Evaluation of the Commonwealth Connects Programme

An Independent Evaluation Carried Out on Behalf of the Commonwealth Secretariat

November 2015

The Commonwealth

Contents

Acronyms

ABC	Australia, Britain and Canada
ARACKE	African Regional Action Plans on the Knowledge Economy
CAPDD	Commonwealth Action Plan for the Digital Divide
CBA	Commonwealth Broadcasting Association
CBC	Commonwealth Business Council
CARICOM	Caribbean Community Secretariat
CCI	Commonwealth Cybercrime Initiative
CCNC	Commonwealth Computer Navigator Certificate
CCP	Commonwealth Connects Programme
CERT	Computer Emergency Response Team
CF	Commonwealth Foundation
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
CFTC	Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation
CHLG	Commonwealth Heads of Government of the High Level Group
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIGF	Commonwealth Internet Governance Forum
COL	Commonwealth of Learning
COLEN	Commonwealth of Learning Network
COMARCI	Commonwealth African Rural Connectivity Initiative
COMNET-IT	Commonwealth Foundation for ICT for Development
CSIR	Council for Scientific Industrial Research
CTO	Commonwealth Technology Organisation
C2P	Commonwealth Connects Platform
ECI	Electronic Commerce Industry
EU	European Union
GIDD	Governance and Institutional Development Division
GNRD	Governance and Natural Resources Division
ICA	International Communication Association
ICANN	Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers
ICDL	International Computer Driving Licence
ICSC	International Centre for Scientific Culture

ICT	Information Communications and Technology
ICT4D	ICT for Development
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IGF	Internet Governance Forum
IPS	International Partnership Summit
ITES	Information Technology Enabled Science
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
JOAM	Jamaica Organic Agriculture Movement
LCAD	Legal and Constitutional Division
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MTIT	Ministry for Telecommunications and Information Technology (Swaziland)
NASCOM	National Association of Software and Service Science
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OAU	Organisation for African Unity
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSS	Open Source Software
OTSC	Open Text Social Community
POC	Point of Contact
PPP	Public Private Partnership
SAC	Strategic Advisory Committee
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SC	Steering Committee
SPED	Strategic Planning and Evaluation Division
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes
WSIS	World Summit for the Information Society

Executive Summary

In September 2000, the Commonwealth Heads of Government of the High Level Group sought to address the problem of the digital divide, and established an Expert Group on Information Technology in this regard. The group concluded that the information and communications technology (ICT) revolution offered: 'vast new digital opportunities [through] the potential for using ICT to facilitate sustainable social and economic development and to enhance the capacity of citizens, businesses and other organisations to participate effectively within their local, national and, increasingly, global communities'. It posited that the Commonwealth could significantly influence actions to bridge the digital divide, both by taking strategic action itself and by facilitating effective action by others, including governments, other development agencies, civil society and the private sector. The result was the drawing up of the Commonwealth Action Plan for the Digital Divide (CAPDD) and subsequently the creation of the Co-ordinating Committee for CAPDD.

Following the submission of the 2005 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) report by the CAPDD Co-ordinating Committee, the 2005 Malta CHOGM issued a specific Malta Commonwealth Declaration on Networking for Development.[1] The declaration emphasised that the Commonwealth could contribute meaningful measures aimed at bridging and closing the digital divide and endorsed the CAPDD as the roadmap, with the Commonwealth's priorities for the digital divide including the establishment of a special operative vehicle – the Commonwealth Connects Programme (CCP) – to drive the Commonwealth's digital divide agenda.

In 2013, the Steering Committee (SC) responsible for the programme recommended the winding down of the said programme and proposed that an evaluation should be carried to identify lessons learned and recommend potential next steps with regard to the Commonwealth and the digital divide agenda. In November 2014, the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Division (SPED) within the Commonwealth Secretariat, in collaboration with the Governance and Natural Resources Division (GNRD), issued a public tender for the identification of consultants to carry out such an evaluation. The terms of reference for the evaluation included: (i) an assessment of the overall effectiveness and impact of the projects under the programme;

(ii) a review of the governance mechanism of the CCP and the assessment of its effectiveness in managing the programme; (iii) an assessment of the efficiency of the implementation arrangements and the Secretariat's support; and (iv) how the programme could be most effectively utilised in the future.

The evaluation of the CCP is based on the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Criteria, as laid out in the DAC Principles for the Evaluation of Development Assistance. The evaluation adopted a two-pronged approach. The first prong assessed the vision, mandate and governance aspect of the programme. The second prong assessed the implementation of the programme's mandate. Within the latter, five projects were identified as case studies and assessed in relative depth.

The following summarises the key findings of the evaluation. First, the Secretariat was correct at the time when it took the decision to establish the issue of the digital divide to be one of high importance and towards which it had to direct significant and sustained focus. Second, neither the Commonwealth, ICTs and Development report presented to the Malta 2005 CHOGM, nor the Malta Commonwealth Declaration made at the said CHOGM explicitly stated and defined the mandate of the CCP. This resulted in a lack of clarity in the mandate of the programme, which visibly hamstrung the operation and evolution.

