Niger Information and Communications Technology Assessment

SUBMITTED TO:

United States Education for Development and Democracy Initiative
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Executive Summary

This report describes Niger's current level of Internet connectivity, how information and communication technologies are being used and how they could be used to promote development of the country. The report is based on an assessment carried out by Yaovi Atohoun, Leland Coordinator for Benin, Eileen Reynolds, Research Triangle Institute, and Karl Stanzick, MTDS, in March 2001. USAID and the US Embassy in Niger requested this assessment in order to determine how the US Government can best assist Niger in improving access to information and communication technology. Based on what the assessment team learned they have recommended key actions for USAID and the US Embassy to take.

Niger's current Internet infrastructure is insufficient to meet the demand present in the country. With less than 15,000 functioning telephone lines, no mobile telephone infrastructure, one 128K connection to the Internet, and only one state-owned supplier of telecommunications services (Sonitel), Niger ranks among the most unconnected countries in the world. Real-time Internet applications such as searching the web, downloading files, or reading a newspaper online are currently extremely difficult, if not impossible.

Based on experience of the Leland Initiative in several other African countries the team recommends limited assistance to Sonitel to immediately increase bandwidth and improve the quality of the Internet connection. Coupled with this initiative the team recommends that the Nigerien government liberalize the Internet services sector in order to permit private companies to resell Internet connections and related services. There are several private enterprises already providing related services that are ready to compete for the chance to provide Internet services to the public.

Many non-governmental, multi and bi-lateral development agencies working in Niger have realized the possibilities offered by information and communication technologies and are attempting to integrate these into their programs. Many are consistently frustrated by the poor Internet connectivity in Niger. Some are trying to circumvent the poor connectivity by looking for wireless solutions and by trying technologies that do not require access to phone lines, such as rural radio stations that receive information by satellite. A new VSAT technology presented in the report offers a low cost option to connect areas outside of Niger's capital to the Internet.

The team recommends several programs that could assist Niger's development by using the Internet. Among these are connectivity for Niger's executive offices, improved research capacity for the national legislature, linking local government offices together through a network, and offering training at the local level to increase capacity of local governments and communities who will bear new responsibilities under Niger's decentralization program.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACMAD	African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development
ARDF	Africa Regional Democracy Fund
ANDDH	Association Nigerien de Defense des Droits de L'homme
CPRP	Comite De Pilotage de la Radio Publique
CILSS	Comite Permanent Inter-Etats de Lutte Contre la Secheresse Dans le Sahel
DRPT	Direction Regionale des Postes et Telecommunications
DHRF	Democracy and Human Rights Fund
DELGI	Delegation Generale a l'Informatique
DPRT	Direction de la Reglementation de la Poste et Telecommunications
ESF	Economic Support Funds
GSI	Groupe Sahelien d'Ingenierie
HKI	Helen Keller International
ISOC	Internet Society
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
ISP	Internet Service Provider
MTDS	Morocco Trade and Development Services
ONEP	Office National d'Edition et de Presse
ONG	Organisation Non-Gouvernemental
RTI	Research Triangle Institute
SNV	Organisation Neerlandaise de Developpement
SONITEL	Societe Nigerienne des Telecommunications
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
U.A.P.	Unité d'Appui au Programme à la Coopération Canadienne
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal
WARP	West Africa Regional Program

Niger ICT Assessment

1.   Introduction

USAID's Leland Initiative targeted Niger in 1996 as one of the first countries to receive Internet infrastructure and policy assistance. The 1996 coup d'etat and subsequent pull-out of the USAID mission to Niger in 1997 caused the postponement of these activities. This year as Niger has returned to a more stable government, the US Embassy in Niger asked the Leland Initiative to provide an assessment of the current state of the Niger Internet infrastructure and to identify opportunities for intervention and assistance. To complete this activity a team of three consultants consisting of Karl Stanzick of MTDS, Eileen Reynolds from RTI, and Yaovi Atohoun, Leland Coordinator from Benin, spent ten days in March 2001 meeting actors from the public and private sectors. Through these meetings and through reviewing documentation the consultants were able to determine Niger's current Internet situation, what factors are affecting its rate of development, and to suggest strategic interventions that could lead to a more demand oriented supply system, improved bandwidth, and useful applications for Niger's development. (see Annex A for full scope of work)

This report is organized into four sections: Pipes, Policy, People and Recommendations. Pipes refers to the actual Internet distribution network into and within Niger. Policy refers to the rules and regulations currently in effect and practiced in Niger regarding the use of the Internet and its associated technologies. People describes how end-users, including the private sector, development community, and Nigerien government, are using the Internet and other information and communication technologies and how the current situation effects them. The final section lists the recommendations of the team.

2.   Pipes

The current Internet infrastructure in Niger is insufficient, oversubscribed and virtually unusable. With less than 15,000 functioning telephone lines, no mobile telephone infrastructure, one 128K connection to the Internet, and only one state-owned supplier of telecommunications services (Sonitel), Niger ranks among the most unconnected countries in the world. No real-time Internet applications such as searching the web, downloading files, or reading a newspaper are currently possible. It takes 45 minutes to view the homepage www.yahoo.com.

The current gateway connecting Niger to the Internet is identical to those found in Benin, Madagascar, and other Francophone countries. In these countries France Cable et Radio (FCR) has been involved in the X.25 packet switching networks, for example TransPac in France, BeninPac in Benin, and NigerPac in Niger. The current

international connection from Niger to the global Internet is rated at 128Kb/sec. This capacity is completely saturated to the point where normal Internet connectivity is not available to anyone in the country and the more robust and time-insensitive e-mail system is the only system that is usable. National telephone connections, where available, are of very acceptable quality. Dial-up lines in Niamey were tested and all were shown to support very reliable and high-speed V.34 connections (28.8kb/sec). There are an estimated 1,500 subscribers currently connecting to the Sonitel Internet node fighting for a very limited number of modems accepting incoming calls. It is common during working hours to dial over 10 times before successfully connecting to the service. Calls to the Sonitel Internet node are billed at 75 F CFA per 90 seconds. Due to the saturation of the international capacity, one text web page can take up to 30 minutes to display canceling out both of the Internet's attractions of being low cost and offering real-time speeds. Sending and receiving mail from the local mail.intnet.ne mail server works well and the mail is delivered on a relatively regular basis. Several complaints from users reporting unexplained days of mail outages shows that the service is heavily subscribed and used on a continuous basis. Sonitel has installed upwards of 30 leased-line connections that are all functioning well and within accepted quality of service levels despite the age of the modem technology in use. The lack of performance of the Internet connections currently in service is due to the saturation of the international capacity and not with faults or poor quality of the national network.

The connectivity described above only applies to the metropolitan Niamey area. The scattering of telephone lines outside Niamey are of such poor quality that connecting to the Niamey Internet gateway is very difficult, if not impossible, due to the noise on the lines.

The aging and insufficient telephone infrastructure and the under dimensioning of the Niger Internet gateway are not the only reasons for the extremely slow development of the Internet in Niger. Sonitel is the unique supplier of Internet services in Niger and has no competition and therefore no sense of urgency to keep its customers happy. Weeklong e-mail outages are left unexplained to subscribers and many have been waiting over a year for the installation of their leased-line. Our own team's attempt to acquire temporary e-mail accounts for the duration of our stay took several days and could never have been accomplished by an individual on his or her own. No marketing of the service is visible in Niamey and the market is very poorly informed. The lack of information available to the public and business sector about Internet in Niger is so great that rumors and fantasy abound. The team heard during interviews that "Internet cannot technically work in the desert", "the Niger government is making copies of every message coming in and out of the country and this is why Internet is so slow", and that "the French don't want the Nigerians to have Internet".

