

UNCRD-APDIP

**CAPACITY BUILDING OF ASIA PACIFIC e-GOVERNMENT
INITIATIVES**

Mongolia

Mobilizing communities for participation in e-government initiatives for the poor
and marginalized

Lkhagvasuren Ariunaa, Executive Director, Intec Co. Ltd,
member of MIDAS/MONITA NGO Mongolia, and
Infoshare member of ASIS&T, USA
Suite 326, National Information Technology Park,
Baga Toiruu – 49, Sukhbaatar – 46, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
Phone/Fax: 976-11-328570,
Email: ariunaa@itconsulting.mn
Web: www.itconsulting.mn

Abstract of executive summary

It has now been 10 years since the first Internet service provider started up in Mongolia. Since Mongolia began its transition from a centrally-planned economy to a market economy and the introduction in Mongolia of the Internet in 1996, wider opportunities have opened up, which have enabled the country to have access to information and resources available on the World Wide Web and to discover new opportunities to share knowledge, experiences and resources both within the country and with countries.

The current paper will provide an overview of ICT development in Mongolia, with a focus on activities. It will review ICT development; review e-government initiatives that have been implemented and that are still planned; and assess the impact on society, especially on the poorest and most marginalized groups.

A survey conducted in 25 soums will be introduced as part of the coverage of e-government initiatives, and recommendations will be presented on how to make the e-government initiatives broader and accessible to a wider public, including those in the more remote areas of Mongolia.

1. Background/history

Mongolia is a landlocked country between the Republic of China and the Russian Federation, covering some 1.5 million square kilometres and with a population of 2.5 million, a large proportion of whom (around 1 million) live in Ulaanbaatar, the capital city. There are two other large cities, with populations of around 150,000: Darkhan and Erdenet. The rest of the population lives in 21 aimag¹ centers (averaging 20,000 residents) and 334 soum² centers (averaging 500-700 residents), or leads a nomadic lifestyle.

The political system of Mongolia is parliamentary, with elections held every four years for the 76 seats. There is a president, also elected for a four-year term. The current parliament was elected in 2004; the cabinet has 18 ministers and there are over 40 government agencies and organizations.

2. Stages of development of ICT in Mongolia

Communications in Mongolia date back to the time of the Great Mongol Empire, when horse riders traveled thousands of kilometers to deliver messages. In the late 19th century, a telegraph facility was established between Khiagt (a town in Russia), Ikh Khuree (nowadays Ulaanbaatar) and Chuulalt Khaalga (a town in China), opening a new chapter in the history of communications in Mongolia. The next stage was between the late 19th century and the mid 20th century, when telegraph, telephone, postal and radio broadcast services were introduced.

After World War II, Mongolia joined the UN, the ITU and other international organizations, and introduced new telecommunications services over the next 30-40 years, including television, public telephones and computers (at first mainframe) for data collection and processing at the National Statistics Office.

From 1982, a new era of information and communications technology started with the establishment of government bodies and research institutions.

The telecommunications network now reaches all soums of Mongolia. With the establishment of the first Internet service provider in 1994, and the start of the Internet access in Mongolia in 1996, the era of information and communications opened its next stage. Today there are two mobile operators with over 350,000 subscribers, eight Internet service providers with over 50,000 users, over 30 radio stations and 10 TV channels.

3. Policy and regulatory framework

Since the transition to a market economy began, one of the important areas focused on by the government and international and donor organizations has been the telecommunications sector. For a widely dispersed population like that of Mongolia, there was a huge need and demand for quality telecommunications services, especially to reach rural areas.

Extensive support and funding was provided to this sector in these years. The telecommunications law was adopted in November 1995, followed by a law on

¹ Aimag is an administrative unit, known elsewhere as a province.

² Soum is an administrative unit; each aimag has 12-15 soums.

radio frequencies in 1999 and a “Vision to develop ICT in Mongolia by 2010” in 2000. In 2002-2003, the ICT department of the then-Ministry of Infrastructure drew up draft laws on information and communications technology (ICT), aiming for input from representatives of civil society, the private sector and government organizations.

The drafts were revised to include four laws: 1) a general one on ICT; 2) one on e-government; 3) one on digital signatures; 4) one on transactions.

