ICT development in Kenya;
Strategic positioning to catalyse growth

(Draft final v1)

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Context: The Kenya ICT Action Network (KICTANet)

KICTANet was created in October 2004 and currently comprises over 50 organisations and networks of ICT initiatives in the country as a multi-stakeholder network with members from the private sector, civil society, media, academia, development partners and government. It is a network of committed volunteers from organisations, networks and groups, who believe in collaborative policy advocacy activities and the sharing of resources and skills. The advocacy activities are focused on the development and use of ICT to support poverty reduction and the transformation of livelihoods. For the past years, KICTAnet has acted as a central meeting point and platform for collaboration and activity for various stakeholders (media, civil society, private sector, development partners and government) interested in greater and more affordable access to Internet and Communications Technologies (ICTs) and services in Kenya.

The multi-stakeholder model for advocacy and input in ICT policy has proven to be very effective. For the time that the network has been in operation, members have contributed time, provided in-kind and cash contributions as required implementing activities.

Objectives of the Kenya ICT Action network are:

Δ To improve the effectiveness of ICT policy advocacy work by expanding base for support of ICT initiatives, providing support for members actions and audience for members ideas

Δ Encourage engagement in mutually supportive activities for lasting change

Δ Facilitate effective dissemination channels regarding the ICT policy process to keep everyone updated on what is going on in the sector

Δ Provide access to varied and multiple resources/skills

Δ Pool limited resources for the common goal to achieve effects that single organisations cannot

Δ Form a nucleus for action and attract other networks

Δ Link organisations and networks working at the community level to those specialised and working in the broader political space

Since creation, KICTANet quickly filled a gap that existed to a create platform that brought together key stakeholders in the industry in a slogan – *lets talk though we may not agree-* . Today the organisation is acknowledged   in government and out of the government. The process did have risks but most importantly are the valuable lessons   for KICTANet and for others to learn . It will be a vantage point for the organisation to look back as well as inward on what it could have done differently and the likely outcomes. This will provide a framework to create strategies for future to ensure its continued relevance in the fast changing market

(Source: KICTANet documentation)

Acronyms

APC	Association of Progressive Communications
CATIA	Catalyzing access to ICT in Africa
CCK	Communications Commission of Kenya
ICT	Information and communications Technologies
KICTAnet	Kenya ICT Action Network
KIF	Kenya ICT Federation
MoIC	Ministry of information and Communications
MSP	Multi stakeholder process
NCS	National Communications Secretariat
nd	No date
RoK	Republic of Kenya
TESPOK	Telecommunications Service Providers of Kenya

Operational definitions

Multi-stakeholder

Multi-stakeholder is a broad term to describe grouping of governmental, intergovernmental, civil society and private sector stakeholders to bring about change. These changes include;

- sharing information on problems and solutions
- developing guidelines for best practice for policy making, commercial activities and reporting etc
- developing and delivering action plans for implementation

<div align="right">Calder (nd)</div>

Networks Ownership

'a phenomenon where the members work within the network and not for it , not simply performing the business of the network but taking responsibility for the ensuring that the business remain important , beneficial and well implemented'

<div align="right">Bernard (98)</div>

Executive Summary:

This research commissioned by KICTAnet seeks to take a vantage point to look backwards and forward into the future to seek a strategic positioning considering; the socio/economic and political dynamic drivers that influence ICT policy change and how should multi stakeholder efforts respond and catalyse change.

The study investigated the socio-political and economic dynamics influencing ICT development that pointed to the creation of KICTAnet and the previous efforts to establish multi-stakeholder partnerships. It discusses KICTAnet and its internal dynamics to manage differing membership expectations, asses the impact of KICTAnet and lessons on ICT evolution and to propose a strategic future role and positioning to catalyse ICT policy development.

This descriptive research collected primary and secondary data. Field data was collection over the months of May /June /July 2007 amongst KICTAnet membership through purposive sampling from a list comprising a population of 342. From this population, 25% of the membership was sampled. The data obtained from field, literature review and mailing list activity of KICTANet mailing list after analysis forms the basis of this report

The key finding in this research is that KICTAnet is a good initiative that is on *'top of things'* that have filled a gap to provide a mechanism for social exchange for the industry at strategic level. However, to remain strategic and relevant, it should position itself to be the frontier buster on ICT issues. Kictanet nevertheless has to continuously review its mission to avoid collapse like other initiatives whose mission was narrow and become irrelevant. For Kictanet to maintain its pre-eminent positioning, it has to offer a value proposition to the industry. This will be attained by focusing on a core role of forum for exchange, lead advocacy and lobby, scope trends in the industry and rally the industry to address key issues and significantly avoid involvement on day to day issues of stakeholders. KICTANet should continue to champion cross cutting issues on content, infrastructure, and the marginalized consumers. In order for it to accomplish its mandate effectively, a thin secretariat is to be maintained to give direction.