3.   Policy

There is currently no official telecommunications policy currently in effect in Niger. The telecom regulator informed us that all telecommunications services are currently forbidden to all but the national monopoly, Sonitel. Only Sonitel has the legal right to provide any service in the telecom arena including Internet. Without a telecom law, an

effective, independent regulator, or Internet specific policy, no private sector investment will occur. The privatization of Sonitel was underway during our visit to Niger and should lead to the development of national telecom policy and the establishment of a more independent regulator.

The policy conditions in Niger are the policy conditions under which the Leland Initiative has worked for the past four years in over 15 countries. While lengthy bureaucratic changes are occurring which will privatize a part of the national monopoly and create a regulatory environment, the Nigerian people should not be made to wait any longer. Niger is left out of important developments in the world due to the lack of sufficient Internet connectivity. Niger's people are being penalized by not being allowed access to one of the most important self-developmental tools of this century.

4.   People

Niger's persistent poverty has not stymied the interest of many of its citizens in the possibilities of information and communication technology. Perhaps due to the hardships Niger has faced in recent years many are looking for ways to jump ahead and see ICTs as an important tool. This section addresses how people in Niger are using the Internet and other ICTs and potential activities that could use ICTs to assist in the development of the country.

In human development terms Nigeriens are worse off today than they were 30 years ago. In the year 2000 Niger was ranked 173rd out of 174 countries in UNDP's Human Development Index. 63% of the population lives on less than one dollar per day. Per capita GNP in 1999 was $200. The social indicators on child mortality, literacy, life expectancy, and primary school enrollment are low. The economy has not kept pace and the population has more than doubled. (World Bank www.worldbank.org/afr/ne2.htm) Niger has a low literacy rate of 13.6% of the overall population, with 20.9 % of males literate and only 6.6% of females. (CIA World Factbook 2000).

These figures demonstrate Niger's need for development assistance to help reduce poverty. Effective development assistance in helping Niger to increase its capacity to use the Internet and other ICTs will have untold positive impact on promoting development. ICTs can provide information and communication that can assist health workers, teachers, businesspeople, government employees, farmers, donor organizations and elected representatives in their work. The assessment team met many who are working on initiatives using the Internet to assist in Niger's development.

4.1.   Multilateral, Bilateral and other Donor Programs Related to Information and Communication Technology

This section provides an overview of what the assessment team learned from the donors we met in terms of what programs they have in place or are planning that have could benefit from an improved Internet connection. This is only a sampling based on conversations with individuals at each organization and not intended to be a

comprehensive list of such programs. The team did not have time to visit with every donor organization in Niger but did try to target those we knew had an interest in using information technology. There are certainly other initiatives not mentioned here which other donors are carrying out related to ICT.

Organisation Neerlandaise de Developpement (SNV)

SNV is interested in the use of technology to reach underserved populations. SNV is a major partner in the Rural Radios Initiative (see below). Among their goals, SNV wants to offer multimedia pedagogical information for community schools on the Internet using a Worldspace satellite to deliver their information to remote areas of Niger. They are interested in equipping schools with Worldspace receivers in order to access this information. If Niger had better connectivity they could send their multimedia pedagogical information to community schools. They have been seeking ways to get around the poor connectivity by testing out wireless solutions.

United Nations Development Program/Niger

UNDP/Niger has played an active role in the development of the Internet/ICT sector in Niger. UNDP staff economist Djiali Benamrane has been a leader in many of these initiatives. In 1998 UNDP carried out a feasibility study with the Government of Niger "Etude de Faisabilite de la Generalisation d'Internet dans l'Optique du Reseau de Developpement Durable au Niger". This was undertaken in the context of UNDP's Internet Initiative for Africa and was intended to launch a series of related activities, however the project did not get off the ground. One principal reason for this was that the Niger government was unable to meet the project requirement that host country governments match dollar for dollar the contribution of UNDP for the development of Internet projects.

UNDP/Niger is now the lead agency on a rural radios and development information centers initiative called RURANET/CID (see http://www.un.ne/home_pnud_fr/Dossier_fr/ue/radiosrurales_doc.htm for more information). UNDP is collaborating with several donor agencies including ACMAD, SNV and the U.S. Embassy/USAID. UNDP's goal is to have broad collaboration between all development partners in Niger including the government, public and private enterprises, donor agencies, NGOs, and civil society. The RURANET initiative seeks to install 160 rural radio stations across Niger. Development information centers would be located where there are rural radio stations. By 2007 the initiative hopes to have installed radio stations in every new commune and such sources of information are intended to assist in the process of decentralization currently being undertaken by the government of Niger. The leaders of this initiative believe that this information at the local level will be useful in the fight against poverty and in promoting good governance.

UNDP is targeting the most underdeveloped, resource-poor villages for rural radio stations. In relation to its rural radio initiative UNDP would like to make Internet access at the village level a reality. Given limited resources and that SONITEL is not likely to be able to provide services to villages, they are seeking ways around the use of telephone lines for Internet access. UNDP is targeting the most isolated villages, places where private companies would have no interest in serving. The rural radio stations that they

help to install are run by villagers themselves, not by outside experts. Rural radio stations are attached to or part of community centers and use solar energy. Worldspace provides access to Afristar satellite programming to rural radio stations for free. Through this access the radio station can offer information for different groups (farmers, schools, etc.) on different days of the week.

The village sets up an independent association to run the radio station and then gets permission to operate from the Niger government. According to UNDP, the Niger government has been very cooperative of this initiative and has granted permissions without delay. According to the guidelines of this program all ethnic groups, women and young people must be represented in the radio association. Also, programs must be in local languages. The stations are 100 % self-run (no intervention from UNDP). The village radio station's association will do its own fund raising, such as contacting donors, collecting membership fees from community members (example of 100 f CFA/person to become a member). In addition, they hire their own outreach staff. In Bankilare, where there is rural radio station, the villagers constructed the building that houses the radio station.

World Bank InfoDev Program

The team learned from the Centre de Coordination de l'Informatique et des Nouvelles Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication, in the Prime Minister's office, that the World Bank's InfoDev program will fund a study on ICT development in Niger. InfoDev, we were told, will provide a grant of $50,000 for the study. The Centre de Coordination de l'Informatique et des Nouvelles Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication suggested that there could be up to a million dollars to do applications from this World Bank initiative. This has not been confirmed by the InfoDev program.

African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD)

ACMAD is an Africa wide organization with its headquarters in Niger. ACMAD's director is very interested in effective use of technology for development. They are working in cooperation with UNDP and other donors to install rural radio stations in Niger. To increase people's access to the information offered on these stations, ACMAD distributes wind up radios to farmers and other villagers. Providing weather related information for farmers was the original basis for creating the stations, but ACMAD realized that you couldn't just do a radio station for meteorological information. So the stations also feature cultural and educational programs. The radio stations are owned and controlled by the village.

They are working in partnership with Worldspace and the Freeplay foundation (wind-up radios). They use donor funding to purchase radios. The village radio steering committees sell the radios to other villagers at 25% of the original cost – they calculate this cost as the same amount a villager would pay for batteries.