Third, the mandate with regard to the setting up of the CCP was a 'political imperative' arising from the Malta 2005 CHOGM, where the Commonwealth Secretariat was politically directed to 'do something' on the digital divide agenda.[2] There is no doubt that the Malta Commonwealth Declaration was a political mandate. As this report shows, however, accepting a political mandate stemming from the drive of political leaders does not necessarily translate into success. Thus, the reputational risk to the Commonwealth Secretariat of failing to deliver on a mandate – because this is not well construed at the outset – is real.

The oversight relationship between the oversight authority – the Office of the Secretary-General – and the mandate implementer – the Steering Committee responsible for the programme – broke down. (A clear example relates to the Commonwealth Partnership Portal [C2P], when the Secretariat had to write-off the bespoke development project, as it realised following an internal audit review that more than 500,000 pounds sterling (£) was invested in a product that failed to deliver on basic specifications). As a result of this, a number of critical issues were not caught sufficiently early for corrective action to be taken. It is, however, pertinent to underline that the introduction of checks and balances with regard to the management of the Special Fund, wherein custody and management for the fund stood with the Secretariat and not the SC, is an example of good governance.

Fourth, the placement of the locum of responsibility for the digital domain in a semi-independent special operating vehicle outside of the Secretariat failed to deliver. Fifth, the decision to maintain administrative costs to the minimum by assigning the-then Governance and Institution Design Development (GIDD) as the secretariat of the programme, while in principle made sense in order to maintain administration costs, was short sighted as the initiative required a small but sustained critical mass to secure traction. Sixth, the hesitancy adopted by the SC of the programme with regard to implementing structured mechanisms at the very start of its lifecycle to raise financing to secure its long-term sustainability is difficult to understand.

Seventh, the identification of the 62 projects presented in Annex D of the 2005 CHOGM report presented a major issue for the newly set up programme, which impacted its pace, performance and effectiveness. In the first years of

operation, faced between ignoring the projects in Annex D and embarking on a structured approach, the SC sought a compromise. Concerned with the fact that expectations were now raised, the SC sought to select three projects from the list as 'pilot projects'. The end result, however, was that by the end of the first year of operations, the SC had only three pilot projects to show for its considerable effort.

Eighth, the programme evolved into a project-implementing agency – one where the CCP's mandate became primarily that of identifying and financing projects, even though (following lengthy discussions on what should constitute the programme's mandate) consensus was reached that the programme should act as a broker and catalyst. The call for project applications issued under the programme served to raise expectancies regarding the funding of projects, giving the impression that the CCP was more about funding than brokerage. The call for applications depleted the fund significantly, leaving little for the ongoing nurturing of CCP, for which funds were required – not to fund projects, but to provide necessary facilitation to get projects underway.

Ninth, nearly all of the projects financed 'died a natural death' once the grant was exhausted. The end result was that expectations were raised among the communities that benefitted from the projects, and these could no longer be met once the grant was exhausted. Finally, there is no evidence that a formalised project management framework governed the CCP.

The evaluation concludes the following: first, the comparative advantages identified by the Expert Group on Information Technology in 2000 were, and continue to be, real. Second, a recommendation for a mandate to be endorsed by the CHOGM should only be considered 'in principle' if this is not supported by a robust strategic plan, a business and financial plan, and an implementation plan. The mandate should subsequently be triggered by the Board of Governors on the submission and approval of a strategic and operational framework covering the immediate, medium and long term. Third, there is, therefore, merit in assessing how the oversight authority of the Office of the Secretary-General can be strengthened further to ensure that it has focussed and sustained scrutiny during the implementation of a CHOGM mandate, which allows for the timely response and resolution of arising issues. Fourth, a policy issue of significant importance such as ICT for development should be embedded and mainstreamed within the Secretariat.

Fifth, the decision to identify an existing Commonwealth agency, with the Commonwealth Foundation for ICT for Development (COMNET-IT) being selected (it could equally have been the Commonwealth Technology Organisation [CTO]) to provide the programme with the necessary critical capacity, given the institutional model chosen, made sense. Indeed, this decision should have been taken at the outset. Sixth, given the institutional financing of the programme, there is no doubt that one of the prongs that the SC should have embarked upon was the design and implementation of a long-term fundraising strategy. The fact that it did not do so undermined the future sustainability of the programme. Seventh, the programme should never have evolved into a project implementation agency, but should have acted as a broker and catalyst between member states and the Commonwealth, as well as between other supra-national agencies operating in the ICT for development policy domain.

The evaluation further concludes that the complete absence of joined-up ICT policy design for development as a strategic outcome, and also as an intermediate outcome within any of the identified six strategic outcomes of the Commonwealth's Strategic Plan for 2013/14 to 2016/17, is a strategic error. The

reality is that while many countries have begun to develop and implement national ICT or e-strategies to promote the development of ICT infrastructure, and have put in place the conditions and capacities to foster its use and stimulate local content development, services and support priority initiatives, few countries have effectively mainstreamed ICT into sustainable development strategies.

