



Foreword

We are all aware of the momentous changes in the global environment. In both the economy and the society, the transition from industrial to information is becoming increasingly marked. Now Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are the main drivers of the process of change. They make transactions faster and cheaper, facilitate global communication and therefore, make a greater range of goods and services available rapidly around the world.

The ICT and Software industry has tremendous potentials for growth in Bangladesh. As a developing country Bangladesh needs to modernize these industries. Development of this sector could play a key role in generating employment opportunity, manpower export and also poverty alleviation. It is really encouraging that the government has recognized the importance of this sector giving top priority for development declaring it as Thrust Sector.

Realising the importance and potential of this sector, the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) formed a committee called "**FBCCI Task Force on ICT Policy of Bangladesh**", consisting of FBCCI, Bangladesh Association of Software Information Services (BASIS), Bangladesh Computer Samity (BCS), Internet Service Providers Association of Bangladesh (ISPAB) and TechBangla. Representing all of the bodies the team studied all available materials and prepared a draft ICT policy. The draft policy has highlighted the need for the development of infrastructure, legal and regulatory framework, human resource development, export market development, E-Governance, etc. I have firm belief that by promoting ICT we can supplement country's export earnings in the post-MFA period when the readymade garments (RMG) sector may face a stiff competition.

I thank all involved in formulating the Draft ICT Policy of FBCCI for their endeavour and hope that this will help the government to finalize the national ICT Policy.

Yussuf Abdullah Harun
President



FBCCI RECOMMENDATIONS ON
NATIONAL ICT POLICY



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P R E A M B L E

- 1.00 There was a time when physical resources, such as Gold, Iron, Petroleum etc. were considered the wealth of a country. That is no more the situation. A nation is “rich” to the extent it “uses” technology in its daily life. The developed countries have achieved a higher level of economic affluence by virtue of their ability to use technology in fulfilling their national objectives. Those who did not do so are left behind. Hence the expression Digital Divide.
- 1.01 This is the Information-driven age. Information and Communication Technologies have advanced so much that any piece of information created anywhere in the world, is communicable all over the place within miniscular fraction of seconds. Since use of Technology is a sine qua non of economic development, any nation willing to improve the lot of its people, must per force make use of the tools available.
- 1.02 Agrarian Revolution came and went away; we were sleeping. Industrial Revolution passed by; we did not take advantage of it. Information Revolution has been knocking at our door for quite sometime; we have not answered. Opportunities still exist; we can not afford to miss this time. If we don't wake up and look around us, this unfortunate nation would continue to remain “have-not” and keep on blaming its luck.
- 1.03 Although it is now about four decades that Bangladesh were exposed to the technology of generating, processing and applying information through automation, it is only about few years that serious discussions have been taking place at all levels about the modus operandi of using the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in achieving our national goals. But like all other issues, we are only talking and talking, and not deciding.
- 1.04 It is about two years that the Government formed a Committee to draw up a National ICT Policy. Meetings after meetings, deliberations after deliberations, seminars after seminars were held. What has eventually been produced, as “IT Policy of Bangladesh”, does not cater for the needs of all the stakeholders. Creation of Technology is research; but its application is business.



Unfortunately, the Committee entrusted with the job ignored this vital dimension of any policy framework. As a result, the draft policy, as circulated, is heavily theoretical. Suggestions given by the business community in the various Seminars held on the Draft Policy were not incorporated.

- 1.05 Thus, Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the apex trade body of the country, had to step in. In a meeting held on 8 January 2002, FBCCI constituted a Committee called "FBCCI Task Force on ICT Policy of Bangladesh" consisting of 13 Members drawn from four different business stakeholders; namely BASIS, BCS, ISPAB and TechBangla. The Task Force was entrusted with the responsibility of preparing a suitable and workable ICT Policy by 12 February 2002 (Annexure-I).
- 1.06 The 1st Meeting of the Task Force was held on 16 January 2002 when the following decisions were made:
 - a A 3-Member Drafting Team was formed.
 - b. Each of the three major stake-holders (BASIS, BCS & ISPAB) were requested to submit their inputs to the Drafting Team within a week
- 1.07 The Drafting Team met several times, studied all available materials and decided on the Report Format. The Task Force held their 2nd Meeting on 3 February 2002 when the Report Format was approved.
- 1.08 The Draft Team submitted the Draft ICT Policy to the Convener of Task Force on 9 February 2002. The Task Force in its 3rd Meeting held on 10 February 2002 deliberated on the Draft Policy and finalized the Policy after necessary changes.
- 10.09 The Drafting Team was enriched by the voluntary help and assistance from the Members of the Task Force, in particular its Convener for his able leadership and constant guidance.