Bankilare, as mentioned above, is one rural radio station that has become very successful. Goudel is another one that is doing well, this one is just outside Niamey proper and is run by youth group. This group is using the radio to educate people about

not throwing their used plastic bags on the ground. The group offers wind-up radios to those who will go and collect the plastic bags that have been littered in the area.

ACMAD's director feels that there is no problem in introducing new technology in Niger. Resources and training are what are needed. He suggested the need to empower local communities using such technologies as rural radio. He also talked about the need for lower priced equipment, for example, laptops that could be used at village level.

ACMAD has a web site for more information – http://www.acmad.ne

4.2.   US Government -Funded Programs

The assessment team did not have time to examine all the possibilities for using ICTs for all of the currently funded USAID and US government programs in Niger. However, the team believes that improved Internet access would help all these activities by improving communications and offering opportunities for information sharing and research.

Africare

Africare had not been involved in information and communication technology initiatives previously because they did not seem applicable to the rural setting they are working in. However, this is changing. Africare submitted a proposal to USAID on March 7, 2001 to start up nine rural radio stations in the north of Niger (Agadez region) and are becoming more interested in the use of ICTs for development. Africare proposed to work in partnership with SNV and ACMAD on this rural radios initiative. They have included in their budget for rural radio some funds for add-on technology such as Internet access for rural areas. Africare, in collaboration with Helen Keller International, is also interested in creating computer training centers in regional capitals across Niger. Africare was also a strong advocate for bringing the ICT assessment to Niger.

Helen Keller International (HKI)

HKI also lobbied to get Leland/USAID to come to Niger to address the issue of Internet connectivity. HKI is very interested in use of ICTs for their Niger program and underlined the importance of improving Internet connectivity. Shawn Baker, HKI's resident representative in Niger, has written a concept paper on how ICTs can be used to help with their program efforts (prevention of blindness, micronutrient malnutrition and educating and rehabilitating the blind). The paper outlines how Internet can be used to provide up to date health information, increase networking opportunities for health workers, and can even assist the blind to gain better economic opportunity through training. HKI is already using the Internet in their program in Niger. For example, HKI participates in a trachoma and nutrition list serve discussion group, and they envision participation in other online discussion groups. HKI has already put some information online about its program in Niger. See www.hkitrachoma.org for more information.

National Democratic Institute International Affairs (NDI)

NDI is currently working on opening an office in Niamey to continue their work with the National Assembly. They are working to improve the capacity of the National Assembly leadership, deputies and staff. NDI has expressed interest in supporting greater Internet

connectivity and training for the National Assembly and increase their capacity to use ICTs to improve their work. (See Recommendation on page 17 for more information about this possible initiative)

NGO Funding Transparency Clearinghouse

The U.S. Embassy in Niamey has requested funding from USAID for an innovative NGO "Funding Transparency Clearinghouse." Due to resource constraints, it was turned down for Economic Support Funds (ESF) "Countries in Transition" funding as well as for Africa Regional Democracy Fund (ARDF) support. The ARDF committee recommended supporting the Clearinghouse through the DHRF. This initiative would create an NGO–run online data base of all development assistance channeled through NGOs, thus promoting coordination, transparency, and credibility for local NGOs willing to submit to such scrutiny. This supports U.S. foreign policy interests as it contributes to the growth of a vibrant civil society, a critical building block for the consolidation of democracy. It dovetails with the demonstrated commitment of other donors to promote Nigerien civil society.

The Peace Corps

Peace Corps volunteers are attempting to get connected to the Internet in the different regions where they work. One noteworthy initiative in the IT arena is the work of a volunteer, Don Johnson, who has provided assistance to a telecenter in Maradi to get connected to the Internet. Peace Corps volunteers come already equipped with the knowledge of the Internet and computers and are uniquely situated to understand the needs of the communities they live in and how to apply ICTs in assisting development efforts. The potential for volunteers to assist Nigeriens in using these technologies is excellent.

American Cultural Center

There are several ways in which improved Internet connectivity could assist the American Cultural Center in its activities. For one, the American Cultural Center has been working with Niger Ministry of Tourism to develop the tourism industry, including sending Nigerien officials to the US on study tours. Niger could increase the number of tourists it brings in and provide a benefit to the local economy by having information for tourists available online. Currently the Ministry of Tourism does not have e-mail and does not have a plan to create a web site to promote tourism. The American Cultural Center is interested in assisting the Nigerien government to offer information online. In addition they have been explaining to the government the importance of telephone and Internet services to the tourism industry. In addition, the ACC's other activities such as its public library and courses could benefit from improved connectivity.

4.3. Information Technology Training/Access to ICTs by Educational Institutions

In order to take advantage of the opportunities the Internet presents there must be people who know how to use it. This includes expanding Internet knowledge of the

everyday citizen as well as training those who will maintain and develop the IT infrastructure and train others. In terms of training IT professionals there are some organizations in Niger which offer courses, such as Institute de Formation aux Techniques de l'Information et Communication (IFTIC), but there is no formal degree program in Niger for computer science or other information technology. The Direction de l'Informatique has trained many Nigeriens who are now working in the private IT sector. The assessment team has found many leaders in the field have been trained abroad. For example the head of a major ICT related business was trained in Tunisia. The lack of Internet access in Niger has led many IT professionals and potential IT professionals to seek work outside the country. These individuals could potentially return to Niger to start up their own IT related businesses, or to work for an existing business, if the connectivity conditions improved. The current connectivity situation is discouraging to those with IT skills or those who wish to become IT professionals.

Internet access in schools and the University is limited if non-existent. According to one source Niger's Université Abdou Moumouni does not have access to the Internet at this time. The Direction de l'Informatique installed a network and helped the university obtain an Internet connection last year. However, the connection did not last long because the University did not have the funds to pay for the connection. Students and professors now try to obtain Internet service in Niamey. They often try to use the free services from one of the non-profit organizations that provide a computer or Internet access during the day. Some of those organizations are SNV, Direction de l'Informatique, and the American Cultural Center. These services cannot meet the demand – SNV for example must limit each person to one half hour on the computer in order to let others have access. Many times they must turn people away because the waiting list is too long.

4.4.   Niger Government

Many offices in the Nigerien government do not have access to a computer, much less to the Internet. The need for ICT's is pressing and the potential impact of ICTs for increasing efficiency, improving services to citizens, improving transparency and the flow of information is great. While the Assessment team was not able to do a comprehensive analysis of Nigerien government needs in terms of ICTs or their use of ICTs, we were able to determine from the government officials we met with that there is a great demand and support at the highest levels for improved Internet access and ICT use. We learned that the President of Niger had recently met with senior government officials to discuss the problem of communication and how to resolve it. Government offices such as the Ministry of Communications, Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Labor and Modernization of the Administration, are especially concerned by this question.

Several high level officials we met with, including the Secretary General of the Office of the Presidency, the Prefet of the Dosso Region and the High Commissioner for Decentralization, do not have computers in their offices. All of them outlined the need for computers, internal networks and Internet access so that they can better communicate and handle information. The Decentralization Commissioner explained how it sometimes took a week or more to send a fax to one of the regions she is working with in implementing Niger's decentralization plan. With an Internet connection in both places such communication could pass rapidly and the work could be done much more

efficiently.   The prefet of Dosso discussed his desire to be able to communicate better with local governments. Currently it takes him days to send a message to local government offices by mail or courrier.