ICT strategies must remain subordinate to broader sustainable development strategies, which again should be part of an overall macroeconomic framework supportive of development with equity. The need to embed ICT interventions in a broader development policy framework is critical, since by themselves ICTs can widen inequality and strengthen the already privileged and powerful as easily as they can do the opposite. Yet, few of the more recent sustainable development or poverty reduction strategies, for example, include ICT as a strategic component. This means that sustainable development or poverty reduction strategies are discussed independently of ICT.

ICTs impact sustainable development and poverty reduction by positively transforming sectors that are critical to sustainable development and poverty reduction – such as the health, agriculture and education sectors. The vision presented in 2005 to leverage ICT to bridge the digital divide continues to hold true today – if not more so given the increased iniquitousness of ICTs. The comparative advantages that the Commonwealth Secretariat brings to this area also continues to hold true. The current gap, therefore, which the Commonwealth has today with regard to joined-up ICT policy design for sustainable development should be addressed.

It is pertinent to underline that different divisions within the Secretariat and other donor agencies intervene in a myriad of ways at both the national and local levels, but rarely are these interventions co-ordinated effectively. In the context of sustainable development, policy silos and fragmented short-term policy interventions are luxuries that developing and small state economies cannot afford.

Integrating this domain within the Commonwealth Secretariat would allow for far greater opportunity for the design of a joined-up policy that incorporates joined-up ICT policy design for sustainable development across the work that is carried out by the Secretariat. Integrating the domain of ICT for sustainable development within the Secretariat would allow for the improved building of networks and more effective communications – resulting in a platform that formally brings together Secretariat departments and agencies, donor organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society. This would allow for work to be carried out with sustainable development to mainstream ICT for development and enable for the crafting of a proper implementation framework for how they are to be achieved, containing detailed agreements on joint actions, budgets, timescales etc.

The evaluation, thus, recommends as next steps the positioning of the domain of joined-up ICT policy design for development within the strategic outcome of either public institutions, social development or development – small states and vulnerable states.

Endnotes

1. See: http://www.mfa.gov.cy/mfa/mfa2006.nsf/All/6477E83F9B8B3366C22571D30025C1B5/$file/Commonwealth%20Malta% 2011.2005%20FINALCOMMUNIQUE.pdf
2. Evaluation Seminar, Commonwealth Connects Programme, Marlborough House, 11 November 2015, United Kingdom.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In November 2014, the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Division (SPED) within the Commonwealth Secretariat, in collaboration with the Governance and Natural Resources Division (GNRD), issued a public tender for the identification of consultants to carry out an evaluation of the Commonwealth Connects Programme (CCP).

SPED awarded the tender to DSG Consultants, Malta, in March 2015.

1.2 Terms of reference

The overall purpose of this evaluation was to assess the relevance, effectiveness and impact of the CCP over the years, and to provide recommendations on its future direction. The terms of reference (ToR) of the evaluation were the:[3]

- review of the relevance of the CCP with regard to (a) the strategic priorities of the Commonwealth Secretariat and (b) the national development priorities of member states in facilitating information communications and technology (ICT) partnerships;

- assessment of the overall effectiveness and impact of the projects under the CCP and the consideration of whether the objectives for these projects were consistent with the remit of the CCP;

- review of the governance mechanism of the CCP and the assessment of its effectiveness in managing the CCP;

- assessment of the efficiency of the implementation arrangements and the Secretariat's support to the CCP;

- assessment of the likely long-term sustainability of benefits arising from the CCP;

- assessment of the 'comparative advantages' of the Secretariat and the 'added value' it brought to the CCP; and

- identification of lessons learned that could be utilised for future programmes with similar governance and organisational models, and the reflection on the future direction of the CCP.

The evaluation was to review the CCP since its inception in 2006 and, based on the findings, to recommend how the CCP could be most effectively utilised in future. A copy of the ToR, as published by SPED, is attached as Annex I.

1.3 Deliverables

The deliverables of the evaluation were to:

- draft an evaluation report;

- deliver a seminar/presentation on the evaluation findings and recommendations; and

- present a final evaluation report, incorporating feedback and comments received.

1.4 Principles of evaluation

The purpose of such an evaluation is of importance to policy and/or programme design and implementation because it enables policy-makers and implementers to determine:

- whether the policy instrument as designed and implemented met the initial strategic and operational objectives set for it, and whether these were well established and designed at the outset;

- whether the policy instrument as designed and implemented met new objectives as the policy and/or programme evolved over time;

- the effect the policy and/or programme had on the target audience;

- the tangible outcomes, including the institutionalisation of deep-rooted ICT for development policy and/or programmes; and

- what worked, did not work, or could have worked better.

