

National Policy on ICT

Since the election of Mr Abdoulaye Wade at the head of state of Senegal, March 19, 2000, the political authorities give special attention to Information Technology and Communication (ICT) in economic and social development of Senegal. This option has been reaffirmed at the policy statement made at the National Assembly October 20, 2004 by Prime Minister Macky Sall who said on this occasion that "The Government intends to make ICT a powerful vehicle for accelerating economic growth and modernization of our administration".

Since 2000, the legal and institutional measures have been taken following:

- Defining a national strategy for ICT development,
- Adoption of new Code of Telecommunications,
- Establishment of the Regulatory Agency of Telecommunications (ART),
- Creation of the Agency for State Information (ADIE);
- Creation of a department responsible for promoting ICT,
- Full Liberalization of the telecommunications sector.

Moreover, under the definition of the Accelerated Growth Strategy (SCA), ICT is a priority cluster. Furthermore, the National Program of Good Governance (PNBG) has identified ICT as an instrument for improving the productivity of public services, the development of quality services and the introduction of modern communication.

Overall, this policy is part of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Document (DSRP), adopted in 2002, which is a contribution to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which aim to:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
- Ensuring universal primary education;
- Promote gender equality and empower women;
- Reduce child mortality;
- Improve maternal health;
- Combat HIV / AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
- Ensure environmental sustainability;
- Develop a global partnership for development.

The three priorities of the PRSP are:

- Doubling the per capita income by 2015 as part of a strong balanced and better distributed;
- Extend access to basic social services by accelerating the development of basic infrastructure to enhance human capital by 2010;
- To eradicate all forms of exclusion and achieving gender equality especially in the levels of primary and secondary education by 2015.
- Under the PRSP, the development of Information Technology and Communication

The sectoral policy (LPS)

The government of Senegal has just published his Letter of Sector Policy (January 2005) The objective of LPS is to present the general guidelines by 2008 and the strategy of the Government of the Republic of Senegal in the telecommunications sector.

The LPS 2004 - 2008 comes 6 years after the opening of capital of Sonatel and after the liberalization of the mobile service in 1998. These two events led to record results which include:

- Strong growth in subscriber base of mobile phone service,
- Connecting approximately 1000 on 14 200 villages in the country to the fixed telephone network, a significant improvement in quality of service,
- A contribution up to 6% of the telecommunications sector to the GDP in 2003,
- Investments of over 100 billion on fixed and mobile networks between 2000 and 2003,
- The creation of 22 000 indirect jobs through telecenters, cyber and phone card distributors.

Despite these achievements, the telecommunications sector suffers far from certain shortcomings, which are in particular:

- A weakly regulated monopoly,
- Low competition on the mobile,
- Insufficient investment to finance the universal service,
- An expectation which is not always filled in terms of job creation in the field of ICT,
- A penetration rate still insufficient for all segments (fixed, mobile, Internet),
- A lack of effective regulation to define the playing field between operators and service providers.

However, in the context of globalization and the multiple challenges posed by the Information Society, the Government of Senegal is convinced that to make the country a showcase of telecommunications in the ECOWAS zone, install priority competition sustainable and also to quickly deploy the best technologies for access of the urban and rural universal service. To do this, a development fund universal service be put in place to support investments in rural areas.

The government wants to position Senegal as a preferred destination for investment in ICT and strengthen the productive and employment generation.

The major priorities by 2008 include:

- Tripled the number of telephone that will grow from 1 million in 2003 to over 3 million subscribers in 2008,
- Increase the sector's contribution to GDP,
- Significantly improve the rate of rural service by connecting 9 500 villages by 2008. Networks of fixed and mobile telecommunications will cover all villages centers for 2010,
- Democratizing the Internet and consider it as part of universal service (phone + internet).

To achieve these objectives, the government strengthened the institutional framework by creating the Ministry in charge of telecommunications.

This department will ensure regulation in the telecommunications sector and to adopt appropriate reforms.

The Agency for Regulation of Telecommunications (ART) for its part, will play a part, the role of referee and regulator and also create the conditions of dynamic competition between healthy and fair traders.

The opening of telecom markets to competition will mean the end of the exclusive rights of Sonatel. Thus the state will be the ultimate guarantor of the new rules governing the sector. And the texts of new applications of telecommunications code will be adopted and the ART will make the upgrade of all matters relating to interconnection.

In the context of further liberalization of the sector increased, the state provides a first step in choosing an operator who will have a blanket license allowing it to operate in all segments of the telecommunications market.

Source: <http://www.telecom.gouv.sn/>