4.5.   Private Sector

Many people affirmed that the Internet could be very useful to businesses in Niger, even the local trader in the market. For example, many traders currently use fax machines to place orders in Hong Kong and other locations. If they had access to the Internet this could greatly speed and facilitate ordering goods. One of our interviewees told us about a trader in the market who is illiterate, yet has purchased a computer and an Internet account because he realizes the utility of it for communicating with business partners. In addition, Niger has many talented artisans who produce hand crafted goods that could be sold to a wider audience if the Internet were more widely available to them.

The assessment team met with several IT related businesses in Niamey. In spite of the very limited bandwidth and other challenges of operating in Niger many are interested in branching into the Internet services sector if and when the sector is liberalized to allow private providers.

These companies are currently providing a variety of services such as web hosting and web page creation, computer equipment configuration for Internet access, cybercafes, and computer and related equipment and software sales.

4.6.   Internet Related Groups

There is an active discussion group called Internet-Niger (visit http://www.egroups.fr/group/Internet-niger for more information) for those interested in development of the Internet in the country. The group has approximately 58 members and counts among them many of the leaders of the IT field in Niger. Members of the group are mobilizing to lobby the government for better Internet connectivity and are preparing to organize a consultative group to lead this effort. The group serves as further evidence of the great interest in ICT and also dissatisfaction with the current state of connectivity.

Another initiative related to the promotion of the Internet is the Fete de l'Internet, held every year. Niger held its second Fete the first week in March 2001 and sponsored activities such as public "cybercafes" set up in schools and other locations to demonstrate the Internet and raise awareness among the population. The Fete de l'Internet was started by France in 1998 to expand popular use of the Internet. Please see www.multimania.com/fianiger/ for more information.

Other IT-related groups include an association for IT professionals, the Association Nigériènne des professionnels de l'Informatique (ANPI), an association for the promotion of Linux and other free software, the Association Nigériènne de Linux et des Logiciels Libres (AN3L), and a local chapter of the Internet Society - ISOC Niger.

All of these initiatives serve as evidence that there is a great interest in the Internet in Niger and that there are professionals who can help to develop and adapt ICTs to assist

Niger's development.

5.   Recommendations

5.1.   Pipes Recommendations

Assistance to Sonitel to Increase Bandwidth and Liberalize ISP Sector

Assistance funds should be made available immediately to increase Sonitel's Internet capacity, buy necessary hardware and software, train technical staff, identify, select, and connect ISPs, and develop a growth management plan. Estimated cost $350,000.

The Internet capacity at the Sonitel needs to upgraded immediately and private ISPs created that will better serve the market and assure competition and reasonable prices. By increasing the actual size of the Internet "pipe" coming into the Sonitel's existing infrastructure, the existing dial-up and leased line subscribers will be able to use the service they are currently paying for and not getting. The Leland approach of reinforcing the capacity of the national monopoly and shifting their role to one of a wholesaler of capacity to a group of private sector actors applies perfectly here. The private sector is ready and able to provide Internet services to end-users and Sonitel and the government of Niger welcomes this assistance. This activity will immediately improve the Internet infrastructure in Niamey and allow for competition and reasonable pricing, as normal supply and demand forces will reign.

Increase Internet Access to USAID Development Partners Outside of Niamey

Pilot projects connecting USAID's development partners via VSAT terminals should be immediately implemented and serve as a model and proving ground for the use of this technology throughout the country and the region. Estimated cost for equipment and service for one site for one year $15,000.

Almost all of the telecommunications infrastructure of Niger is centralized in Niamey and Leland experience has shown in other countries that the private sector is not capable by itself of building the Internet infrastructure into secondary cities, much less more isolated rural areas. A solution has to be found to affordably connect those outside of Niamey in a cost-effective way. Very recent advances in satellite technology have made it affordable to have end-user sites connected directly to the satellite with no need to rely on the national telecommunications infrastructure, which in Niger does not exist outside of the capital.

Existing USAID partners can be provided full Internet connectivity directly to a satellite and have exceptional access speeds at affordable and even self-sustaining prices. This possibility has not been available in Africa at these speeds and prices until second quarter 2001.

5.2. Policy Recommendations

The following activities would help support the development of a coherent and effective telecommunications/Internet policy in Niger:

Study tour for Niger Internet technical and policy civil servants to Morocco. $20,000 (2-3 people for one week in Morocco)

Sonitel technicians and policy makers have few resources and are isolated. While trips to the United States and Europe are common for Nigerien officials, the technological and policy gap between the developed nations and the developing nations is too large. US models may therefore not be applicable to the developing country situation. Morocco has done an exemplary job in reforming its telecommunications infrastructure over the last five years and has a policy of sharing this information with regional partners. Officials from Mali, Madagascar and Eritrea have participated in previous study tours to Morocco and these have had great success and impact.

Introduce new equipment technologies, products, and services on a regular basis.

R&D is a luxury that African companies can rarely afford. The risks associated with buying and testing new equipment are often too high and the take up of more efficient and cheaper technologies is late in coming to the areas that need it the most. USAID can strategically equip some of its partners with newer equipment and techniques that will inspire the private sector to try them. Another way to introduce new technologies is in USAID's daily operations as well as actively encouraging US private companies to introduce their products and services into the region. In Africa, few things are believed until they are seen. Getting things seen in Africa is not often worth the costs for equipment suppliers, therefore Africans are more often than not the last to know what the most appropriate products and services are for their applications.

5.3. People Recommendations

The assessment team has found that there is a great potential for the use of the Internet to promote development in Niger. Many we talked to underlined that access to the Internet is not a luxury, but a *necessity*, for Niger's development. All sectors, from health and education to democratic governance can benefit from the improved communication and increased access to information provided by use of information technologies such as the Internet.

Local Government Intranet

Problem: Difficulty of communications between government offices
Proposed Solution: Develop a network connecting local government offices (commune, arrondissement) in one or more regions to each other using the Internet. The new VSAT technology referred to on page 17 offers new opportunities to expand access to Niger's communes.

Strengthening Communications of the Executive Office

Problem: Low ICT capacity of Niger's Executive Office leading to inefficiencies and lack of understanding of use of ICTs for Niger's development
Proposed Solution: Improve the capacity of the Executive Office by improving IT infrastructure (networked computers), training in use of ICT for improved communications, and networking with other African executive offices through African Executive Office Network (Execnet)

Improving Research and Information Dissemination Capacity for the Nigerien National Assembly

Problem: Low research capacity due to lack of Internet access and training, lack of information available to citizens on activities of the legislature
Proposed Solution: Provide computer equipment, technical assistance in setting up a local area network, limited time subsidized subscription to the Internet for the National Assembly, training/demonstration for assembly members and their staff on how to put their information online for their constituents.

Strengthening the Decentralization Process Through Dialogue

Problem: Niger is in the process of decentralizing significant powers from the central government to the local level governments. In order to be successful this process requires open dialogue among the different stakeholders in the process.
Proposed Solution: Assist Nigeriens to participate in the Decentralisation Dialogue (DDialogue), a network of people committed to:

- ?? Increasing the exchange of useful decentralization information and perspectives between local and central level peers, within and across sectors, within participating countries, and across regions of Africa
- ?? Strengthening local government effectiveness, particularly in the area of public finance, local revenue generation, and citizen involvement in local governance
- ?? Increasing local engagement in decentralization policy development and implementation.

