei-Singapore, Brunei-Malaysia Philippines (BMP) and the SEA-ME-WE3 digital submarine cable system as well as satellites earth stations facing the Indian Ocean Region and the Pacific Ocean.

ENABLING LAWS

Three new laws were gazetted on 31 May 2001, which are:

- The Telecommunications Order 2001;
- The Telecommunications Successor Company Order 2001 and
- The Authority for Info-communications Technology Industry Order 2001.

With these three laws, the Telecommunications Act, 1952 will be repealed and they will enable the corporatisation of JTB. The Telecommunications Successor Order 2001 will enable Telekom Brunei Berhad (TelBru) to replace the Telecommunications Department as the telecommunications operator in the country. Meanwhile, the role of the Telecommunications Department as the info-communications authority will be taken over by the Authority for Info-communications Technology Industry (AiTi).

Three other relevant laws have also been enacted namely Copy Right Order, Computer Misuse Order and Electronic Transactions Order. A new Data Protection Order is also in the pipeline.

BRUNEI INFO COMMUNICATIONS VISION

For Brunei, it is our vision to make Brunei as a cyber-hub in the region as Brunei has a good prospect to be one of the major hubs for telecommunications and multimedia services in the region. The Government has invested heavily in building our National



Information Infrastructure (RaGAM 21) which has broadband capabilities in order to keep pace with the rapid changing global trends in the information technology field.

Indeed, under Brunei's 8th National Development Plan (2001-2005), B\$211.7 million is allocated for telecommunications under the Transport and Communications sector. An amount of B\$526 million or almost 7.2% of the total development allocation is provided for Information and Communication Technology.

Through Brunei Economic Development Board, Ministry of Communications, Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources are working on a plan, which includes the development an Eco-Cyber Park. This park will consist of office blocks shopping malls, R&D manufacturing plants, a small exhibition centers and others. The physical development of the Cyber Park will be linked by a road network to nearby strategic locations like the learning institutions, the national theme park, housing estates, the international airport, deep-water port and the business centres. Through RaGAM 21, the Park will be linked to the Asia-Pacific Information Infrastructure (APII) and the Global Information Network (GII).

With the completion of the planned ICT programmes, Brunei Darussalam hopes to become one of the most wired nations in the region.

FUTURE PLANS

On security aspect, a cyber crime function has been established within the Brunei Police Force and a National Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) will be established by 2005.

FUTURE CHALLENGES

One of the main future challenges is that not only providing access is important but as well as a sustainable access at prices affordable by all users and provided on commercial terms without government subsidy.