The preferred membership structure is core team who carry the spirit of the kictanet and other members drawn from sectoral interests and members at large. Membership would include; core team acting as vision setters, corporate - providing technical skills and individual members to tap into organisations that would not otherwise be members.

To sustain and strengthen kictanet ,it is recommended that kictanet formalise its structure, create a well moderated blog for pre-researched debates, focus on strategic issues based around scenario planning, and review membership structure. While institutional membership is to be preferred to provide a longer term view as well as funding, individual membership is just as critical to take into account individuals who cannot join through their organisation eg UN agencies and government yet provide valuable intellectual experiences.

1   Background:

This study reviews the evolving ICT policy and regulatory environment in Kenya and the gaps that emanate from the changing dynamics and explores where KICTAnet contributes or can contribute to this development .The study further explores the internal dynamics of KICTAnet and how the key drivers of the organisation influence it to ensure success towards its mission.   The study output   contributes towards defining how KICTAnet   can position itself to contribute to effective change to serve the nation and the ICT consumer.

1.1 Project Objectives:

The general objective is to take stock of the last three years of KICTANet existence and explore a strategic positioning to ensure a relevance for KICTAnet and proactive contribution to ICT   development in Kenya . To achieve this general objective, the study has the following specific objectives, to;

Δ Investigate the socio-political and economic dynamics influencing ICT development and the prevailing situation that pointed to the necessity of creation of KICTAnet and document previous efforts to establish multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSP) forums and challenges faced.

Δ Describe KICTAnet and its internal operational dynamics to manage differing membership expectations

Δ Assess the impact of KICTANet and lessons on ICT policy evolution

Δ Propose a strategic future role and positioning   to catalyze   ICT policy development

1.2 Research questions

What is the optimal strategic positioning of KICTANet considering;

Δ the socio/economic and political dynamic drivers that   influence ICT policy change and how should MSP efforts respond to this change

Δ kictanet and   its internal dynamics and membership what is the motivation of continued membership or departure

Δ the impact

Δ the optimal strategic position to catalyse change

1.3 Importance of the study

In seeking to address the fast changing dynamics affecting ICT policy development and how to catalyse its growth in the long term, the study attempts to define strategic options that KICTAnet can pursue and an entry point to steward the ICT policy evolution in Kenya. Consequently, the study would be of interest to a number of stakeholders in ICT sector described below.

Kenya government and its organs will have clarity on a professional body that they can deal with. The current National ICT Policy guideline gazetted in March 2006 stresses the role of the civil society organisations, private sector and professional organisations. The government recognises the necessity of these institutions among others playing their respective but interdependent roles to promote ICT growth. In the National ICT Policy the government recognises the role of the civil society –' *to inform the policy making process by making relevant contributions in regard to ICT access, e-education, poverty reduction and e-Governance*.' Similarly, the policy recognises a need for strong professional bodies '.. *to foster professional ethics, standards and human resource development*.' (RoK 2006). KICTAnet seeks to contribute in that space and the study explores how best it achieves these key objectives to contribute to the government's objective for ICT development.

The private sector as well as the media will understand and appreciate the role of a professional organisation that seeks to be an honest broker in the development of the ICTs in Kenya. The dramatic changes in the ICT sector are confusing to many stakeholders and an institution that seeks to create understanding is imperative.

Countries with CATIA programmes and African countries generally can learn significant lessons on do's and don'ts for an effective multi-stakeholder partnership. The emerging ICT technologies and consumer demands put immense pressure for change. It is imperative that the stakeholders develop vehicles to manage change and lessons from the study would be useful in this regard.

KICTAnet members have a formal framework to share and modulate expectations for overall ICT market growth. The membership has very varied expectations and how to handle these expectations is important for the growth of KICTAnet into the future

Finally, the leadership in KICTAnet will have a strategic view to guide KICTAnet growth and contribution in the future.

1.4 Scope of the study

The scope of the study is KICTAnet operations within the Kenyan ICT policy and regulatory dynamic. The study traces the policy and regulatory framework evolution and seeks to develop a scenario over the next few years to position KICTAnet.

1.5 Research process

Data and analysis framework for this study is abased on an exploratory and qualitative research to describe perceptions of stakeholders on the role and space of KICTANet and the future positioning to continue being relevant and playing a role in catalysing ICTs in Kenya. Research design for field data is described in detail in section 7.2. Prior to field work, literature review was undertaken to set the context for the study and identify body of knowledge on theoretical foundations on policy development, multi-stakeholders processes, networking and policy evolution in Kenya. Other sources of data used reviewed for this research included KICTANet mailing list . The literature review and field data and mailing data form the basis of this study.