Assistance would include:
- ?? Hiring a local Dialogue coordinator
- ?? Training in Internet use for information exchange, especially using the DDialogue web site and discussion groups
- ?? Limited assistance with payment of Internet accounts and equipment or subscriptions to local cybercafes
- ?? Assistance for workshops to discuss decentralization issues and other activities such as radio programs to help increase communication and improve understanding of these issues.

Local Governance University

Problem: Local governments will be soon taking on greater responsibilities for managing development, including education and health care. Many of the future leaders and administrators of local governments lack necessary experience and training

Proposed Solution: Develop and offer courses for local government officials that will assist them in their new responsibilities. RTI has recently piloted a distance-learning program called Local Governance University (LGU) that could be used to train local government officials and citizens in financial management, citizen participation, planning and other management subjects.

Assistance would include:
- ?? Hiring lecturers to carry out courses appropriate to local government in Niger
- ?? Assisting selected local governments with equipment purchases and Internet access to be able to take LGU courses (and use the Internet access and computer to assist them in their other business)
- ?? Introductory training in the use of the Internet and computer (as needed)

Access

Problem: Most Nigeriens do not have access to the Internet and cannot afford to purchase their own computer and Internet account and therefore they are cut off from this resource.
Proposed Solution: Assist the development of Community Learning Centers (CLCs) that can provide Internet services to the public.
Assistance would include:
- ?? Training in business development /planning
- ?? Limited time equipment and Internet access assistance

Donor Coordination

Problem: Lack of accountability and a way to track the performance of NGOs operating in Niger.
Proposed Solution: Create an NGO "Funding Transparency Clearinghouse." This Clearinghouse will permit coordination of donor, NGO, and GON activities. Moreover, the resulting database (which will be available on the internet) will permit donors, international NGOs, and other possible development partners to know which local NGOs have built up a reputation for probity and effectiveness in the use of resources. This will provide an incentive for Nigerien NGOs and associations to improve their performance and it will enhance the credibility of Niger's nascent civil society.

Training and Use

Problem: Many Nigeriens do not have any exposure to the Internet and aren't aware of its benefits
Proposed Solution: Provide targeted trainings for different groups such as non-governmental organizations, business people, artisans, community groups, government employees, women, students, health workers, journalists, etc. to teach them how to use the Internet to promote their goals.

Problem: Niger's Université Abdou Moumouni does not currently have Internet access
Proposed Solution: Assist the university through provision of equipment and subsidy for Internet access and develop a plan for how to sustain this access

Problem: Most of Niger's primary and secondary schools do not have access to computer or the Internet. Without access the next generation will be not be prepared to use this technology and Niger will fall further behind

Proposed Solution: One model for providing assistance is the Partners for Internet in Education (PIE), begun with Leland Initiative assistance in 1997 in Ghana (see http://members.nbci.com/pieghana/). By bringing teachers, school administrators, private sector actors, and others together, this forum becomes a catalyst for building awareness about the possibilities that the Internet has for education in Niger. In addition, it allows institutions to experiment with existing programs and explore new ideas, all the while making their lessons available to others.

Problem: Health programs, educators and people with disabilities do not have access to the most up to date information, and are isolated from colleagues

Proposed Solution: Provide increased Internet access, training, and electronic networking to Nigerien health workers and to disabled groups such as the blind.

Problem: Lack of information available about Niger for tourists. It is difficult for tourists to locate up to date and accurate information about hotels, tour packages, car rentals, etc. Furthermore, many are unaware of the attractions Niger has to offer.

Proposed Solution: Assist Niger's Ministry of Tourism to create a Web site with tourist information so that people who are interested in visiting Niger could research lodging, attractions, etc. from their countries. Such a Web site could potentially bring in greater numbers of visitors bringing much-needed funds into the country and providing jobs.

Problem: Niger's artisans have difficulty reaching potential markets

Proposed Solution: Assist a local artisans association to create a web site to advertise and sell their goods over the Internet

Conclusion

One important lesson in countries where Internet is not yet a well-known tool is that it is important to foster the demand *while* enhancing the supply. For this reason, activities to assist development activities in Niger should be planned as soon as possible, building on existing resources.

Annex A: Scope of Work

ICT Internet Assessment in Niger
Scope of Work
March, 2001

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are powerful tools for stimulating economic growth and social change. The quality of, and access to information are critical to its successful application and adoption by society. ICTs cut across all USAID traditional sectors and ICTs enable groups working on common issues to benefit from each other's experiences and share best practices. ICTs can: provide access to education and health in remote or inaccessible areas through distance learning, telemedicine, and interactive training; improve services to citizens by providing on-line access to government/public services; empower individuals and communities to make informed choices in the decision-making process; and reduce business costs while opening access to new markets through electronic commerce.

Across Africa, access to the Internet is increasingly available, but there are a number of key impediments to its wide scale use. As the US Government recognizes the critical need for its partner countries to be engaged in Internet and E-Commerce development, the Leland Initiative has adopted the four "Ps" approach to successful Internet development: (1) Policy, (2) Pipes, (3) Private Sector, and (4) People.

1.   "Policy" - Opening doors through policy reform to permit the introduction of information and communication technologies, reduce barriers to open connectivity, and ensure that global electronic commerce can take place in an open and transparent fashion;

2.   "Pipes" - Demonstrating the effectiveness of appropriate hardware and software by utilizing the latest in technology such as wireless, high speed data transfer, secure transaction capability, extending the Internet to underserved areas, and working with private sector Internet Service Providers to offer a range of services to clients;

3.   "Private Sector" - Ensuring the private sector "can do what it needs to do to be successful." This entails combining "Policy" reform and "Pipes" improvement with ensuring there are sufficient, well-trained technicians to support the build-out of ICT industries; and

4.   "People" - Implementing new approaches to sustainable social and economic development through ICT tools of the Global Information Infrastructure. It is critical that USAIDs partners are using the Internet and other ICT technologies as tools for development.

II. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this Scope of Work is to assess opportunities for US Government support of the ICT sector in Niger by providing a countrywide Internet sector overview, analysis of constraints and opportunities, and recommended targeted interventions. The team will draft a report summarizing its findings and recommendations and provide summary meetings to interested participants so that a follow-up plan of action can be developed.

III. SCOPE OF WORK

The assessment team shall be prepared to do the following:

Provide an Internet sector overview, covering such areas but not limited to:

Pipes: Describe Internet technology in use. Recommend potential solutions for improving and extending Internet access and/or lowering costs.

Private Sector: Assess the size of the IT market, number of Internet Service Providers and subscribers, the quality of the service provided from a user viewpoint, cost for Internet bandwidth and retail Internet accounts, existence of E-Commerce.

Policy: Provide in-depth analysis of telecommunications laws relating to the Internet Sector including the legality and practicality of using wireless communication and the existence, independence and strength of a Telecom Regulator.

People: Work with each US Government foreign aid representative to determine how their partners are using (or not using and why) the Internet and recommend methods for enhancing their partners operations via Internet technology and applications. Coordinate with other USG representatives, host-country nationals, as well as other donors to advance Internet and E-Commerce development.