Evaluation is the systematic investigation of the merit, worth or significance of an object, hence assigning 'value' to a policy and/or programme's efforts. The evaluation of the CCP was based on the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Criteria, as laid out in the DAC Principles for the Evaluation of Development Assistance. These criteria, as applied in this evaluation, are presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: DAC Principles for the Evaluation of Development Assistance[4]

Relevance	This principle relates to the extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the member state, target group, recipient and the respective contributors to the Special Fund of the CCP. In evaluating the relevance of the CCP, questions such as the following were investigated: • The extent to which the objectives of the CCP were valid? • Whether the activities and outputs of the CCP were consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives? • Whether the activities and outputs of the CCP were consistent with the intended impacts and effects?
Effectiveness	This principle constitutes a measure of the extent to which an aid activity financed and granted under the Special Fund of the CCP attained its objectives. In evaluating the effectiveness of the CCP, questions such as the following were investigated: • The extent to which the objectives of the CCP were achieved? • The major factors, if any, that influenced the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives of the CCP?
Efficiency	This principle measures the outputs – qualitative and quantitative – in relation to the inputs. 'Output' is an economic term that signifies that the financial and grant support used the least costly resources possible in order to achieve the desired results. In evaluating the efficiency of the CCP, questions such as the following were investigated: • Was the CCP cost-efficient? • Was the CCP implemented in the most efficient way?
Impact	This principle relates to positive and negative changes produced by an intervention under the CCP, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. To the extent possible, this involved the main impacts and effects resulting from the activity on the local social, economic and other development indicators. In evaluating the efficiency of the CCP, questions such as the following were investigated: • What was the impact as a result of the CCP? • Did the CCP make a real difference to the beneficiaries?
Sustainability	This principle is concerned with the measuring of whether the benefits of an activity continued after the financial and grant support provided under the CCP were exhausted. In evaluating the sustainability of the CCP, questions such as the following were investigated: • To what extent did the benefits of the CCP continue after financing and grants provided under the CCP were exhausted? • What were the major factors that influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the CCP?

1.5 Methodology

In the undertaking of the evaluation of the CCP, the following methodology was applied:

i. The undertaking of meetings with senior stakeholders within the Secretariat who were involved in the CCP, such as the Head of the Secretariat of the CCP.

ii. The undertaking of meetings with representatives of Commonwealth implementing agencies on the Steering Committee (SC), including representatives from the Commonwealth Technology Organisation (CTO), the Commonwealth Foundation for ICT for Development (COMNET-IT) and the Commonwealth Foundation (CF).

iii. Meeting with the last Chairperson of the CCP, the Hon. Minister Dr R Griffiths, Minister for Science and Technology in the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

iv. The undertaking of e-mail exchanges and communications with Points of Contact (POCs) representatives on the CCP's Champions Network and project sponsors/owners.

v. The undertaking of Skype online discussions with project managers and/or co-ordinators with the regard to the following projects: Cyber Crime Initiative (CCI); Multiple Access Centre; Commonwealth Connects Platform (C2P); Computers for Communities; e-Waste; and Digital Doorways.

vi. The undertaking of field visits in Swaziland, South Africa, Lesotho, and Trinidad and Tobago with regard to the projects financed under the CCP stated in (iv) above.

vii. The design, circulation and follow-up of a survey to the most recent POCs representatives on the CCP's Champions Network.

viii. The design, circulation and follow-up of a survey to the project owners/sponsors for all projects and initiatives financed by grants issued under the CCP.

ix. The review of SC minutes and supporting documentation, where these were made available.

x. The review of documents relating to the Commonwealth Action Plan for the Digital Divide, (CAPDD), the CCP, specific projects and initiatives.

xi. The review of relevant documentation and communiqués issued by the Commonwealth Heads of Government (CHOGM) meetings between 2000 and 2013.

xii. The review of reports presented by the SC to the 2007, 2009 and 2011 CHOGMs respectively.

xiii. The review of literature and documents relating to the CCP placed on the Commonwealth Huddle Platform by SPED, GNRD etc.

xiv. The review of literature and documents researched over the internet relating to the CCP and specific projects and initiatives carried out under the CCP.

xv. The final draft of the evaluation report was circulated to all pertinent persons within the Secretariat and written responses invited.

xvi. A seminar on the evaluation conclusions following (xv) above was held under the stewardship of SPED and chaired by the Deputy Secretary General - Political of the Commonwealth Secretariat on 11 November 2015.

The names of persons met or interviewed are presented in Annex II. A bibliography is attached as Annex III. The questionnaires circulated to POCs and owners of projects, respectively, are presented in Annex IV.

1.6 Limitations

In the undertaking of this evaluation, the evaluators experienced the following limitations:

i. Documentation of the Secretariat to the SC of the CCP

The documentation held by the Secretariat to the SC of the CCP, as presented to the evaluation, was not complete. For example, important strategy documentation relating to the predecessor of the CCP, the CAPDD, could not, in the main, be traced. Similarly, documentation for certain minutes and supporting material were not available. Additionally, a large number of documents

– too numerous to single out – where the minutes formally show that these were presented to the SC or tabled at the SC as presentations etc., too, could not be traced.

ii.   Winding down of COMNET-IT

As this report shows, COMNET-IT played a major role in the lifecycle of the CCP. Formal proceedings leading to the dissolution of COMNET-IT were initiated in February 2015, prior to the initiation of the work on this report. The liquidators informed the evaluator that they retained only such documentation as mandated by legislation with regard to dissolution. This meant that important assets such as the website of the CCP, the inventory of ICT assets, papers relating to the Cyber Crime Initiative (CCI), the Commonwealth Internet Governance Forum (CIGF), as well as CCP-related documentation, were not available for review.

iii.   Time lag between the winding down of the CCP and the undertaking of this evaluation

By the time work on the evaluation was initiated in March 2015, the CCP had already been wound down for more than 12 months. An immediate consequence of this situation was that key players, such as sponsors or owners of projects or initiatives financed by grants under the CCP, as well as POCs, were no longer available.