1.6 Structure of the document

Section 2 describes the Kenyan ICT evolution in Kenya to address the changing social political environment and demand for improved services by citizens. This section traces the various policy statements and the consequences. The section also reviews the often-divergent views of the key stakeholders and therefore a need to evolve an organisation that can create synergy among the players

Section 3 defines KICTANet evolution as a answer to create synergy among the divergent views of the key stakeholders and identifies areas that would be of concern to the budding KICTANet
Section 4 reviews the perception of KICTANet by members. Data for the section was collected from interviews and defines a strategic positioning for the organisations

After the conclusions, recommendations, and research design, a key area is background information that informs the study on multi-stakeholder process and networks. This is in section 7.3

2   ICT policy evolution and changing scenario

The government   implemented ICT policy reforms between 1999 and 2006 which resulted in a number of structural changes in the ICT sector. The policy documents released in January 1997, April 1999, and Dec 2001   illustrated in Fig 1   resulted in the following key structural changes;

- Elucidation of a long term vision of the ICT sector to contribute to socio -economic development

- Redefinition and clarification of roles in telecommunication sector development. The policy statements identified distinct roles for policymaking, market regulation in a competitive environment, dispute resolution and operation of services among multiple players. Private sector would henceforth be the key investor in the sector with profit being a key incentive as illustrated in fig 1

- Promulgation of a new market structure driven by the private sector in a competitive environment. Government was to withdraw as an investor through privatisation of the incumbent telecommunications sector provider.

Figure 1: roles definition in ICT sector
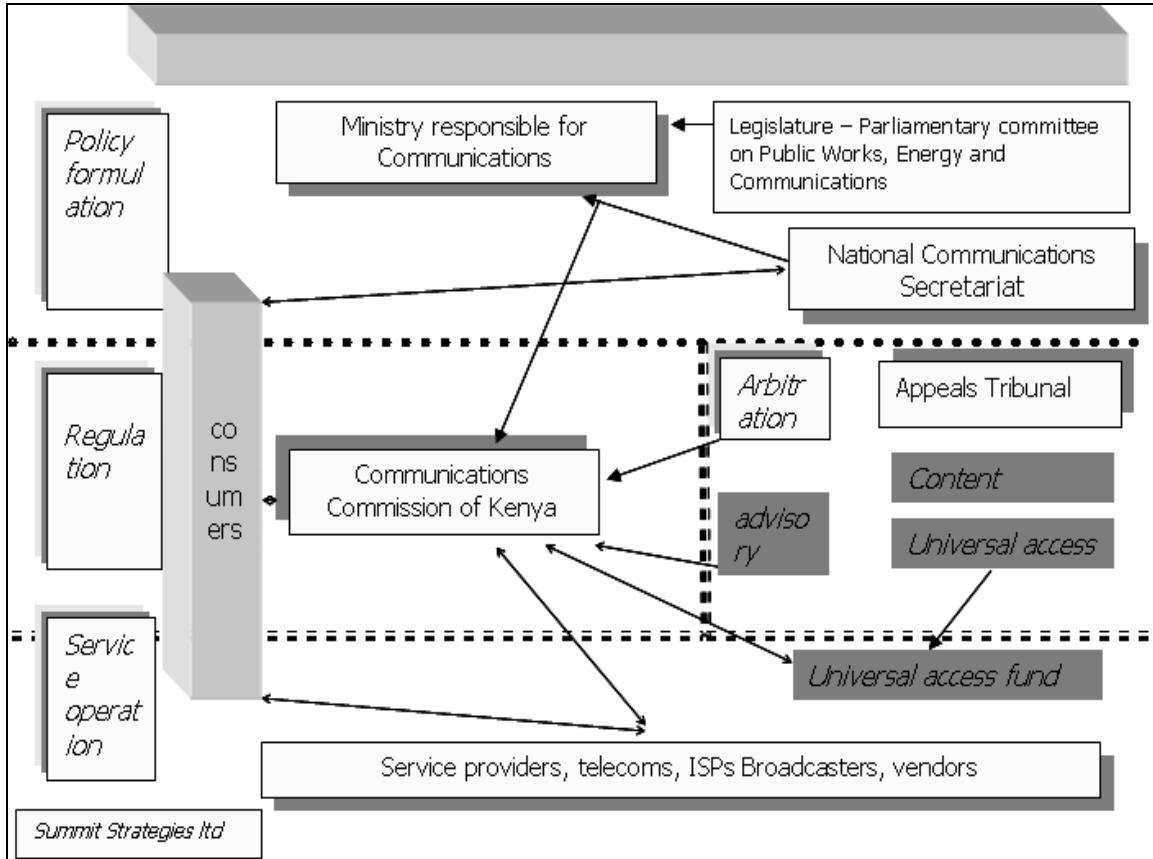
In operation of services, multiple operators compete in various market segments based on a philosophy of private sector operation in a competitive environment. The government consider competition as a tool to safeguard consumer interest by forcing lower tariffs and improved quality of service.

It is clear that not all objectives were realised. As illustrated in Fig 2, some of the efforts to deepen the liberalisation were not achieved . Additionally, these policies were inadequate in key areas and did not especially address convergence in ICT but instead focused on telecommunications only. This resulted in the clamour to review the December 2001 policy guideline. Multiple players lobbying for an new ICT policy ended with divergent perspectives and strategies resulting in loss of synergy.