The drafts also had proposals for amendments and changes to a number of laws and regulations, and were discussed at a cabinet meeting. However, as there were concerns expressed by the Ministry of Justice, they remain on the agenda.

Meanwhile, the newly established Information and Communications Technology Authority (ICTA) initiated and developed an “e-Mongolia” program, approved by the government in June, 2005. The vision of this was to establish an “information society and the foundation for a knowledge-based society in Mongolia by enhancing extensive application of ICT in all social sectors,” aiming to make Mongolia one of the top 10 ICT-developed countries in Asia.

The “e-Mongolia” program has 4 major components: 1) policy, legal and regulatory framework; 2) telecommunications and information infrastructure; 3) utilization of ICTs and governance and other applications; 4) developing human resources. There are 17 objectives, targeted for achievement by 2012.

The e-government policy paper was developed by the ICTA with Korean government support, but it has not yet been approved.

4. *Institutional setup*

Since 1997, the government has been paying great attention to ICT. Although the government has changed, the intention has always been to support ICT development, and this has been essential for its development. This is shown by the fact that the prime minister has usually led the process. In 1998, when the first National ICT Council was established, it was chaired by the adviser to the prime minister, with representation from government organizations, the private sector and educational institutions. The next ICT Committee was established to have broader representation from various stakeholders and had an advisory function to the government.

The government has changed with elections. However, there has been progress in staffing, from when there was only one person in the whole government system in 1997, the ICT officer at the Ministry of Infrastructure. Only seven years later, there was a whole office of information and communications technology. This shows the importance of the ICT sector itself, but also that the government is aware of the significance to overall Mongolian development.

In November 2004, the Information and Communications Technology Authority (ICTA) was established under the direct authority of the prime minister, chaired by Mr. Saikhanbileg, with a staff of about 40. Its main purpose is to coordinate and facilitate ICT development in Mongolia. It has initiated the “e-Mongolia” national program, within which a number of activities have been implemented:

- helping establish the Mongolian Internet Service Providers’ Association (MISPA), so that Mongolian ISPs can negotiate the cost of overall bandwidth for Mongolia;

- computers at affordable prices (\$250-450) are available to the wider public;
- government organizational websites have become more active and updateable, so that people can find information and resources. The Taxation Authority website is one of the best examples of this initiative;
- tax exemptions have been allowed for imported computers and accessories.

The Communications and Regulatory Commission was established in 2001 as the main regulatory body for telecommunications and IT matters. It issues licenses for telecommunications, Internet service provision, voiceover IP, transmission etc. It has a staff of 30 and is an independent institution.

Ministries or government agencies in most cases have an ICT department/unit or staff, responsible for day-to-day operations and maintenance of computers and network in their ministry, agency or organization.

5. E-government initiatives

“ICT for SHD” 1996-1999

The first e-government initiative dates back to 1997, when the “ICT for Sustainable Human Development” project was established in the cabinet secretariat, supported by UNDP. To establish a public management information system for the government, a wide area network was established, connecting local area networks of ministries and government agencies, which were encouraged to set up their own websites to provide information on government.

Citizens in turn were provided with access points in six aimag centers to access this network and find government information and to communicate with government officials and parliament members.³ Citizens’ Information and Service Centers (CISC) were established in the governors’ offices of Uvurkhangai aimag, Kharkhorin soum, and Khuvsugul, Khovd, Dundgovi, Tuv and Sukhbaatar aimags, usually with 4-5 computers and a printer connected to the local area network. This network was connected to the governor’s office network and further to the server at the Cabinet Secretariat through dial-up access.

Considering that the dial-up connection cost was quite high at that time (1 minute for 375Tug⁴), not many connections were installed. Still, citizens were able to learn to use computers, and had access to CDs and e-mail.

When the project ended in 1999, these centers were functional and operational. However, as the sustainability issue was not properly addressed, only 3 centers are still operational, those in the governors’ offices of Uvurkhangai aimag, Kharkhorin soum and Tuv aimag. By 1999, almost 400 citizens had visited the centers, over 300 had had basic level computer training and around 50 were using email.

Assessment of the government information and communication system, 1999

³ The parliament has 76 seats, with general elections every 4 years.