A survey instrument circulated to both target groups at the start of the evaluation solicited a negligible response.

1.7 Acknowledgements

Endnotes

3.   Commonwealth Secretariat (2014a), Evaluation of the Commonwealth Connects Programme, Terms of Reference, Commonwealth Secretariat, London.
4.   Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (1991), The DAC Principles for the Evaluation of Development Assistance, OECD, Paris; 'Glossary of Terms Used in Evaluation', in OECD (1986), Methods and Procedures in Aid Evaluation; and OECD (2000), The Glossary of Evaluation and Results Based Management (RBM) Terms.

2. Background

2.1 Placing the digital divide on the agenda of the Commonwealth

In September 2000, the Commonwealth Heads of Government of the High Level Group (HLG) moved to tackle the problem of the digital divide by establishing an Expert Group on Information Technology, tasked to:

- examine the constraints preventing the wider adoption of ICT in developing countries and possible ways of overcoming them, and

- identify the objectives, which may include the strengthening of existing institutions active in this area, and activities, possibly undertaken in synergy with the United Nations (UN), the Group of 8 (G8), other inter-governmental institutions and the private sector, of a proposed Commonwealth mechanism which could promote the wider use of ICT in Commonwealth member states, particularly in small states and developing countries.

The group, chaired by the Director-General, Department of Communications, South Africa, underlined that the ICT revolution underway offered: 'vast new digital opportunities [through] the potential for using ICT to facilitate sustainable social and economic development and to enhance the capacity of citizens, businesses and other organisations to participate effectively within their local, national and, increasingly, global communities'.[5]

Additionally, the group cautioned that given that the global economy and social order were becoming increasingly dependent on ICT to support economic growth and governance, activities by those countries without the capacities to access ICT, or to use it effectively, would be further marginalised.[6]

The group emphasised that the strongest foundation for a global plan to reduce the digital divide and enlarge digital opportunities was strong national strategies, effectively implemented by national governments in partnership with the private sector and civil society, and supported by the international community through targeted programmes of mutual co-operation and assistance.[7]

Moreover, the group posited that the Secretariat could significantly influence actions to bridge the digital divide – a conviction rooted in the strengths of the association, which lie in its deep commitment to democracy, good governance and sustainable development; and in its capacity to share experience and expertise in a trusted environment between countries and across various ICT environments (especially in the least developed and small, and small island, states).[8] The group emphasised that the comparative strengths of the Commonwealth and the institutional capacities that already existed in the association in the ICT area would add significant value. This stemmed from the recognition that:[9]

- The Commonwealth was an association of 54 countries covering 1.7 billion people, wherein ICTs and bridging the divide could make a critical contribution to democracy, good governance and sustainable development.

- The high-level political contact that the Secretariat enjoyed, through the CHOGM biennial meetings and other regular meetings of ministers and senior civil servants, positioned it well for advocacy and promotion of ICTs among its member states. The flexible and informal ways in which the Commonwealth's institutions worked, and the sense of trust that informed its relations provided it with a valuable base for developing new initiatives, and to act as an incubator in bridging the digital divide.

- As its member states cut across the North–South divide and had a wide international reach by virtue of their position in other important regional or specialist groupings such as the G8, Group of 15 (G15), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Organisation of African Unity (OAU), Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Secretariat was well-positioned to promote international consensus and

programmes of action, building on the positions on bridging the digital divide reached within it.

- The rich network of contacts at the professional, civil and the people-to-people levels, which provided easy facility for addressing developmental and civil society issues – in order to implement practical projects and act as a conduit for applying and promoting ICT use in a manner that gave its use a wide reach.

- The strategic understanding that ICTs could play a significant role in facilitating better communication and networking within the Commonwealth, and thereby rendered it more effective in its own functioning, making the association more valuable as a platform for knowledge transfer. The fact that English is a common language among Commonwealth countries enabled ICTs to work even faster in assisting communication within the Commonwealth.

- Its shared inheritance in institutions (for example, legal and governmental structures) and the rule of law placed the Commonwealth in a strong position to develop models of good practice and regulatory frameworks for wider adoption, thus facilitating the development of best practice that was favourable for enterprises and investment and for greater use of ICTs.

- The fact that the Commonwealth contained diverse developmental experience, providing opportunities for learning, including in the area of ICTs, as well as containing a rich reservoir of experts in ICT and related areas, enabling it to mount programmes of mutual assistance in the ICT area with great ease.

- More than half Commonwealth countries are small – often island – states, with several being among the least developed countries that face difficult constraints in developing their ICT capacities. The Secretariat, thus, was seen as being able to play a crucial role in disseminating initiatives that have proved successful elsewhere, and help tailor them to local conditions to yield practical and beneficial results.