HISTORICAL EVENTS

- 2.00 The use of Information and Communication Technology in what is now known as Bangladesh started in 1964 when Atomic Energy Commission installed a Main Frame Computer.
- 2.01 United Bank Limited (now Janata Bank) and Habib Bank Limited (now Agrani Bank) pioneered the automation of Financial Sector towards the end of 60s.
- 2.02 Around the same time, Adamjee Jute Mills Limited converted their manual MIS to Computer, being the first Commercial house to automate.
- 2.03 The first major computerization in the Government was in the Bureau of Statistics which installed a donated Computer in early 70s.
- 2.04 With the invention of Micro Computer (aka Personal Computer) in early 80s, its use expanded to some extent. The whole of 80s saw some progress, limited mainly to financial sector.
- 2.05 A handful of very smart, highly educated and self-motivated young talents saw this phenomenon as a business opportunity, and a new breed of entrepreneurs emerged. Yet another private sector initiative found ground and a silent revolution took place by the end of 80s, without the national leadership taking any notice.
- 2.06 90s witnessed the real growth in the computerization of both financial and commercial organizations. Government Departments also followed suit, due mainly to the pressure from Donor Agencies.
- 2.07 By then ICT Industry in Bangladesh had established itself by successfully developing and implementing a few Application Software for both domestic and overseas markets, as well as data processing services for utility billing etc.
- 2.08 Having realized the potential of this sector, GOB, with financial assistance from ITC/UNDP, launched "Export Development and Promotion Project BGD/91/004" for Product Development and Market Identification in relation to export of Computer Software and Services.



- 2.09 Around that time, a number of studies were undertaken by engaging internationally reputed Consultants and funded by Donor Agencies. Following are a few of those studies:
- a. September 1990:
“Effective Application of Information Technology in Bangladesh and How to Advance IT”
By T.S. Garnier and C.M. Pang.
 - b. Jan 1992:
“Export of Computer Data Entry and Software Development Services from Bangladesh”
By Nusrat S. Retina
 - c. March 1994
“Software Export Potential in Bangladesh – Supply Factors
By John S. Morrison
 - d. February 1995:
“Development of the Bangladesh Software Industry – Recommendations for Action”
By John S. Morrison
- 2.10 Bangladesh Computer Council also undertook various studies under different programs during 1991-92.
- 2.11 Around that time, a World Bank funded project called Bangladesh Export Diversification Project (BDXDP) was launched, Computer Software being one of the identified items.
- 2.12 In May 1996 the then Caretaker Government permitted Data Communication through VSAT, and the first Internet Service Provider (ISP) was inaugurated on 6 June 1996.
- 2.13 The Task Force On Export Trade, in its 18th Meeting held in May 1997, identified Computer Software as a potential export sector and decided to carry out a study on the problems and prospects of the Industry.
- 2.14 This was followed by the Ministry of Commerce forming a Committee, vide its Notification No.BR/R-2/PANNYA-2(ii)/97(L-1-9) dated 28 May 1997, to make



effective recommendations for promoting export of Computer Software (Notification in Annexure - II).

- 2.15 The Committee, popularly known as “JRC Committee”, submitted its report to the Honorable Minister for Commerce on 6 September 1997 (Annexure - III).
- 2.16 In accordance with one of its recommendations, the Government constituted a Standing Committee, headed by the Vice Chairman, Export Promotion Bureau, with Professor Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, Ph. D. as its Adviser, to monitor the implementation of the JRC Committee recommendations.
- 2.17 The very first activity of the Standing Committee was a day long Seminar, organized in joint collaboration with Bangladesh Computer Samity, held on 18 December 1997, where Late Dewang Mehta of NASSCOM of India was the key-note speaker. This was participated in by a number of Honorable Ministers and dignitaries who had the opportunity of knowing what India did to become a leading player in International market of Software and Services.
- 2.18 On 4 January 1998 an Inter-Ministerial Meeting took a number of decisions to help growth of the ICT Industry, the most revolutionary one being withdrawal of all Duties and Taxes on Computer Hardware and Software at the import level. This was a major thrust for the subsequent developments, in as much as Computer became cheap and user base suddenly expanded.
- 2.19 According to the revised JRC report submitted to the Commerce Minister in January 2002, 24 out of 45 recommendations of the “JRC Committee” have been implemented.
- 2.20 Having recognized the changes that have taken place in the ICT Sector since 1997, the Standing Committee decided to update its report.
- 2.21 A revised Report was submitted to the Government in January 2002. The updated Report contains a new set of 40 recommendations (Annexure -IV).



NEED FOR A NATIONAL ICT POLICY

- 3.00 All the Studies made so far on the ICT Industry of Bangladesh, have pointed towards the need for a Policy Direction, so that efforts from various stakeholders can be coordinated.
- 3.01 Even the JRC Committee recommended that the Standing Committee, when formed, would formulate and implement policies, strategies and action plans. That was never done.
- 3.02 In early 2000 the Ministry of Science and Technology formed a Committee to formulate IT Policy of Bangladesh (Annexure - V).
- 3.03 The Committee after numerous deliberations created a Draft Policy, which was circulated to all concerned organizations (Annexure - VI).
- 3.04 Bangladesh Computer Council, which was acting as the Secretariat of the Policy Committee, held Seminars on the Draft Policy with the business community at various Chambers and Trade Bodies.
- 3.05 In view of the above, the Government has asked FBCCI to review the work that has been done so far, and finalize the Policy.
- 3.06 FBCCI formed a Task Force for the job (Annexure - VII), and decided to expand the scope of the Policy by including Communication Technology. Thus the document is called National Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policy.