IV. DELIVERABLES

Prepare a report on the state of Internet in Niger covering such areas but not limited to, description of Internet technology in use, size of the IT market, number of Internet Service Providers and subscribers, how Nigeriens are using the Internet, and what applications could potentially be useful to Nigeriens and the US Government in advancing development of the country. Identify Internet champions - Nigerien leaders with a great interest in and knowledge of Internet technology - who could be partners with the US Government in promoting Internet development. Describe the cost for Internet bandwidth and retail Internet accounts, the legality and practicality of using wireless communication, and the independence and strength of the Telecom Regulator. Prepare a Plan of Action to lead to increased usage of Internet in the country and for regional activities.

Provide an oral summary to US Government foreign aid representative and to key host-country counterparts. All written deliverables are required within three weeks of completing TDY.

Annex B: Web Based Information

General Niger Information

CIA World Factbook: http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ng.html
World Bank Niger Country Summary: www.worldbank.org/afr/ne2.htm

Donor Organizations/ NGOs

African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD) :
http://www.acmad.ne
Aghrymet : www.agrhymet.ne
Fonds de Soutien au Développement du Secteur Agricole : http://www.sdsa.ne
Helen Keller International's Niger page: http://www.hkitrachoma.org/NIGERFr.html
Initiative des Radios Rurales au Niger (Ruranet) :
http://www.un.ne/home_pnud_fr/Dossier_fr/ue/radiosrurales_doc.htm
Institut de Recherche pour le Développement: http://www.orstom.ne and
http://www.ird.ne
L'Action Europeene au Niger: http://www.prodige.ne/
SNV au Niger: http://www.snv.ne/
United Nations Development Program -Niger: http://www.un.ne

Niger Government

National Assembly: http://www.assemblee.ne/
Niger Customs Agency : www.douanes.ne
Sonitel : www.intnet.ne
Direction de l'Informatique : www.delgi.ne

Internet Related Organisations/Information

Internet - Niger Discussion Group: http://fr.groups.yahoo.com/group/internet-niger
Fete de l'Internet au Niger : www.multimania.com/fianiger/
Promouvoir Linux et Logiciels Libres au Niger : http://www.eamac.ne/plan/
AISI - Connect National ICT Profile - Niger:
http://www2.sn.apc.org/africa/countdet.CFM?countries__ISO_Code=NE
L'Internet au Niger, presentation to the African Internet & Telecom Summit, Banjul,
Gambia, 5-9 June, 2000: http://www.itu.int/africainternet2000/countryreports/ner_f.htm

Annex C: Decret Number 2000-037 portant creation, attributions et organization du Centre de Coordination de l'Informatique et des Nouvelles Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication, Republique du Niger, Presidence de la Republique, Cabinet du Premiere Ministre

Please see attached document.

REPUBLIQUE DU NIGER
PRESIDENCE DE LA REPUBLIQUE
CABINET DU PREMIER MINISTRE

DECRET N° **2000-327** /PRN/PM

du 1ᵉʳ septembre 2000

portant création, attributions et organisation du Centre de Coordination de l'Informatique et des Nouvelles Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication.

LE PRESIDENT DE LA REPUBLIQUE,

VU   la Constitution,

VU   l'ordonnance n° 99-56 du 22 novembre 1999 déterminant l'organisation générale de l'Administration Civile de l'Etat et fixant ses missions ;

VU   l'ordonnance n° 99-57 du 22 novembre 1999 déterminant la classification des emplois supérieurs de l'Etat et les conditions de nomination de leurs titulaires ;

VU   le décret n° 99-466/PCRN/MFPT/E du 22 novembre 1999 fixant les modalités d'application de l'ordonnance n° 99-56 du 22 novembre 1999 ;

VU   le décret n° 005-99/PRN du 31 décembre 1999 portant nomination du Premier Ministre ;

VU   le décret n° 2000-001/PRN du 5 janvier 2000 fixant la composition du Gouvernement ;

SUR   Rapport du Directeur de Cabinet du Premier Ministre ;

Le Conseil des Ministres entendu :

DECRETE:

Article premier: Il est créé auprès du Cabinet du Premier Ministre, un centre dénommé : *« Le Centre de Coordination de l'Informatique et des Nouvelles Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication ».*

Article 2 : Le Centre de Coordination de l'Informatique et des Nouvelles Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication a pour mission principale de superviser, coordonner et évaluer toutes les actions en matière de développement de l'informatique et des nouvelles technologies de l'information et de la communication dans l'administration publique et para-publique tant au niveau national que régional et local.

A ce titre, le Centre de Coordination de l'Informatique et des Nouvelles Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication en relation avec les structures concernées est chargé de :

- Veiller à la mise en oeuvre des orientations politiques et des mécanismes de gestion dans le domaine de l'informatique et des nouvelles technologies de l'information et de la communication conformément à la politique générale du gouvernement;

- superviser et de valider les schémas directeurs informatiques et des nouvelles technologies de l'information et de la communication des départements ministériels et institutions de l'état;

- veiller à la bonne gestion des réseaux informatiques et des nouvelles technologies de l'information et de la communication d'intérêt général;

- suivre et évaluer la mise en œuvre de la politique nationale d'informatique et des nouvelles technologies de l'information et de la communication.

Article 2 : Dans le cadre de l'exécution de ses missions telles que définies à l'article premier ci-dessus, le Centre de Coordination de l'Informatique et des Nouvelles Technologies de l'information et de la Communication peut, entre autres:

- organiser périodiquement des réunions d'évaluation avec les responsables des services concernés , afin de faire respecter les normes et procédures inclues dans le plan stratégique national ;

- initier des études et réflexions dans le domaine de l'informatique et des nouvelles technologies;

Article 3 : Le Centre de Coordination de l'Informatique et des Nouvelles Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication est dirigé par un coordonnateur nommé par décret pris en Conseil des Ministres sur proposition du Premier Ministre.

Article 4 : L'organisation du Centre de Coordination de l'Informatique et des Nouvelles Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication est fixée par arrêté du Premier Ministre.

Article 5 : Le Directeur de Cabinet du Premier Ministre est chargé de l'exécution du présent décret qui abroge toutes dispositions antérieures contraires et sera publié au journal officiel de la République du Niger .

Fait à Niamey, le 1er septembre 2000

Signé: *Le Président de la République*

MAMADOU TANDJA

Le Premier Ministre

HAMA AMADOU

Pour ampliation :
Le Secrétaire Général
du Gouvernement

LAOUEL KADER MAHAMADOU

Annex D: Info Dev Evaluation des Infrastructures des technologies de l'Information et de la Communication et etat de "e-preparation"

Please see attached document.

REPUBLIQUE DU NIGER
CABINET DU PREMIER MINISTRE

CENTRE DE COORDINATION DE L'INFORMATIQUE ET DES NOUVELLES
TECHNOLOGIES DE L'INFORMATION ET DE LA COMMUNICATION

Info Dev Evaluation des infrastructures des technologies de l'information et de la communication et état de « e-préparation »

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— FÉVRIER 2001 —

1. CONTEXTE GÉNÉRAL

Le sous-développement est la résultante d'un développement inégalitaire qui s'est accumulé au fil des révolutions des moyens technologiques qui ont émaillé l'histoire de l'humanité. Le déséquilibre qu'il sous-entend a connu une très forte accélération avec la révolution industrielle. Ses manifestations sont très bien connues. Elles s'appellent très faible croissance économique, démographie galopante, sous emploi, inaccessibilité aux soins primaires, malnutrition, analphabétisme, instabilité politique, etc. Par contre le cheminement à suivre pour amorcer une réduction du déséquilibre par une accélération plus forte et plus soutenue du développement des pays défavorisés par cette situation semblent moins bien connu et constitue de ce fait l'objet de controverses.