Indeed, at the time the report was written, the Commonwealth had already garnered extensive and substantial expertise on the development of ICT as a tool for efficiency, effectiveness, sustainable development etc. through organisations such as the Commonwealth of Learning (CoL), CTO, COMNET-IT and the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC). The programme budgets of these Commonwealth agencies, which in the main were directed primarily towards ICT or ICT-related programmes, amounted to approximately £15.1 million.[10]

The group presented four recommendations:

i.   In order to affirm leadership and commitment at the highest levels, CHOGM meetings should continue to monitor progress on the efforts to narrow the digital divide and the contribution of ICT to the developmental priorities of member states.

ii. The Secretariat should help in the building and strengthening of capacity of ICTs in member states through the support of a five-point action programme aimed at securing the building blocks for information societies within and outside the Commonwealth. The action points were: (i) establishing Telecentres as knowledge shops; (ii) establishing ICT Policy Resource Centres; (iii) ensuring skills for ICT development and use; (iv) achieving e-Government for Good Governance; and (v) introducing knowledge networks for information sharing.

iii. The Commonwealth Secretary-General was to convene a high-level forum prior to CHOGM 2003 comprising Commonwealth governments, representatives of international aid agencies and business, individual entrepreneurs and civil society organisations to bring political momentum to the advancement of ICTs, and to promote co-operative action by them.

iv. The Commonwealth should establish a mechanism, under the authority of the Commonwealth Secretary-General, to review and – as necessary – strengthen existing mechanisms, and prioritise, co-ordinate and support projects in the CAPDD for implementation by Commonwealth agencies, including non-governmental organisations.

With regard to point (iv) above, the group proposed that this would be achieved by:[11]

- Integrating ICT considerations into the development work of all existing agencies, rather than narrowing the focus to a single organisation or mechanism.

- Instilling greater overall strategic leadership for, and political commitment to, Commonwealth-wide information society initiatives and, thus, promote greater priority for, and adequate resourcing of, the ICT-based programmes and activities of Commonwealth agencies and mechanisms. This would thus help to further clarify agency mandates concerning ICT and ensure greater co-ordination in programme activity.

- Establishing a forum for prioritising and planning across Commonwealth organisations involved in ICT-based development activities, to achieve greater clarity and understanding of the ICT missions of Commonwealth agencies and their resource commitments; facilitating joint planning and co-operation among agencies and with the private sector; providing additional funding at an appropriate level with a co-ordinating and oversight mechanism for the implementation of the five-point programme; and providing for high-level strategic direction and commitment to the development of information societies across the Commonwealth.

- All member agencies of the Commonwealth, including voluntary and private sector organisations, should clarify their ICT roles and objectives in the context of their overall mandates, and specify their current and future resource commitments in this area. These contributions were seen to form the basis for a Commonwealth strategic plan within the framework of the CAPDD advocated in our report, for endorsement by Commonwealth governments and other partners.

- A high-ranking Commonwealth Secretariat official, such as at the Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General level, should be designated as responsible for the overall co-ordination and advocacy of these efforts and for the mobilisation of external resources.

This would be through the convening of an annual meeting of key Commonwealth agencies during the Commonwealth Secretariat Resource Week for the purpose of forward planning of ICT-based projects and activities, to encourage inter-agency co-operation, identify economies of scale/scope, and to target possible strategic alliances with non-Commonwealth bodies.

The report by the CHLG, as adopted by the 2002 CHOGM, stated that while 'networks created by advanced ICTs hold a revolutionary potent', the presence of 'uneven levels of access to technology, applications and skills, which has created a digital divide between and within countries, have limited the realisation of these benefits'.[12]

It added that the Secretariat could significantly influence the deployment of ICTs for development, both by taking strategic action itself and by facilitating effective action by others, including governments, other development agencies, civil society and the private sector, especially entrepreneurs.[13] The CHLG further recommended that the CHOGM should adopt the recommendations presented in the Expert Group – which recommendations were adopted. It is to be noted, however, that neither the Coolum Communiqué nor the Coolum Declaration made any reference to ICT and the digital divide.

2.2 The 2002 report on the Commonwealth Action Programme for the Digital Divide to the 2003 Abuja (Nigeria) Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

The 2002 CAPDD report by the Expert Group on Information Technology[14] recognised the valuable contribution of the various Commonwealth agencies and suggested that the Commonwealth could better focus its ICT programmes and actions at the bilateral and multilateral levels, building on its existing work and strengths.[15] The group made four general recommendations:[16]

i. to build and strengthen capacity in ICTs in member states through the support of the five-point action programme aimed at strengthening the building blocks for information societies within and outside the Commonwealth;

ii. the Commonwealth should establish a mechanism, under the authority of the Commonwealth Secretary-General, to review and – as necessary – strengthen existing mechanisms, and prioritise, co-ordinate and support projects in the CAPDD for implementation by Commonwealth agencies, including non-governmental organisations;

iii. to 'convene a high-level forum immediately prior to the CHOGM 2003 comprising Commonwealth governments, representatives of international aid agencies and business, individual entrepreneurs and civil society organisations to bring political momentum to the advancement of the ICTs, and for promoting co-operative action by them'; and

iv. CHOGMs should continue to monitor progress on the efforts to narrow the digital divide and the contribution of ICT to the developmental priorities of Commonwealth countries.