4.00 VISION

To raise the quality of life by creating a knowledge-based society through the use of Information & Communication Technology.

5.00 MISSION

A countrywide ICT infrastructure should be developed rapidly to ensure access to information by every citizen from every segment of the society that in turn will enhance the sustainable economic development of Bangladesh.

OBJECTIVES

- 6.00 Make the Government a facilitator and enabler to create environment for the private sector to play the leadership role in developing ICT.
- 6.01 Implement open data communication regime and create a national communication backbone and a High Speed Internet Gateway.
- 6.02 Develop a pool of fully trained human resource at all levels to cater for domestic and overseas requirements.
- 6.03 Enact Laws and Regulations for uninterrupted growth of ICT, in conformity with World Trade Organization (WTO) stipulations.
- 6.04 Create a positive image about Bangladesh as a potential ICT outsourcing address.
- 6.05 Provide adequate business incentives for ICT Sector to have the breathing space it needs to take off.
- 6.06 Encourage use of ICT in all Public and Private Organizations.
- 6.07 Ensure speed, accountability and transparency in the Government activities through the use of electronic-governance.
- 6.08 Establish facilities for e-Commerce for both domestic and international transactions.
- 6.09 Create and maintain easily accessible secured and reliable National Databases of public interest.



- 6.10 Create facilities for Research and Development in ICT Sector.
- 6.11 Create a level playing field for all ICT operators both in the public and private sectors.



NATIONAL ICT POLICY

SECTOR: INFRASTRUCTURE

SUB-SECTOR : TELE / DATA COMMUNICATION

PRESENT STATUS (Feb 2002)

- 7.00 Tele-density at 4.6 per 1,000 is probably the lowest in the world.
- 7.01 Communication cost is exorbitant.
- 7.02 High Speed internal backbone does not exist.
- 7.03 Speed of the external Gateway is very low – 64 Kbps Max.
- 7.04 Wireless Local Loop (WLL) is not available.
- 7.05 Private operators are restricted to a band of 2.4 and 5.8 Ghz.
- 7.06 VOIP, which is an inevitable technological advantage, is artificially restricted.
- 7.07 The Telecom Regulatory Commission, formed in January 2002, is mostly comprised of retired govt. officials without any representation from the private sector and technologists.

GOALS (DEC. 2006)

- 7.08 To increase tele-density (fixed-line) to 50.0 per thousand in the urban areas and 10.0 per thousand in the rural areas.
- 7.09 To create inter-connectivity between different cellular phone operators.
- 7.10 To create Broadband Network internally and high speed international Gateway with a minimum speed of 2 giga-bps.
- 7.11 To make available high-speed broadband (at least 2 mbps) data communication link at the end-user level.

POLICY DIRECTION

- 7.12 In order to encourage BTTB to improve its services in an open competitive environment, private sector will be encouraged to invest in & operate tele/data-communication infrastructure.



- 7.13 Private Sector will be encouraged to build, own and operate telecommunication services, in direct competition with BTTB , so as to improve upon the tele-density.
- 7.14 BTTB will operate as a service provider in fair competition with the private sector.
- 7.15 Technologies such as VOIP and Wireless Local Loop will be opened up to the public.
- 7.16.1 The Telecom Regulatory Commission will be re-constituted with equal representation from the Private sector.
- 7.16.2 Infrastructure service and retail service to be treated as distinctly separate operations. Transfer prices from infrastructure to retail operations shall be the same irrespective of ownership.
- 7.17 Tariffs for all telecommunication services will be rationalized in line with the rates obtaining in the regional countries. The Telecom Regulatory Commission, after re-constitution, will be entrusted with the responsibility of fixing tariffs from time to time.
- 7.18 In order to have access to global communication network, Bangladesh will be connected with Submarine Cable.

ACTION PLAN

A. SHORT-TERM (By Dec 2003)

- 7.19 Telecom Regulatory Commission will be re-constituted.
- 7.20 Private Sector is allowed to set up Fibre Optic Backbone in locations of their choice, and offer services to general public.
- 7.21 Private Sector can establish telecommunication exchanges and distribution network under BOO System.
- 7.22 VOIP and WLL are open to private operators.
- 7.23 BTTB operates with clear separation of their infrastructure and retail service operations within 2002.