⁴ Tugrug: the local currency. At that time 1USD=540Tug

In preparing for the first IT Summit, there was an assessment of the government information and communication system by representatives of governmental organizations. All ministries and some governmental organizations were visited and given a questionnaire on their current situation in the policy and regulatory framework, availability of computers, networks and accessories, human resource policy and policies to develop public accessibility of government organizations. The questionnaires were distributed to aimag governors' offices, and comprehensive information and documents were collected and compiled to represent the national ICT situation. Unfortunately, no results of findings have been published, and there is no reference in other resources.

Open-government website, 2002

The prime minister in 2001 initiated the "open-government" website, initially supported by USAID (US Agency for International Development) and supported since 2004 by the Asia Foundation. The purpose was "to strengthen linkages between the private and public sectors and to facilitate public contribution of opinions to state policies and laws." (www.open-government.mn)

The website has: 1) legislation (bills, parliamentary agenda and links to laws); 2) discussion (forum, online conferencing, questions, answers); 3) links and search engine. The website has been highly publicized as a means of reaching government officials and providing input to bills. The prime minister provided personal leadership to ensure successful implementation. Government ministries and agencies have a schedule to provide feedback and comments on questions, issues and concerns raised by citizens on the site.

Over 127,000 have visited the site and left input and comments. The most challenging part of the site was to provide access to bills prior to cabinet and parliamentary debate so that citizens' voices could be heard and suggestions integrated into the bills. With each change in government, prime ministers have taken over the initiative and promoted it.

Mid-term strategy to develop ICT in Mongolia, 2002

The mid-term ICT development strategy was government-approved in 2002. There have been extensive discussions among stakeholders from government, non-government and private sectors to ensure involvement in the strategy document and commitment to successful implementation of the policy.

It has four major components: 1) establishment of a favourable legal and regulatory framework; 2) establishment of a reliable in-country infrastructure; 3) support for and implementation of a proper human resource development policy; 4) support for private sector initiatives to improve competitiveness.

One importance of this document was that it tied activities to organizations and financial resources. For example, "the introduction of electronic forms in all consulting and advisory services provided to citizens"⁵ was assigned to the Ministry of Infrastructure (MI), Cabinet Secretariat and the National ICT committee, using domestic and foreign resources. Another example was "to set up Internet information centers in all aimags and settlements,"⁶ assigned to the

⁵ Mid-term strategy to develop ICT in Mongolia, 2002, p.9

⁶ Mid-term strategy to develop ICT in Mongolia, 2002, p.9

MI and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (MECS), and using external resources.

Moreover, issues related to the social sector were specifically outlined in the mid-term strategy. They included establishment of: 1) a health management information system (Ministry of Health and MOI); 2) an education and science management information system (MECS); 3) an agricultural risk management information system (Ministry of Agriculture); 4) a geological and mineral resources information system (Ministry of Industry and Commerce and Mongolian Academy of Science); 5) a social security information system (Ministry of Population and Development); 6) an electronic card system for health and social security (Ministry of Health and Ministry of Population and Development).

The mid-term strategy has over 60 of these actions for 2003-2005. Some of these actions have been implemented by the successor of the Ministry of Infrastructure, the ICTA.

6. E-government master plan, 2005

The e-government master plan was developed by the South Korean Industry Promotion Agency (KIPA) and ICTA. An extensive survey on the current ICT situation in government organizations was conducted, followed by development of the vision and strategy for the e-government master plan. As part of this, a plan for implementation of the e-government program was developed, outlining the timeframe and actions.

The master plan was developed to “establish state policy and a regulatory regime to provide favourable environment for development of government-legislation, economy-business, and citizen-society frameworks based on consideration of ICT as a major accelerator to develop Mongolia in the 21st century.”⁷

It has three major frameworks: 1) government-legislation; 2) business-economy; 3) human development. Within each of these, there are 18 projects and 4 policies to be developed. The policies are on government-to-citizens, government-to-business, government-to-government and infrastructure. As part of the government-to-citizens policy, strategies to provide an on-line public service and diversification on service channels have been identified and projects such as 1) a government representative portal; 2) a passport management system; 3) a real estate registration system; and 4) a social insurance system have been identified to develop separately. Each of these projects along with those to be developed within the framework of the other three policies has been described and specified in terms of objectives, scope, services, expected effects and considerations.