The Abuja CHOGM mandated the implementation of recommendation (ii) through the setting up of the Co-ordinating Committee for the CAPDD, reporting to the Commonwealth Secretary-General.[17] Importantly, the group was cognizant of the strategic importance that such a Commonwealth programme was to complement, rather than duplicate, other ICT initiatives. Thus, the group proposed that the programme should focus on five specific areas[18]:

1. building policy and regulatory capacity;

2. modernising education and skills development;

3. entrepreneurship or wealth creation and poverty reduction;

4. promoting local access and connectivity; and

5. regional networks, local content and knowledge.

2.3 The 2005 report by the Co-ordinating Committee for the Commonwealth Action Programme for the Digital Divide on information technology to the 2005 Malta CHOGM

The 2005 Report to CHOGM by the Co-ordinating Committee for the CAPDD, while underlining that since the aforementioned 2002 report by the Expert Group and its endorsement at the 2003 CHOGM, 'much work was carried out within the Commonwealth to expand the contribution of ICTs to social, economic and civic development' it, nevertheless, admitted that the 'full potential and promise for the Commonwealth in the area of ICT for development remains largely unfulfilled'.[19]

In reasserting the continuing relevance of the CAPDD and the strategic role of the Secretariat vis-à-vis the digital divide and in building a future strategy on ICT for development, the Co-ordinating Committee stated that the CAPDD was bedevilled by a series of weaknesses in the governance, financing and organisational framework: weaknesses which had to be overcome. Among the weaknesses mentioned in the 2005 CAPDD Co-ordinating Committee's report to the Secretary-General, titled *Networking the Commonwealth for Development: The Commonwealth, ICTs and Development*, the following are of note:[20]

- responsibility for the programme was initially placed within the Science and Technology Division in the Secretariat and subsequent organisational realignment within the Secretariat impacted the programme's effectiveness;

- lack of focus, co-ordination and alignment at the strategic level;

- the absence of a clear strategic direction with regard to collaboration within and outside the Secretariat; and

- a lack of consistent, dedicated funding.

In order to secure funding and sustainability for the CAPDD, the Co-ordinating Committee presented a number of recommendations that, if accepted,

would allow it to meet its mandate following the 2005 CHOGM. The following were the salient recommendations:[21]

a. The strategic development, oversight and resource-governance should rest with the Commonwealth Secretariat Board of Governors. The core CAPDD functions would be operationalised through the Commonwealth Secretariat's annual strategic and operational planning process.

b. The Commonwealth Secretary-General would constitute a voluntary Special Fund in accordance with the CHLG endorsed by the Coolum CHOGM and resourced through:

    – voluntary and extra-budgetary contributions;

    – support from the international donor/development community;

    – private sector participation; and

    – in-kind contributions of products and skills.

    It was stated that the special fund was to be constituted within three months from CHOGM's endorsement of its recommendation.

c. The Board of Governors would authorise seed funding through the CFTC for core activities. These core activities, led by Governance and Institutional Development Division (GIDD) within the Secretariat, would include co-ordinating and promoting CAPDD activities, facilitating and encouraging the development of national strategies, co-ordinating the assembly and dissemination of Internet-based resources, including the CAPDD web portal, and providing access to expertise. It was further proposed that the Commonwealth Secretary-General would appoint a Steering Committee (SC) for the CAPDD, which would be supported by a secretariat within GIDD.

d. The SC, reporting to the Secretariat Board of Governors through the Executive Committee, would be tasked with the following performance targets by the 2007 CHOGM:

    – mature ICT strategy and planning processes in developing member states; and

    – mature processes for sharing the Commonwealth's intellectual assets for ICT deployment.

e. The chair of the SC would act as an advocate and champion for the CAPDD.

f. The Commonwealth Secretary-General would continue to report progress to CHOGM.

With specific reference to the digital divide, the final communiqué of the 2005 CHOGM highlighted the significant potential contribution of ICT for development (ICT4D) and issued a specific *Malta Commonwealth Declaration on Networking for Development.*[22] *The Malta Commonwealth Declaration on Networking for Development* underlined that CHOGM's:[23]

• Viewed ICTs as powerful instruments of development rather than ends in themselves, delivering savings, efficiencies and growth in the economies of member states.

• Recognised the ability of ICTs to act as catalysts in creating new economic synergies, offering opportunities to overcome the constraints of remoteness, small size, and other factors which have traditionally acted as a brake on development.

• Believed that the Commonwealth could contribute meaningfully measures aimed at bridging and closing the digital divide, and was resolved to do so given that ICTs provided an opportunity for individuals to learn, to grow, to participate more actively in society and to compete more effectively in markets.

• Believed that existing mechanisms and resources should be strengthened to achieve sustained collaboration with partners in other organisations within and beyond the Commonwealth, as well as with the corporate sector and civil society to share knowledge and experience.