7.24 Submarine cable connects Bangladesh with the transcontinental trunks.

B. MID TERM (2004-2006)

7.25 BTTB operates as a private corporation



SECTOR : INFRA-STRUCTURE

SUB-SECTOR : PHYSICAL FACILITIES

PRESENT STATUS (FEB. 2002)

- 8.00 Grameen has setup some sort of "Technology Park" in their Centre located at Mirpur, Dhaka. But the facilities are nowhere near what is needed. On top of that, the rental is exorbitantly high.
- 8.01 Despite repeated assurances from the Government since 1997 about "IT Park", "IT Village", "High-Tech Park", not much progress has been made over the last four years. The only achievement so far is allocation of some land at Mohakhali for "IT Village", and another at Kaliakoir for "High-Tech Park".

GOALS (DECEMBER 2006)

- 8.02 To create appropriate physical facilities for investors to "walk-in" and set up development centers. These should include space, tele-data com, utilities etc. and be available at a very low rental

POLICY DIRECTION:

- 8.03 IT Parks with all necessary facilities will be established in strategic locations of the country.
- 8.04 Entrepreneurs, both local and overseas, would be allocated space at a very low rental in such IT Parks.
- 8.05 Certain IT Parks will be treated as Export Processing Zones.
- 8.06 Land will be made available at concessional prices for ICT Industry to set up software development, manufacturing, research and development outfits in the Hi-Tech Park at Kaliakoir.

ACTION PLAN:

A. SHORT-TERM (BY DEC 2003)

- 8.07 Complete the construction of the proposed ICT Village at Mohakhali, Dhaka.
- 8.08 Set up an ICT incubator within Dhaka city with necessary infrastructure support.



8.09 Locate a suitable site and establish a similar ICT Village in Chittagong.

B. MID-TERM (2004-2006)

8.10 Complete the proposed High-Tech Park at Kaliakoir, Dhaka.



SECTOR : INFRA-STRUCTURE

SUB-SECTOR : POWER AND OTHER UTILITIES

PRESENT STATUS (FEB 2002)

9.00 As the electricity generation capacity is much lower than the total national requirement, ICT Sector has been suffering from acute shortage of power, particularly in the rural areas.

9.01 Tariffs on electricity are prohibitive.

GOALS (DEC 2006)

9.02 To ensure adequate supply of all Utilities services, such as electricity, water etc. at lower rates, to the ICT Industry.

POLICY DIRECTION

9.03 Capacity of the Power Plants will be increased to take care of the total national requirement with emphasis on the rural areas.

9.04 Solar power to be encouraged.

9.05 Private Sector will be encouraged to invest in power generation and distribution sector to supplement the Public Enterprises.

ACTION PLAN

A. SHORT TERM (UPTO DEC 2003)

9.06 Reduce all Utility System losses to 10% maximum.

9.07 Allow private sector to establish power generation and distribution capabilities, each such unit having a clearly defined geographical area, with priorities in the rural areas.

B. MID TERM (2004-2006)

9.08 After evaluating the performance of the private sector upto 2003, permit the private sector to expand its activities in other territories, thereby reducing the dependence on the public sector.



9.09 Explore the possibility of building Regional Power Grid with the neighboring countries, such as India, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar etc.

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SECTOR : INFRA-STRUCTURE

SUB-SECTOR : ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

PRESENT STATUS (FEB 2002)

- 10.00 As many as five Ministries (Science and Technology, Commerce, Post & Telecommunication, Education and Industry) are involved in the development of ICT Industry. Each of these Ministries has its own priorities and the level of understanding about this Industry is not the same. As a result, there is a lack of co-ordinated actions.
- 10.01 The Task Force headed by the Honorable Prime Minister, which was created sometime ago, has been involving itself in discussing policy level issues rather than actual execution of decisions. Consequently, the focus that ICT Industry needs, is missing.

GOAL (DECEMBER 2006)

- 10.02 To establish a separate ICT Ministry with necessary authority and budget for the ICT Industry.

POLICY DIRECTION

- 10.03 Necessary organizational structure will be created exclusively for ICT Industry to consolidate the various aspects of ICT now being handled by the ministries of Science & Technology, Commerce, Industries, Cultural Affairs, Law, Post & Telecomm, and others.

ACTION PLAN

A. SHORT TERM (BY DECEMBER 2003)

- 10.04 Officials of MOICT will recruit suitable professionals having proven track record of positive contributions in this field, high standard of managerial capabilities and unquestionable ethical standard.
- 10.05 MOICT will focus on the following functional areas:
- A. Human Resource Development
 - B. Infrastructure



- C. Tele / Data Communication
- D. Legislations
- E. Industry
- F. Export
- G. Facilitate and support computerization of govt. functions

10.06 Technical staff appointed on Government payroll will be compensated in line with the local market.



SECTOR : HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

SUB-SECTOR : FORMAL EDUCATION

PRESENT STATUS (FEBRUARY 2002)

- 11.00 Number of Computer Science Graduates coming out of the Universities is inadequate.
- 11.01 Although a large number of talented manpower is available, concerted efforts to create human resource are absent.
- 11.02 Education Institutions are still following the age-old syllabus, in total disregard of the rapid changes in Information & Communication Technology.
- 11.03 A large number of graduates coming out of the Universities, are lost due to migration overseas.