Of all these projects and initiatives, that of providing online public services through a government representative portal has been selected for detailed review and discussion. The main reasons are: 1) there is some background: lessons have been learnt and experience gained from previously implemented projects like the public management information system and the open-government website; 2) it is an opportunity for citizens to have easy access to administration and receive government services using ICT; 3) to provide citizens access to

⁷ e-government program, Government of Mongolia,
http://www.icta.gov.mn/icta/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=63&Itemid=55

administration and services using ICT, the project has to consider access challenges to serving any citizen, from any location, with no consideration of religion, gender or age (Constitution of Mongolia, p.1).

All these reasons will be described later, but special focus will be on the third reason: public access to administration and services through ICT. Government organizations are working hard to put information and services on-line.

One example is the Mongolian Taxation Authority website – www.mta.mn. This site has not only information about the authority, but also an extensive list of services for citizens and organizations. Among them is a soft-copy download of all tax forms, previously only available at tax agents in printed form at a cost. Now any business or individual can download the forms from the website, fill them out and bring them to the “one-point service” to be submitted. It’s an extensive advance in the use of ICT in administration. However, only those with access to Internet services can access the site and benefit. A 2003 survey showed that there were only 50,000 Internet users in Mongolia, around 4% of the population. The rest, without access, are left behind. One way to address the access issue is via Internet and information centers.

As described earlier, citizens’ information and service centers were established in some aimag centers years ago, and only a few are still operational. Even in existing centers there is limited access to government information and services. Development of a government representative portal would provide broader opportunities for citizens to have this access.

A government representative portal could be based on the experience and knowledge gained from the public management information system and the open-government website. The latter was a prime ministerial initiative in 2001 and was set up to “strengthen linkages between the private and public sectors and to facilitate public contribution of opinions to state policies and laws” (www.open-government.mn).

The initial beneficiaries were the private sector, who could directly address government officials and the prime minister himself. Over its 5 years of operation, there has not been a steady increase in the number of users, however, and most users are citizens rather than business people, at whom it was originally targeted.

Content is managed by the prime minister’s office, and the contact page has the address of the prime minister and staff responsible for maintenance – the website manager and webmaster. All government organizations, agencies and institutions are involved in the website, especially those related to forums, discussions and submissions on bills. There is a working schedule for line ministries, responsible for oversight of the website and reporting on it at cabinet meetings, as approved by the prime minister (see [Annex 3. Schedule of work at “open-government” website](#)). The schedule is developed for 6 months. As it can be seen from this schedule, each of the line ministries is responsible for providing feedback and comments made through www.open-government.mn website as well as responsible for reporting about it to Prime Minister and other ministries at the meeting of the Cabinet.

Since the open-government website is closely linked with work of line ministries, government agencies and institutions, it has extensive linkages to websites of their organizations, projects and initiatives. In turn, there is a link to the open-government website on each website of governmental organizations,

including ministries, agencies, institutions and aimag governors' offices, as well as on NGO websites such as Open Forum, MIDAS/MONITA, Mongolian development gateway.

The website of the cabinet secretariat at the prime minister's office shows that in each cabinet meeting, the agenda calls for line ministers to provide updates and information about their work on the open-government website (<http://www.pmis.gov.mn/cabinet/index.php?news5>)

The public management information system has also been expanding since it began in 1996. Websites of government organizations now include websites not only of central government organizations and agencies, but also of governors' offices of the 21 aimags and information about the offices of the governors of 340 soums. Cabinet secretariat, as the main implementing agency for maintaining and regularly updating information on this website, coordinates and cooperates with other government organizations, ministries, agencies and institutions and with donor and international organizations.

In about 10 years of operation, it has been visited by over 540,000 people, or over 4,500 per month, a number which compares with popular non-governmental sites such as www.olloo.mn, www.forum.mn, www.gateway.mn. Easy access to websites of other government and state organizations provides broad opportunities for finding information and the opportunity to receive on-line services from government organizations otherwise troublesome to access.

