

Formulating Policy and Project Implementation for Access to ICT for Persons with Disabilities in Nepal

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Outline

- Background
- Translating intent into action
 - Existing Legislation & Policy
 - Formulating enabling provisions
 - Programmes
 - Recommended approach

Significance

- National Census 2001 recorded disabled population as 0.45%
- The World Bank (1999) pegs the percentage as 67%
- Majority likely to be
 - illiterate
 - unemployed and
 - below poverty line
- Nepal ratified UNCRPD in 2010
- Committed to inclusion of the disabled

Barriers to Inclusion

- Barriers to Communication:

Owing to lack of availability, affordability and /or inadequate awareness, a large section of PwDs is deprived of accessible communications.

- Barriers to Self-Reliance:

Disabled people often face difficulties in leading life of independence and dignity

- Barriers to Empowerment:

Disabled people are often not equipped with necessary wherewithal to realize their true potential, to contribute to and participate in mainstream society

- Barriers to Inclusion:

Eventually this translates into isolation & marginalization

POTENTIAL: ICTs can...

However for ICTs to play these roles for PwDs, the ICT services must be available, affordable and truly “accessible”.



**Enable
effective
communications**

**Provide
access to
various
services and
information**

**Facilitate
employment**

**Contribute to
socio-economic
and political
inclusion**

Role of ICTs with ATs

- ▶ ICTs in conjunction with Assistive Technologies have the potential to bring a positive change in the lives of persons with various disabilities
 - ▶ Hearing
 - ▶ Visual
 - ▶ Speech
 - ▶ Mobility
 - ▶ Learning
- Also,
- ▶ Aged & illiterate

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Translating Intent into Action

- Key Players
- Existing Legal Provisions & Policy Environment
- Possible Amendments
- Programmes
- Way forward

Existing Provisions- Law, Regulation, policy

- **Constitution of Nepal (2007)**
 - ▶ Special provision by law for protection & advancement
 - ▶ Social security
 - ▶ Special privileges for disabled children
- **Protection & Welfare of the Disabled Persons Act(1982)**
 - ▶ Assistance for education, employment, mainstreaming
- **Protection & Welfare of the Disabled Persons Rules (1994)**
 - ▶ Free education, training
 - ▶ Disabled person device fund

Existing Provisions- Law, Regulation, policy

- **Education Act (1971)**
 - ▶ Special education
 - ▶ Inclusive education
- **Special Education Policy (1996)**
 - ▶ Awareness about inclusion
 - ▶ Self-reliance through education
 - ▶ Special equipment, material, teacher training
 - ▶ Vocational training
 - ▶ Adult education
- **Local Self Government Act (1999)**
 - ▶ Data collection
 - ▶ Support for activities relating to disabled

- **Telecommunications Act (1997)**
 - Ubiquitous, reliable & easily available services
 - Protection of rights & interests of consumers
- **Telecommunication Policy (2004)**
 - Reliable, accessible, affordable universal access
 - ICT for development & poverty alleviation
 - Community & individual access
 - Service appropriate to capacity & needs of rural areas
- **IT Policy (2010)**
 - Gives importance to access by aged, disabled

- Formulate a policy/ code of good practice for accessibility of telecom products and services through a consultative process.
- Include accessible service delivery, especially access to emergency services, as part of the license terms of operators.
- Use the Telecommunications Development Fund for providing fixed, mobile and broadband services for persons with disabilities using assistive technologies.
- Launch pilot projects and programmes for funding accessible ICTs
- Identify and adopt internationally recognized accessibility standards for telecommunications products and services such as those developed by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the International Standards Organization (ISO).

Recommendations: RTDF

- Identify accessibility of telecommunication and mobile services for persons with disabilities as a specific mandate of the universal service
- Implement pilot and large scale projects and programmes to provide basic and special telecom services for persons with disabilities.
- Fund accessible ICT centres with assistive technologies in schools/special schools through a pilot project scheme.
- Fund accessible community telephone/internet centres for public access in rural areas. This would also benefit the illiterate population.
- Fund pilot projects/schemes for providing mobile access by way of special tariffs and appropriate handsets with/without bundled content as per requirements of persons with disabilities.