GOALS (DECEMBER 2006)

- 11.04 To create a large pool of trained and skilled manpower for all components of ICT Industry for both local and foreign markets.
- 11.05 To train and re-train the skilled manpower as and when a new technology is available, thereby keeping the resource fully updated at all times.

POLICY DIRECTION

- 11.06 Faculty Members will be brought in from abroad in the fields where local teachers are not available.
- 11.07 Local Faculty Members will be developed under a crash program.
- 11.08 Capacity in the Public Universities will be increased to enroll increasingly large number of students.
- 11.09 Private Universities will be encouraged to expand their capacities.
- 11.10 "Computer Literacy" will be introduced as a Compulsory subject for H.S.C. and S.S.C. in phases.
- 11.11 All schools and colleges will be connected to Internet in phases.



11.12 Syllabus and Course Curricula for all levels of Computer Science education will be updated continuously.

ACTION PLAN

A. SHORT-TERM (UPTO DECEMBER 2003)

11.13 Government to give Internet connectivity and supply computers to schools free of charge as per following programmes:

- a. Ten Computers to each School in the District Head Quarters
- b. Five Computers to each school in the Upazila Headquarters.
- c. One Computer to each school in Union, subject to availability of electricity.

11.14 Undertake a crash program to train Teachers for the schools.

11.15 Increase the capacity of Computer Science Department in all Public Universities to 1,000 students per year.

11.16 Public Universities to appoint foreign Faculty till such time local expertise is not available.

11.17 Convert the existing "Institute of Information & Communication Technology" (erstwhile Computer Center) of BUET into a full fledged Faculty and offer both under-Graduate and Post-Graduate courses. This Institute will operate in the same way as the IBA of Dhaka University, and shall have Technical collaboration with one of the renowned Universities from the United States of America (such as, Stanford, Berkley, Carnegie-Mellon, Yale, MIT etc.).

11.18 Syllabus and Course Curricula of "Computer Literacy" as well as "Computer Science" programs will be reviewed and, if necessary, revised every two years in consultation with the ICT Industry in the private sector.

B. MID-TERM (2004-2006)

11.19 The proposed Institution of Information & Communication Technology (IICT) will be fully operational by 2004.



11.20 The capacity of IICT and the Computer Science Departments of the Public Universities will be increased in line with market demand.

11.21 Foreign Faculty will be phased out .



SECTOR : HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

SUB-SECTOR : NON-FORMAL

PRESENT STATUS (FEB. 2002)

- 12.00 Due to lack of proper training and exposure and environment automation of Government operations have been suffering.
- 12.01 The above Statement is also valid for Public Enterprises, Public Financial Institutions and most private organizations.

GOALS (DECEMBER 2006)

- 12.02 To make every Government employee Computer Literate.
- 12.03 To encourage Private Sector Workforce to become Computer Literate.

POLICY DIRECTION

- 12.04 All Government employees, present and future, will have to undergo Computer Literacy Courses the result of which will form part of their Annual Confidential Report, and impact their career progression.
- 12.05 Financial assistance at attractive terms will be made available to Institutions and students willing to buy Computers and related Peripherals.

ACTION PLAN

A. SHORT-TERM (BY DECEMBER 2003)

- 12.06 Appropriate Govt. authority to devise course curricula for Computer Literacy Program, and train all Government employees in phases, senior ones being the early recruits.
- 12.07 Atleast 25% of Mid-to-lower level staff and all senior officials will undergo this training by December 2003.
- 12.08 Nationalized Commercial Banks will be authorized to sanction loans to students, teachers and schools for purchase of Computers and Peripherals at 5 % simple rate of interest payable in 36 installments.



- 12.09 All ICT Training Institutions, both Public and Private, will be accredited with appropriate govt. authority which will devise standard Course Curricula and Testing Methods.
- 12.10 An Examination System (similar to the S.S.C. & H. S. C. Exams given by the Education Boards) will be introduced by appropriate govt. authority which will conduct annual examinations for the students being trained by these Institutions, and award Certificates to the qualified students. Such certificates will receive preference for employment in both Public and Private Sector.
- 12.11 Anyone who is not Computer literate will not be recruited in any Government job.
- 12.12 National programming competition should be organized and a national body should be formed to conduct it consisting of private and public sector representatives.

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SECTOR : INDUSTRY

SUB-SECTOR : HARDWARE

PRESENT STATUS (FEB 2002)

- 13.00 Withdrawal of Duties, Taxes at Import level from Computer Hardware in 1998 helped price reduction and market expansion of Computer.
- 13.01 Continued Levy of Duty and Taxes on communication products has been acting as a big hindrance to the Communication Network (WAN) Industry.