For example, links to state and government organizations like parliament (www.parl.gov.mn), the presidency (www.president.mn) and government, facilitate the search process and eliminate the need to remember the addresses of every government organization. That it is frequently visited, with its content viewed and feedback provided on a regular basis, indicates its popularity and attractiveness for different stakeholders. However, there are still only few who have access to the Internet and these websites in order to benefit from this service.

7. Lessons learnt and experiences gained from implementation of e-government programs

Since the initiation of the open-government website, launched in 2001, there have been positive effects, such as:

- business and public have started using the open-government website and the public management information service to find information on government organizations and their work. The number of hits on the www.pmis.gov.mn website has passed 500,000. The number of hits on the www.open-government.mn website has passed 120,000 since May, 2004.
- in most cases, laws and regulations are available to the public after approval by government and parliament. However, it was seen as essential to make them available before passage so that the public could provide input and suggestions to bills and regulations. The www.open-government.mn website has had extensive input for many bills and regulations.

- regular visits of government staff to the website provide opportunities for quick response and “feedback on issues and concerns raised by public” (L. Ariunaa, Review of Open-Government Website, p.4, manuscript).
- Prime ministerial leadership has been a major success factor for this initiative.

Implementation of the public management information system (PMIS) project in 1996-1999 also helped progressive changes in government. These have included:

- when the PMIS project was introduced, there were few (perhaps no) public servants who could use computers or even work with common office programs like Word, Excel, Power Point. Nowadays, if you walk into a government office, you are almost bound to find computers, printers and copy machines.
- Public servants started using emails extensively, even for their personal mail. In the present PMIS system, there are over 150 computers in the cabinet secretariat office alone, all connected to the local area network (LAN). Public servants have started sharing information and communicating via email. Most public servants nowadays have their email address on their name card.
- PMIS has expanded beyond what it was 8-9 years ago, with new agencies, organizations and institutions. There are over 30 organizations linked up to PMIS, including 11 ministries and 20 agencies and institutions.
- government organizations connected to PMIS all have websites, good first-hand public information sources.
- aimag governors’ offices have followed the example of previously implemented projects and now have 30-50 computers, connected to the local area network. Some aimag governors’ offices e-mail government organizations at the central level.

Despite those positive changes and impacts, there are bigger challenges to be addressed. These include enhancing the internal government system with ICT, involving not only ministers, but all government officials in updating websites and providing feedback on issues addressed at government websites, especially on bills, and to provide information on website visitors (location, issues raised etc).

There is also the issue of the digital divide between rural and urban people. This exists even between people living downtown and in the suburbs of Ulaanbaatar, the capital city. Nice buzz words and phrases such as e-government, public on-line services, public participation in the decision-making process, these all remain buzz words and phrases for those in rural areas and Ulaanbaatar outskirts, where there are few access points.

Of 7 CISCs set up with UNDP support in 1996-1999, only 3 are still operational, and even those are more the old information resource centre/library type, supplying subscribed newspapers and magazines, policy documents and materials delivered monthly or quarterly. There is no Internet or e-mail access in these centers; it was disconnected because of the high connection costs, and there have been no initiatives to resume Internet and e-mail provision from those centers yet.

In the survey to assess the current ICT situation in Mongolia, specific questions on the e-Mongolia program and e-government initiatives were developed and answered ([questionnaire, Annex 2](#)). The questions were put to representatives of governors' offices, school principals, telecommunications representatives, individuals and citizens in some 36 soums, with over 50 people being interviewed.

Asked whether they had heard about the e-Mongolia and e-government initiatives, almost all respondents responded positively, and said that it was mainly through radio and television. The same response was received on the e-government master plan: people had heard about it, but had not been involved. This was despite the fact that on a number of occasions, progressive governors or officials from a soum governor's office had expressed an interest in being involved in the project.

Asked what particular projects or programs they would be interested in being involved, the answer was mostly the "Computers for all" program of e-Mongolia. As for e-government, the focus was on involvement in an internal information system, so that governors' office staff could share information, files and documents within the organization first.

One set of questions related to whether the organizations had ICT development policies in their organizations; almost all replied in the negative. In 10 cases (33%), the response was that the soum governor's action plan did include section on staff training.