L'optimisme et le volontarisme que les adeptes des technologies de l'information et de la communication (TICS) appellent dans leurs discours sont ainsi souvent taxés d'utopie ou de rêve. Face à cette absence d'unanimité, la question fondamentale qui vient à l'esprit quand on oppose TICS et développement est de savoir si les TICS vont résoudre tous les problèmes de développement et changer radicalement le monde.

Le développement est sans conteste un problème trop complexe qui nécessite d'agir simultanément sur plusieurs registres à la fois pour espérer des résultats tangibles, en conséquence les TICS ne sont qu'un moyen. Il n'est donc pas raisonnable de prétendre sans risque d'erreur qu'elles vont résoudre tous les problèmes de développement et changer radicalement le monde. Elles constituent cependant une réelle chance de progrès pour l'humanité, surtout pour les pays du Sud.

Au Niger, les TICS sont déjà introduites çà et là dans l'administration, le secteur privé, la société civile et les organisations internationales, avec les services Internet depuis novembre 1996.

L'objet de cette étude est d'évaluer les infrastructures dans le domaine des TICS et de l'état de 'e-préparation' au niveau de notre pays le Niger.

Cette évaluation servira d'outil d'aide à la décision dans le domaine des TICS à l'attention des décideurs Nigériens (publics et privés) et des partenaires au développement. Elle relatera l'état des lieux dans la préparation de notre pays par rapport aux différents services électroniques porteurs dans le développement d'un pays. Il s'agit du commerce électronique, de la télé-médecine, de tous les outils qui ont trait à la formation à distance (visioconférence, télé-enseignement, etc.).*

La seule étude sérieuse dans le domaine de l'évaluation des TICs est « l'étude de faisabilité de la généralisation d'Internet dans l'optique du Réseau de développement durable (RDD) au Niger », effectuée en Février 1998 sous Financement PNUD. Cette étude a consisté à faire l'état des lieux du développement des Nouvelles technologies de l'information et de la communication sur tout le territoire national, et de jeter les bases du programme RDD/Internet qui devrait s'exécuter sur trois (3) ans avec une enveloppe de $334,000. Malheureusement, l'instabilité politique au niveau du Niger n'a pas permis la poursuite de ce projet.

2. OBJECTIFS DE L'ETUDE

Cette étude sur les technologies de l'information et de la communication au Niger permettra :

- de faire un état des lieux des infrastructures de communication sur tout le territoire Nigérien afin d'évaluer l'investissement à faire pour mettre à la disposition de la grande majorité des populations, les services de communication à des coûts abordables;
- de faire une analyse approfondie des principaux problèmes qui freinent le développement des TICs dans notre pays;
- de rechercher et de mettre en place de nouvelles infrastructures afin de favoriser les technologies les mieux adaptées au pays et aux populations en mettant l'accent sur les systèmes et outils de communication fonctionnant avec très peu d'énergie ;
- d'identifier les actions (sous forme de propositions et recommandations) dans le cadre d'un plan stratégique pour le développement de l'usage des TICS ;

- de mobiliser aussi bien les financements publics nationaux qu'internationaux afin d'assurer la mise en œuvre de ces actions.

Pour cela des dispositions doivent être prises dans le cadre de la définition du plan stratégique, il s'agit :
- d'encourager la création de contenus originaux à forte valeur ajoutée dans tous les domaines d'activités de la société Nigérienne ;
- de réduire significativement les frais de douanes, les taxes, et les prélèvements indirects sur le coût du matériel informatique ;

Cette évaluation permettra de jeter les bases de la création d'une société de l'information dans notre pays. Les grandes lignes de ce projet seront contenues dans le plan d'actions qui sera issu de la présente étude. La création d'une société de l'information au Niger, permettra :
- d'accroître l'efficacité globale de l'Administration et la maîtrise de la décentralisation administrative initiée avec la mise en place des structures démocratiques, grâce à une amélioration de la circulation de l'information ;
- de produire à temps des informations fiables pour le pilotage de l'économie ;
- d'offrir aux populations des possibilités nouvelles de communication avec l'Administration ;
- de mettre à la disposition des opérateurs économiques, des moyens modernes pour leur permettre d'interagir efficacement avec leurs partenaires internationaux, de renforcer leur présence sur le marché international et d'améliorer leur compétitivité ;
- d'accroître la pratique de l'enseignement à distance ;
- d'assurer une meilleure gestion de l'environnement et des ressources naturelles ;
- de créer ainsi des conditions plus favorables pour les investissements et pour un développement durable ;
- et à tirer le meilleur profit de la mondialisation par la réduction du fossé numérique avec les pays du Nord.

3. LA METHODOLOGIE

Cette étude portant sur l'évaluation des infrastructures des technologies de l'Information et de la Communication et l'état de e-préparation de notre pays sera réalisée de la manière suivante :

1ère étape : Mise en place d'un comité de coordination de l'étude ;

2ème étape : séminaire de sensibilisation avec médiatisation (radio et télévision);

3ème étape : étude sur l'évaluation et l'impact des TICs avec deux équipes de consultants : une équipe pour l'intérieur du pays et l'autre couvrant toutes les institutions concernées au niveau de la capitale ;

4ème étape : réalisation du plan d'actions national sur la base des rapports des deux premiers groupes de consultants. Un consultant international sera recruté sur la base de son expérience dans ce domaine ;

5ème étape : Organisation d'un atelier national pour la validation du plan d'actions, en présence de tous les consultants.

4. LES ACTIONS À FINANCER PAR LE DON

Dans le cadre de cette évaluation les actions qui seront supportées par le don infodev sont :

1. La tenue de séminaire de sensibilisation :

Cette opération est une préparation à l'opération « Evaluation des infrastructures »; elle consistera à sensibiliser l'ensemble des partenaires dont la parTICsipation est déterminante pour le succès du projet envisagé. L'auditoire sera constitué :

- Des décideurs : pour les convaincre de l'ampleur de l'enjeu.
- des différents opérateurs et autres acteurs du domaine des TICS pour qu'ils se sentent impliqués pleinement dans le projet
- de la société civile : pour qu'elle soit informée des initiatives, qu'elle comprenne l'importance des TICS pour le développement et qu'elle puisse apporter sa contribution pour une préparation

- de la presse

Des rencontres seront organisées et des supports d'information seront élaborés à l'intention des personnes susceptibles d'apporter une contribution directe ou indirecte dans la réussite de l'opération. Le financement couvrira les frais d'animation des séminaires, les frais de location des salles, le déplacement, l'organisation des jours de sensibilisation, les fournitures, ...

L'obstacle principal à lever sera la marge de temps à prendre : ces actions de sensibilisation doivent s'effectuer en préalable avant le démarrage de toute opération parce qu'elle détermine la réussite de l'opération. L'accès au financement de l'action dans un délai raisonnable sera donc d'une importance capitale pour le démarrage des activités dès le mois de Mars.

2. *La presse en tant qu'outil d'information et de sensibilisation :*

En tant que moteur principal de la transmission d'informations, des supports médiatiques radio-télévisés seront utilisés : des spots publicitaires, des interviews, ...