GOALS (DECEMBER 2006)

- 13.02 To encourage growth of Computer Hardware Industry in the private sector by establishing Assembly Plants
- 13.03 To create appropriate environment for progressive local manufacture of Computer Components, peripherals and accessories such as PCB's, Motherboards, Power supplies etc.

POLICY DIRECTION

- 13.04 Local entrepreneurs will receive the necessary incentives for setting up Assembly Plants and subsequent progressive manufacture of Computer Hardware and Peripherals
- 13.05 Joint venture outfits will be preferred during the early years, in order to ensure technology transfer.

ACTION PLAN

A. SHORT-TERM (UPTO DECEMBER 2003)

- 13.06 MOICT will have a Fund for financing R & D in Hardware manufacturing.
- 13.07 Duties and Taxes on communication products will be withdrawn.

B. MID-TERM (2004-2006)

- 13.08 Hardware and Peripheral manufacturing units will receive the same fiscal incentives as those of Software Export Sector.



13.09 Manufacturing Premises will be treated as document-based Bonded units, in order to ensure unhindered movement of Duty and Tax Free materials and components.

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SECTOR : ICT INDUSTRY

SUB-SECTOR : SOFTWARE AND SERVICES

PRESENT STATUS (FEB 2002)

- 14.00 Software and Services Sector is virtually non-existent, because of lack of domestic demand.
- 14.01 Whatever expertise is available within the country, is subjected to uneven competition from across the border.

GOALS (DECEMBER 2006)

- 14.02 To create sufficient domestic demand for this Sector, so that Software and Services can become a formidable industry to compete globally.
- 14.03 To earn US \$ 2 (Two) Billion through exports of Software and Services by 2006.

POLICY DIRECTION

- 14.04 Adequate funds will be placed at the disposal of all Government Departments, Public Sector Enterprises and other nationalized organizations to replace manual work by automation in phases, to ensure speed, transparency and accountability.
- 14.05 Private Sector will be encouraged to follow suit.

ACTION PLAN

A. SHORT-TERM (by December 2003)

- 14.06 3 % of the Annual Budget will be spent on computerization every year by each Ministry, Divisions, Departments, SOEs, Sector Corporations etc.
- 14.07 Import of foreign Application Software in areas where local expertise exist or can be developed, will be banned.
- 14.08 Nationalized Commercial Banks will complete their computerization program by 2003.
- 14.09 Every Government Ministry will have its own interactive web site.



14.10 Every transaction of VAT-ed items will be processed in Electronic Cash Register/POS system.

B. **MID-TERM (2004-2006)**

14.11 All Government, Semi-Government, Autonomous Bodies, Sector Corporations, Commercial Banks, Insurance Companies, Leasing Companies and others will switch over to computerized operation in replacement of manual system.

14.12 Retail outlets will be required to use Bar Coding System for all pricing and transactions.

14.13 Tender conditionalities for medium and large Government projects will be suitably amended to allow local bidders to participate.



SECTOR : ICT INDUSTRY

SUB-SECTOR : INTERNET

PRESENT STATUS (February 2002)

- 15.00 Current satellite Links are inadequate.
- 15.01 Data downloading speed is very low.
- 15.02 Internet Density is very poor, because of low availability of Computer and Telephones.

GOALS (December 2006)

- 15.03 To expand Internet user base to a level obtaining in the regional countries.
- 15.04 To help creation of Internet Content Provider.
- 15.05 To make use of available technology for data, video and voice transmissions.
- 15.06 Internet access cost will be reduced.

ACTION PLAN

A. SHORT-TERM (December 2003)

- 1507 A single Licence will allow the ISPs to use all equipment, and no additional licence will be required for re-selling any equipment nationwide.
- 15.08 VSAT Owners can install Data, Video and Voice Circuits.
- 15.09 ISPs are free to procure equipment from their own sources.
- 15.10 Inter-connectivity between different ISPs will be set up.
- 15.11 ISPs will be allowed to establish Multiple POP's.
- 15.12 VSAT Operators can operate phone lines under similar terms and conditions.



SECTOR : EXPORT MARKET DEVELOPMENT

PRESENT STATUS (Feb 2002)

- 16.00 Bangladesh is not known as a potential outsourcing country.
- 16.01 Traditional suppliers, such as USA, Ireland, Israel and even India, have been facing shortage of manpower. Also new markets are opening up in Mid-east, Japan, & Far East.

GOALS (December 2006)

- 16.02 To become a major player in the international market.
- 16.03 To achieve an export value of US \$ 2.00 (Two) billion by 2006.

POLICY DIRECTION

- 16.04 Bangladesh will be projected in the International Market as a potential outsourcing country for Software and Services requirements.
- 16.05 Technology Corporations such as Microsoft, IBM, Computer Associates, Oracle, SAP etc. will be lured to set up their R & D Centers in Bangladesh.