The situation of soum organizational equipment was interesting. On average, a soum had 10 computers, in the governor's office, school, kindergarten and/or bank. This was quite high for a population of 500-700, averaging 1 computer for 25-30 people (excluding the youngest). Only 2 or 3 organizations interviewed had LANs installed in their organization, so for the others, documents and materials sharing was on floppy or through flash disks. Even in soums where dial-up access was available, there was no knowledge of how much this opportunity provided.

Asked about skills, knowledge and experience of those using ICT, it was said that all computer users had had limited short-term training courses, conducted by students on summer vacation or visitors. No specific plan for skills training had been developed, so capacity building was spontaneous and ad hoc.

8. Recommendations on how to reach the poorest and most marginalized groups with information relevant to their needs

Considering that the government of Mongolia is putting efforts to develop ICT in Mongolia to reach out to the rural population and at the same time, there is a need from the poorest and marginalized groups to have access to information, it's possible to develop different approaches to reach out poorest and marginalized groups.

One approach is to mobilize communities at the central level, when the different government and non-governmental organizations along with the private sector combine their efforts and forces to provide necessary services to the rural population of Mongolia. This has been already initiated by the ICTA, when the government organizations (for example, ICTA) is working with MIDAS/MONITA/MASCO NGO and cooperating with the private sector (for

example, banks) through developing programs for delivering computers for affordable prices to citizens. The long-term leasing program has been jointly developed with leading banks of Mongolia, so that the citizens would be able to pay-off costs of the computers.

The second approach is to mobilize communities at the local level. This can be done with cooperation and coordination of governmental and non-governmental organizations and private sector at the local level – at aimags, soums and baghs. According to the previously mentioned survey, the most of the respondents were somewhat aware of the e-Mongolia and e-government programs shows that these programs are known to soum citizens. Respondents said, moreover, that they would like to be involved in these projects and initiatives, especially in the “Computers for all” program of the e-Mongolia program. In a number of soums in Dundgovi and Khentii aimags, there was special interest in the “Computers for all” program through a computers leasing program, since most people living in the soum center were public servants, working in the governor’s office, school, library, health center etc. Although, the public servants receive salaries and have regular income, considering that their average income is mostly shared among 3-4 members of the family, their income would not be considered sufficient enough. So, for these groups of local population, the involvement in e-government program of Mongolia through introducing leasing agreements with the banks is the viable solution to enable them to get access to technology, information and services, etc.

The third approach is to reach out to poorest and marginalized groups. According to the survey, the representatives of local governors’ offices expressed their interests in setting up a network at their offices, connecting computers so that local governors’ offices would be able to provide with information and services to the general public and get them involved in what the governor’s office was doing. In one case, it was mentioned that they would like to run “computer training for the unemployed” (Intec Co. Ltd, ICTA and MIDAS/MONITA NGO, Current Situation of ICT in Mongolia, 2005; typescript). The main reason for this statement is that besides public servants, there are fewer options for work available at the soum and bagh levels, so majority of population at the local level are unemployed. For these people, there is a need of developing special places for access to information and services, such as subsidized community information and access centers, where the citizens with low or no income can have access to information and services, thus being able to be part of what’s going on in the country. Considering that some of those soum centers have limited electricity supply (sometimes between 8:00pm-11:00pm – 3 hours per day), that the postal services (including distribution of subscribed newspapers and magazines) reach citizens here in 2-3 weeks time, that the most popularly listened program is a program of the only nation-wide radio broadcaster (which is pro-party dominated broadcaster), the ICT could play one of the leading roles to fill this gap in this situation through providing on-line access to information and services. The citizens of those soums can read newspapers online, listen to and watch some of the on-line FM radio stations and TV stations as well as be able to communicate easily through email with their friends, relatives, colleagues and even potential employees; participate in the different on-line training – distance education, in-service training, etc. The centers could provide trainings and capacity building activities for those people involving into this trainings people

with more advanced skills from school, governor's office, etc. , as well as identify areas where there is need of developing their skills. For example, most of the people, who are unemployed at the soum centers are herders, who lost their livestock due to the natural disasters. The thing which they do the best is herding animals. There is a need of developing programs, which would provide training and capacity building exercises for herders, such as training on using computers, software applications and etc, so that those people can be able to advance themselves in using ICT in their daily life, thus becoming compatible in even aimag level. Returning to the earlier implemented CISCs, it is apparent that they could serve as a basis for further development with newer information and communications technologies. This could be through setting up information and service access points for the unemployed, those poor but keen to learn something new. These information and service access points could provide computer skills training for people to use in finding new employment opportunities and exploring new challenges. There are big challenges in involvements in these activities, and great benefits. As well as gaining computer skills, people could learn languages, find information (on education, health, employment etc) and be able to communicate with others.