Recommendations: MoIC

- Include accessibility within the provisions of the Telecommunications Policy 2056, (2004) and Telecommunications Act, 2053 BS (1997) through amendments.
- Fund training for persons with disabilities in the use of assistive technology for their communication needs or engage with Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare and Ministry of Education for this purpose.
- Work with Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology to ensure that e-governance and m-governance services are provided in an accessible manner.
- Develop accessibility guidelines for mobile equipment manufacturers and service delivery standards for service providers.
- Design a score card for accessible services and encourage accessibility amongst operators through incentives such as awards, tax breaks, concessions etc.

- **Telecommunications Act (1997) Preamble:**

1. Whereas, it is expedient to make the Telecommunications service reliable, **accessible** and easily available to the public, involve private sector as well in Telecommunications Service and to regularise and systematize such service.

Suggested Definition of Accessible Telecommunications Service:

Accessible telecommunications service means that the service can be used by a person with disability as effectively as it can be used by a person without that disability. (e-accessibility policy tool kit)

- **Telecommunications Act (1997):Section 13(b)**

2. Functions and Duties of the Telecommunications Authority:

To make the Telecommunications Service reliable accessible and easily available to the public

- **Telecommunications Act (1997):Section 13(m)**

3. Functions and Duties of the Telecommunications Authority:

To develop and extend or cause to be developed and extended the Telecommunications Service in such a way that it protects the rights and interests of the consumers including persons with disabilities

- **Telecommunications Policy (2004)**

- 2. Para 3.4 on Objectives:

Arrangement shall be made for providing opportunity to all persons in rural areas to use appropriate information and communication technology as a means of poverty alleviation of rural population and development of the rural areas. This would include special measures for illiterate persons, women, backward classes and persons with disabilities. Where required and as decided by the Nepal Telecommunications Authority, these may be funded from the rural telecommunications fund on least subsidy basis.

- Telecommunications Policy (2004)

- 2. Para 4.1 on Universal Access:

The telecommunication service shall be extended in a manner that there shall be universal access to reliable, affordable telecommunications services within shouting distance of inhabited areas, for all people including persons with disabilities, in both rural and urban areas.

The telecommunication service shall be made available to the consumers through the shared telephone. Emphasis shall be given to extend telephone as fixed, mobile, etc. therefor. The satellite system may also be applied for extension of service. Other services pertaining to information and communication shall be made available through the Community Centre.

- Telecommunications Policy (2004)

2. Para 4.8 on appropriate ICT:

Appropriate information and communication technology shall be made available as per the capacity and needs of the users of the rural areas including persons with disabilities.

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- **Priority:**
 - Education for the disabled
 - Vocational training
 - Individual access to information & services

- **Mean-Use RTDF to provide:**
 - Accessible ICT Centres in schools
 - Public access Telecentres in of hours
 - Accessible Mobile phones
 - Bundled Content

- **Methods:**

- A. Tender for ICT Centres in Schools**

- Infrastructure (Furniture, flooring, partitions)
- Hardware (Computers, servers)
- Assistive Software
- AMC
- Training/facilitation - MoE, Ministry of Women, Children & Social Welfare

Evaluation:

Technical prequalification & Financial

- **Methods:**

A. Tender for ICT Centres in Schools



Programmes: Focus Area

■ Methods:

B. Eol for Pilots Projects:

Project Types:

- Accessible ICT centres in rural educational/vocational training or rehabilitation institutes
- Accessible handsets with/without bundled content
- Accessible Public Telecentres
- Combination

Facilities:

- Telecom Connectivity
- Hardware (computers, mobiles)
- Assistive Software
- Content
- Training & Facilitation

■ Methods:

B. Eol for Pilots Projects:

Partnerships:

- Service Providers
- Hardware providers (mobiles, computers)
- Educational/rehabilitation Institutes
- Software & Content Provider
- Concerned Ministries

Evaluation:

Qualitative, points based

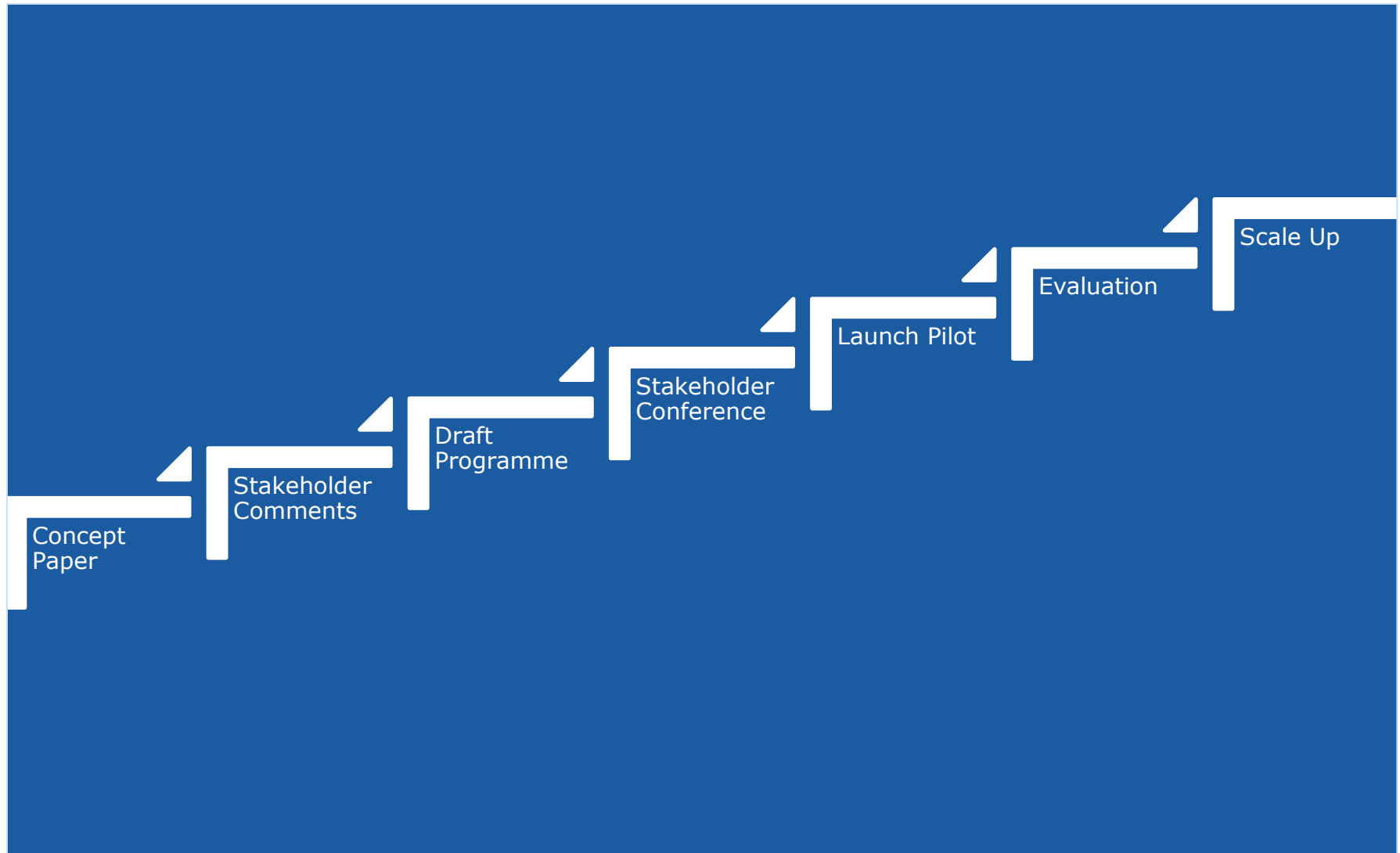
Programmes: Focus Area

■ Methods:

B. Eol for Pilots Projects:



Programmes: Recommended Approach



THANK YOU!