ACTION PLAN

A. SHORT-TERM (By December 2003)

- 16.06 Government will set up Marketing Offices in U.S.A., EU and Japan to project "Bangladesh Capabilities". Such offices will be operated by IT Marketing Professionals from the private sector. They will be accountable for achieving quantifiable targets within the budgetary allocations.
- 16.07 Participation in relevant International Fairs / Exhibitions will be increased from the present two to four every year.
- 16.08 Atleast two Marketing Missions, one in the North America and another in EU, will be sent each year.
- 16.09 Development Partners will be encouraged to provide funds for undertaking a study on Bangladesh ICT Industry with the focus on the export potential.



16.10 Establish highest level contacts with a number of Multi-national IT Corporations and invite them to set up R & D centers in Bangladesh.

A. MID-TERM (2004-2006)

16.11 Marketing Offices will be opened in Australia, Mid-East, Far East and Africa.

16.12 Atleast one Multi-national IT Corporation will establish R & D Centre in Bangladesh.



SECTOR: FISCAL

PRESENT STATUS (February 2002)

- 17.00 Duty/ Tax-Free import is allowed in respect of Computer Hardware and Software only.
- 17.01 Communication products, and similar items continue to be heavily taxed.
- 17.02 Automated Teller Machines (ATM) and other computerized banking devices continue to be heavily taxed. Local Banks can not afford these.
- 17.03 VAT at local sale level continues.
- 17.04 Tax Holiday, as offered, is not clearly defined.
- 17.05 Bank Interest continues to be prohibitive.
- 17.06 Financial incentives, as offered, can not be utilized due to procedural problems.

GOAL (December 2006)

- 17.07 To make Computer, Networking Products and related technology items cheaper and affordable by most users.
- 17.08 To simplify fiscal incentive procedures.

POLICY DIRECTION

- 17.09 ICT related products will be made cheaper so that most users can afford to buy.
- 17.10 Government Revenue collected from ICT related products is so insignificant that withdrawal of Duties and Taxes will not affect the national coffer much. Rather new revenues from VAT and income-tax will enhance govt. earnings.
- 17.11 ICT Industry will be supported through financial incentives at least over the next 10 (ten) years.

ACTION PLAN

A SHORT-TERM (by December 2003)

- 17.12 Existing exemptions of Duty and Tax shall continue.
- 17.13 Duties and Taxes on communication Products will be withdrawn from July 2002.



- 17.14 VAT at the local sales level on Computers, Peripherals, Networking Products, ATMs and related items will be withdrawn from July 2002.
- 17.15 Tax Holiday for ICT Industry will be allowed for 10 (ten) years, and the Registration procedures will be simplified.
- 17.16 Bank Interest rate for ICT Industry will be reduced to 7 %.
- 17.17 Equity Participation Fund of Tk. 100 Crore will be converted to Venture Capital Fund.

A. MID-TERM (2004 – 2006)

- 17.19 Cash Subsidy of 25 % will be available for all export of Computer Hardware, Components, Software and ICT Services.



SECTOR: LEGAL AND REGULATORY

PRESENT STATUS (FEBRUARY 2002)

- 18.00 Copyright Act 2000, which was enacted to include, among others, Protection of Intellectual Property Rights, is yet to be implemented.
- 18.01 Laws relating to electronic payments, digital signatures and electronic documents do not exist.

GOALS (DECEMBER 2006)

- 18.02 To implement Copyright Act 2000 by 2002.
- 18.03 To enact necessary laws for electronic payments, digital signatures and electronic documents.

POLICY DIRECTION

- 18.04 Ministry of Law will take necessary steps to implement Copyright Act 2000 immediately.
- 18.05 Ministry of Finance will allocate necessary funds to implement Copyright Act 2000.
- 18.06 Law Commission will be entrusted with the job of framing new laws to cater for the following:
- a. Payment through Internet
 - b. Acceptance of Digital Signature in lieu of physical signature, where appropriate.
 - c. Digitally authenticated electronic Contracts, Letters of Credit, Commercial Documents etc.
 - d. Protection of Data Security and Interoperability through encryption standards.
 - e. Protection against electronic fraud and forgery, hacking, virus etc.
 - f. Appropriate amendments to the following Laws and others:
 - i. Bangladesh Penal Code
 - ii. Banking Companies Act



- iii. Bangladesh Foreign Exchange Act, 1947
- iv. Bangladesh Banker's Book Evidence Act
- v. Contract Act
- vi. Arbitration Act
- vii. Evidence Act
- viii. Money Loan Court Act
- ix. Companies Act

ACTION PLAN

SHORT-TERM (BY DECEMBER 2003)

- 18.07 Implement Copyright Act 2000 in full in 2002.
- 18.08 Law Commission to start enacting Cyber Laws.