In the current approach, there are three major issues, which needs to be considered.

One of the issues is to consider involving most active and influential citizens from local community in this process, so that they could lead other citizens and encourage using ICT tools for the advantages of the citizens themselves.

Another idea is to involve citizens' communities of these areas in Ulaanbaatar. These communities in Ulaanbaatar came from the same area where the centers will be piloted, thus they now what is the needs and demands of the citizens living in this particular areas. So, the members of communities in Ulaanbaatar could work together to find our and send out necessary and demand-searched and looked for information to those living in countryside.

The third important issue, which needs to be addressed here is the development of demand-based contents. According to survey, there was a little understanding of what kind of services could be delivered to rural areas, so that those services could meet the demand and needs of those living in countryside. Thus, there is a need of "building" demand for ICT-based services – introducing them to www.mta.mn website (website of the Mongolian Taxation Authority), so that they can find necessary forms from there; or even let them have access to websites of the banks (www.egolomt.mn), so that they could find information related to their bank account without asking about it from the bank person. Among the contents, which needs to be delivered to the citizens, could be simple thinks, such as getting certificates and necessary documents required for citizens. This could include opportunities to find out information for individuals such as social security benefits, health insurance, driver's licence application, educational opportunities near where they live (e-learning), employment opportunities and encouraging active participation in not only the decision-making process, but also in the activities of local communities and communities of their interests.

9. Resource materials

- E-government master plan, 2005, Mongolian government, Ulaanbaatar.
- E-Mongolia National Program for 2005-2012, 2005, ICTA, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.
- Review of open-government website of Mongolia, 2005. Encyclopedia of Digital Government, manuscript.
- Current Situation of ICT in Mongolia, 2005: Intec Co. Ltd, ICTA and MIDAS/MONITA NGO, typescript.
- World Public Sector Report, 2003; UNDP.
- Constitution of Mongolia.

10. Abbreviations

ICTA – Information and Communications Technology Authority

CRC – Communications Regulatory Committee

UNDP – United Nations Development Program

ICT – Information and Communications Technology.

CISC – Citizens' Information and Service Center

SHD – Sustainable Human Development

USAID – US Agency for International Development.

NIDA – National Information Development Agency

PMIS – Public Management Information System

MIDAS/MONITA NGO – Mongolian Information Development

Association/Mongolian Information Technology Association Non-Governmental Organization

UNDP – United Nations Development Program

MTA – Mongolian Taxation Authority

11. Attachments

Annex 1. Map of Citizens information and service centers:



Annex 2. Questionnaire about E-Mongolia and e-government program

Questionnaire to define the current situation of ICT development in aimag and soums of Mongolia, conducted within framework of “Current situation of ICT development in Mongolia”

Purpose:

To define the development of ICT in Mongolia in aimag and soum levels.

Coverage:

Khentii, Dornod, Bayankhongor, Gobi-Altai, Selenge, Arkhangai, Khovd and Umnugovi aimag centers and selected soums from these aimags.

The governmental and non-governmental organizations, private companies and individuals are expected to be covered within this study.

Questions

1. ICT policy related questions
2. ICT infrastructure related questions
3. The skill, knowledge and experience of people using ICT
4. The situation with equipment, software and applications
5. Need and demand for ICT.
6. Knowledge about the E-Mongolian National program implemented from the Government, opinions about the program and their suggestions and ideas.

Questions:

1. ICT policy related questions
 - 1.1. Does your organization have some policy document on developing ICT? Yes
No (of no, then explain ...)