3. *L'enquête sur les infrastructures et l'utilisation des TICS au niveau du secteur public, parapublic, privé, organismes internationaux et de la société civile.*

Cette enquête permettra d'établir un état des lieux des infrastructures, faire une étude sur l'utilisation actuelle de ces infrastructures. Elle sera effectuée par une équipe de consultants nationaux qui auront à élaborer un rapport sur l'état d'utilisation des TICs au Niger, faire une analyse sur cet état et faire des recommandations et propositions qui serviront de points de réflexion pour l'élaboration du plan d'actions.

L'obstacle à la réussite de cette opération peut être le refus de collaborer de la part des acteurs du secteur des TICs et les utilisateurs pour permettre de recueillir le maximum d'informations. Une bonne organisation de la première opération, à savoir

la sensibilisation, et la qualité des consultants identifiés pour mener la tache permettra d'éviter un tel obstacle. Pour cela un accent sera mis sur l'expérience dans le choix de ceux-ci et des moyens conséquents pour leur permettre de travailler dans de bonnes conditions.

4. La mise en place des équipements (réseau local) pour le besoin de cette étude

Pour mener cette activité à terme, des outils de travail seront nécessaires. Un réseau local comprenant un serveur et trois à quatre postes de travail sera mis en place pour le besoin des intervenants : responsables, consultants, spécialistes (réseaux, Web, ...).

Pour permettre une diffusion en ligne des informations sur les actions réalisées et les résultats, des pages Web seront développées et mises sur site. Pour donner un accès sur Internet on procédera à l'installation d'une liaison spécialisée permanente et un abonnement couvrant la durée des activités. Le don couvrira alors les frais liés à l'installation de la liaison spécialisée, l'abonnement d'un an, l'achat de matériels de travail à savoir un serveur, trois micro-ordinateurs, des accessoires réseau (Hub, cartes, câbles, ...).

5. La réalisation d'un plan d'actions national pour la création d'une société de l'information

Sur la base des informations et recommandations du rapport sur les TICs au Niger dans le secteur public, parapublic, organismes et société civile et le rapport de l'enquête sur les TICs dans les régions du pays, un plan d'actions sera élaboré. Il visera à définir un cadre général pour la mise en œuvre d'une société de l'information au Niger et consistera à définir les grandes lignes des actions futures : les infrastructures, les dispositions, ... et une évaluation financière pour la mise en œuvre de ce plan.

Ce travail sera réalisé par une équipe composée de consultants sélectionnés au niveau national et un expert international ayant une compétence reconnue dans le domaine.

6. *La tenue d'un atelier de validation du document Plan d'actions National pour la création d'une société de l'information au Niger.*

Le plan d'actions élaboré fera l'objet d'un atelier national afin de le valider. Cet atelier réunira l'ensemble des décideurs à tous les niveaux, les acteurs du domaine des TICs, la société civile.

5. QUALIFICATIONS DE L'AUTEUR DE LA PROPOSITION

L'auteur de la proposition est le centre de coordination de l'informatique et des nouvelles technologies de l'information et de la communication (CCINT) rattaché au Cabinet du Premier Ministre.

Ce centre, créé le 1er septembre 2000 par décret pris en conseil des Ministres, a pour mission principale de superviser, coordonner et évaluer toutes les actions en matière de développement de l'informatique et des nouvelles technologies de l'information et de la communication (NTICS) dans l'administration publique et parapublique tant au niveau national que régional et local. A ce titre, il est chargé, en collaboration avec les services concernés, de :

- veiller à la mise en œuvre des orientations politiques et des mécanismes de gestion dans le domaine de l'informatique et des nouvelles technologies de l'information et de la communication (NTICS) conformément à la politique générale du Gouvernement ;
- superviser et de valider les schémas directeurs informatiques et des NTICs des départements ministériels et institutions de l'Etat ;
- veiller à la bonne gestion des réseaux informatiques et des NTICs d'intérêt général ;
- suivre et évaluer la mise en œuvre de la politique nationale informatique et des NTICs.

Compte tenu du fait, que le CCINT est une structure très récente, il n' y a pas d'études d'évaluation des Infrastructures I&C, antérieures qu'il a eu à réaliser.

6. BUDGET ET JUSTIFICATION DU BUDGET

La procédure d'exécution des dépenses publiques au Niger, pour les marchés dont les fonds proviennent du groupe de la Banque Mondiale, prévoie en son point 1.2 que le lancement d'un appel d'offres ouvert international est le meilleur moyen de satisfaire toutes les exigences des directives de la Banque Mondiale.

Cependant, elle dispose que lorsque le lancement d'un appel d'offres international n'est manifestement pas la procédure la plus économique ni la plus efficace, d'autres méthodes de passation des marchés sont spécifiés notamment :
- l'appel d'offres international restreint ;
- l'appel d'offres national ;
- la consultation des fournisseurs ;
- l'entente directe ;
- la régie.

Vus les délais et l'urgence du dossier, le centre de coordination de l'informatique et des nouvelles technologies de l'information et de la communication (CCINT) s'orientera vers des procédures de passation de marchés simplifiés.

Dans le cadre du suivi de la performance de l'aide financière, un rapport mensuel d'évaluation financière sera confectionné. Il permettra de maîtriser la situation et d'apporter éventuellement les redressements appropriés.

BUDGET

$1 = 700 F (F CFA)

POSTES DE DÉPENSES	MONTANT	FINANCEMENT	
		INFO DEV	ETAT DU NIGER
Séminaire de sensibilisation sur les TICs et le développement : - honoraires conférenciers ; - transport ; - pauses café, restauration ; - logistique, etc.	$7,143	$7,143	-----
Presse : spots publicitaires, interviews	$4,286	$4,286	------
Enquête dans les sept (7) Régions du pays sur les TICs : Consultants nationaux - Honoraires ; - Déplacement.	$10,000	-----	$10,000
Enquête sur les TICs au niveau du secteur public, parapublic, privé, des organisations internationales et de la société civile : Consultants nationaux - Honoraires ; - Déplacement.	$7,142	$7,142	-----
Intranet gouvernemental : - 1 LS et 1 an d'abonnement - 1 serveur Web + HUB - 3 postes clients - Accessoires (câbles, cartes, développement pages web)	$14,286	$14,286	-----
Réalisation du Plan d'actions national : Consultant international + consultants nationaux : - Honoraires ; - Hébergement et billet d'avion consultant international	$14,286	$14,286	-----
Atelier national de validation du document Plan d'actions national pour la création d'une société de l'information au Niger : - honoraires conférenciers ; - transport ; - pauses café, restauration ; logistique, etc. - Hébergement et Billet d'avion Consultant International.	$5,714	$2,857	$2,857
TOTAL GENERAL	$62,857	$50,000	$12,857

7. PLAN D'ÉVALUATION

L'appréciation des résultats devra se faire de façon dynamique afin que les redressements nécessaires puissent être apportés à temps.

A l'issue de la phase d'élaboration de l'évaluation, il s'agira de mesurer, dans un rapport d'évaluation, le degré d'efficacité de la stratégie mise en œuvre en répondant à certaines questions telles que :

- o les objectifs initiaux sont-ils atteints ?
- o les délais ont-ils été respectés ?
- o les contraintes pressenties à cette étude ont ils été levées ? Comment ?