MID-TERM (2004-2006)

- 18.09 Enact Cyber Laws
- 18.10 Amend all Laws affected by Cyber Laws



SECTOR : ELECTRONIC-COMMERCE

PRESENT POSITION (February 2002)

- 19.00 Highly insufficient infrastructure in existence today for effective e-commerce
- 19.01 Cyber laws, int'l credit card transaction rules, internet penetration etc. are either non-existent or highly restrictive.

GOAL (December 2006)

- 19.02 All necessary cyber laws including necessary laws and regulations are to be framed for allowing e-Payment for local and international transactions to facilitate e-commerce and will be enacted.
- 19.03 Internet infrastructure will be made available at thana level.

POLICY DIRECTION

- 19.04 E-commerce is to be highly encouraged and patronized to bring new levels of efficiency in business transactions and to open up new horizons in products and services export.

ACTION PLAN

A. SHORT-TERM (by December 2003)

- 19.05 Open up internet infrastructure business totally to private sector.
- 19.06 Allow internet-based transaction authorizations for locally issued int'l credit cards (may be with a per-transaction-ceiling of USD100).
- 19.07 Govt. to allow payment of income tax, VAT, license fees etc. through e-payment.

B. MID-TERM (2004-2006)

- 19.08 Constitute e-commerce supervisory organization to oversee consumer rights, check frauds, and regulate authentication/certification services in connection with e-commerce.



SECTOR : ELECTRONIC – GOVERNANCE

PRESENT POSITION (February 2002)

- 20.00 Government operations continue to be manual and computerization is virtually non-existent.
- 20.01 Due to non-use of Technology, speed, accountability and transparency in the Government activities can not be implemented.

GOAL (December 2006)

- 20.02 All Government Offices will be fully computerized and manual system replaced.
- 20.03 Excepting the national security issues, all Government activities will be hosted in their web sites.

POLICY DIRECTION

- 20.04 E-Governance will be implemented to ensure speed, accountability and transparency of all Government activities.

ACTION PLAN

B. SHORT-TERM (by December 2003)

- 20.05 Every Government Office will have its web site.
- 20.06 At least 25 % of manual work of each Government Office will be computerized.
- 20.07 3% of the Revenue Budget of each Ministry will be spent on computerization each year.

B. MID-TERM (2004-2006)

- 20.08 Complete computerization of all Government, Semi-Government, Sector Corporations, Autonomous Bodies etc. will be implemented fully, and manual system replaced completely.
- 20.09 Every activity in each Government Office will be hosted in the web site, with the exception of information of national security.



SECTOR : BANGLA STANDARDS AND PRACTICES

PRESENT STATUS (February 2002)

- 21.00 Two Bangla Characters (Khanda TA & Danrhi) are not in the Unicode Standard.
- 21.01 Bangladesh is not a member of Unicode Consortium.
- 21.02 Bangla Keyboard is not standardised.
- 21.03 There is no Operating System and Application Packages where Bangla Environment is available.
- 21.04 Internet and Intranet Contents cannot be published at ease (as Text) in Bangla. E-mail correspondence in Bangla is not generally available

GOAL

- 21.03 To have standard Bangla code and keyboard.
- 21.04 To make Bangla useable in every aspect of ICT.

POLICY DIRECTION

- 21.05 Unicode Coding should be as per National Standard for Bangla (BDS:1520 Revised)
- 21.06 Bangla should be implemented at the Operating System level and useful package software should be developed in Bangla environment.
- 21.07 Facilities should be available to create contents on Print, Electronic and Digital media.

ACTION PLAN

A. SHORT-TERM (by December 2003)

- 21.08 Appropriate govt. authority (ICT Ministry) will become a full member of Unicode Consortium.
- 21.09 All Bangla characters to be accepted as Unicode standard.
- 21.10 Bangla Keyboard will be standardised as per the choice of Users.



B. MID-TERM (2004-2006)

21.11 Development of Operating System, Internet Browsers and Application Packages will be done in Bangla Environment.

21.12 All Govt. contents published in the Internet and Intranet should also be done in Bangla.

21.13 Govt. will make arrangement to make ICT resources available in Bangla.



SECTOR : OTHERS

22.00 Necessary Laws and Regulations are to be framed for allowing E-payment for local and international transactions

A. SUB-SECTOR: INDEPENDENT CONSULTANTS

22.01 Growth of automation is dependent on the availability and quality of Independent Consultants.

22.02 Individuals, firms and companies desirous of offering consulting services will have to register with appropriate govt. authority.

22.03 All medium to large procurement in both Public and Private Sectors will be required to make use of Independent Consultants.

22.04 Independent Consultants can not have any tie-up, financial or otherwise, with any vendor or user.

B. SUB-SECTOR : NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS (NGO)

22.05 NGOs have been engaging themselves in ICT business in direct competition with the Private Sector. They have the advantage of arranging funds as donations and loans with nil or negligible interest, and use the same fund to compete against companies who borrow funds from Commercial Banks at about 15 % interest. This is an uneven playing field.

If NGOs are interested to do business in ICT Sector, a level playing field has to be ensured.

end