- 1.2. What kind of ICT development policy documents exist in your organization, please describe in detail

2. ICT infrastructure related questions
 - 2.1. Describe the capacity of your soum telecommunications center, what kind of channel is available, how many users, how many governmental organizational users and how many private users, etc.
 - 2.2. Describe if there is a plan for extending telecommunications network, and if there is a possibility of accesing Internet, etc.

3. Skill, knowledge and experience of people using ICT
 - 3.1. How many computers and other ICT equipment are there at your soum, how many people using them.
 - 3.2. What kind of equipments are used - computers, printer, scanner, etc.
 - 3.3. What are educational levels of people using these equipments and what schools they have graduated from?
 - 3.4. Have these people participated in any computer and equipment usage training, if yes, then how long was it and who conducted trainings?
 - 3.5. What are demands for training and courses?
 - 3.6. What are barriers to improve their ICT skills, knowledge and experience and how they were overcoming those difficulties.
 - 3.7. When the ICT equipments were purchased?

4. Current situation with ICT equipment and software and applications.
 - 4.1. How many computers are there in your organization, what capacity and specs, i.e. hard disk drive, CD-ROM, multimedia enabled, etc.
 - 4.2. What purpose the computers are used for?
 - 4.3. What kind of software and applications were used?
 - 4.4. What other equipments exist in your organizations (printers, scanner, modem, etc. – as per type, brand name, number, etc.)
 - 4.5. The average usage time of ICT equipment

5. Demand and need for ICT
 - 5.1. What are needs for ICT in your organizations – computers, equipment, software and applications, improving education skills of staff, etc.
 - 5.2. What are demands for training and courses ?
 - 5.3. Paying capacity

6. How much do they know about E-Mongolia national program, their opinion and suggestions on this
 - 6.1. How much do you know about E-Mongolia program, describe in detail of what it's about?
 - 6.2. Possibility of being involved in E-Mongolia program, if participated before, in what partuculary they have been involved in
 - 6.3. Knowledge about e-government

- 6.4. Opportunities for citizens of soum, which are opened with implementation of e-government program, what barriers exist for its implementation in local level, ways of overcoming those barriers, etc.

Annex 3. Schedule of work at “open-government” website)

APPROVED. PRIME MINISTER OF MONGOLIA

TS.ELBEGDORJ

**WORKING SCHEDULE AT “OPEN GOVERNMENT” WEBSITE
(Second half of year 2005)**

Ministries	Period	Responsible Minister	Responsible officials
Ministry of road, transportation and travel	2005.V.25- VI.07	G. Batkhoo	Ts. Oyungerel, J. Uranchimeg
Ministry of construction and urban development	2005.VI.08-21	N.Batbayar	G. Tsogtsaikhan J. Uranchimeg
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	2005.VI.22-VII.05	Ts. Munkh-Orgil	N. Buyandelger O. Enkhbayar
Ministry of Environment	2005.VII.06-26	U.Barsbold	N. Bayaraa
Ministry of Social welfare and labour	2005.VII.27-VIII.09	Ts. Bayarsaikhan	B. Delgermaa D.Ganchimeg
Ministry of Justice and Internal Affairs	2005.VIII.10-23	Ts. Nyamdorj	Sh. Solongo
Ministry of education, culture and science	2005.VIII.24-IX.06	P. Tsagaan	B.Delgermaa Sh. Bat-Erdene
Minister on Emergency Management	2005.IX.07-20	U.Khurelsukh	N. Bayaraa
Ministry of energy and fuel	2005.IX.21-X.04	T. Ochirkhuu	G. Tsogtsaikhan J. Uranchimeg
Ministry of Defence	2005.X.05-18	Ts. Sharavdorj	N. Bayaraa
Ministry of finance	2005.X.19-XI.01	N. Altankhuyag	G. Tsogtsaikhan A. Enkhbat
Ministry of Food and Agriculture	2005.XI.02-XI.15	D.Terbishdagva	E. Sumya
Ministry of Health	2005.XI.16-29	T. Gandi	B.Delgermaa D. Ganchimeg
Ministry of Industry and Commerce	2005.XI.30-XII.13	S. Batbold	G.Tsogtsaikha E. Sumya
Minister on State inspection	2005.XII.14-27	D. Dorligjav	E. Sumya