• Endorsed the CAPDD as the roadmap, with the Commonwealth's priorities for the digital divide, in particular, being the development of policy and regulatory capacity, the modernisation of education

and skills development, the promotion of entrepreneurship for poverty elimination, the promotion of local access and connectivity, and the strengthening of local and regional networks. The Commonwealth Secretary-General was mandated to establish the SC of relevant existing Commonwealth agencies, including member states, to work with the Commonwealth Secretariat in implementing the CAPDD.

• Welcomed the launch of an Indian initiative on a Pan-African E-Network project that would link all the 53 member states of the African Union and assist in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially in respect of education and health.

• Endorsed the establishment of a Special Fund to enable implementation of the specific activities and to achieve the performance targets envisaged in the Action Programme, and called for contributions so that the fund could become operational without delay.

2.4 The relaunching of the Commonwealth Action Programme for the Digital Divide as the Commonwealth Connects Programme and its governance and performance management framework

2.4.1 Priority and focus areas of the Commonwealth Connects Programme

In 2006, the CAPDD was rebranded as the 'Commonwealth Connects Programme (CCP)'[24] and formally launched in August 2006. The CCP was:

…an articulation of a shared vision that ICTs can transform societies, improve governance, and accelerate development in the countries of the Commonwealth … [and] an acknowledgement that the Commonwealth through its agencies, can make a significant impact on the digital divide that exists across the Commonwealth, and in fact create digital opportunities.[25]

The mandate set for the CCP was that it would focus on five specific areas:[26]

i. building policy and regulatory capacity – sharing best practices, legislation, regulatory tools, strategic plans and case studies;

ii. modernising education and skills development – using ICT to promote learning and skills;

iii. promoting entrepreneurship for wealth creation and poverty reduction – supporting initiatives using ICT to develop small and medium-sized enterprises;

iv. promoting local access and connectivity – improving access to transformational information by a wide spectrum of stakeholders; and

v. creating regional networks, local content and knowledge – helping local players to enter world markets and take advantage of the opportunities presented by globalisation by promoting regional networking and the convergence of different media.

The SC was to take forward its mandate by:[27]

• providing strategic leadership and co-ordination;

• fostering multistakeholder partnerships and co-operation;

• promoting the development of national ICT strategies;

• sharing ICT resources for capacity building; and

• supporting pan-Commonwealth ICT-based initiatives.

At the 2009 CHOGM held in Trinidad and Tobago, Heads of Government agreed that the CCP should focus on promoting strategic partnerships, building ICT capacity and helping member states to access new resources. Furthermore, Heads of Governments recognised that the underpinning role of the CCP was to act as a 'catalyst for the initiation of partnerships to promote the use of ICTs for development'.[28]

2.4.2 Terms of reference and constitution of the Steering Committee

The terms of reference (ToR) of the SC were established as follows:[29]

- advising on the general strategic direction to be utilised by the Commonwealth in addressing the digital divide;

- establishing the overarching Commonwealth priorities for action, and their alignment with global initiatives such as the World Summit for the Information Society (WSIS) and the MDGs;

- promoting and ensuring policy coherence of the overall programme;

- maintaining a multistakeholder, multipartner implementation framework;

- determining criteria for action and priorities for the programmes and projects executed under the CCP;

- establishing overall implementation processes and mechanisms for the CCP;

- managing the strategic direction of the CCP's Special Fund, and being accountable for its expenditure;

- establishing a communication strategy for the programme; and

- project monitoring and periodic reporting on progress of implementation.

The chair of the SC rotated every two years. The first chair was Dr Frendo, the-then Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Malta, whose tenure expired at the 2007 CHOGM. Dr Frendo was succeeded by Dr Salomão Manhiça, the Director of the ICT Policy Implementation Technical Unit of the Government of Mozambique, who was appointed by the new Commonwealth Secretary-General, Hon. Kamalesh Sharma, in September 2008. At the same time, Mr Kiran Karnik, former Chair of the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASCOM), was appointed to the newly established position of Deputy Chairperson, created by the Commonwealth Secretary-General to maintain continuity within the programme. In 2010, the Honourable Minister, Rupert Griffith, Minister of Science and Technology, Government of Trinidad and Tobago, took over from Mr Karnik as the Chairperson.

The SC was made up of representatives of the governments of India, Malta, Mozambique, Trinidad and Tobago, and of member organisations, COMNET-IT, CTO, the Commonwealth Business Council (CBC), the Commonwealth of Learning

(CoL) and the Commonwealth Foundation (CF). Additionally, the constitution of the SC allowed for three representatives from civil society, which was facilitated by the CF. At the constitution of the SC, three non-government organisations (NGOs) were nominated: the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association (CBA) based in London, ANAIS, an NGO based in Cameroon, and the Electronic Commerce Industry (ECI), based in Canada.

The SC was designed as a team of independent bodies that would work through consensus, with members assuming leadership in delivering the programme based on their specific expertise, experience and resources. The Commonwealth Secretary-General had the authority, in consultation with the chair of the SC, to invite other representatives to join the SC.

The ToR set out that the SC was a co-ordinating committee and not an implementing agency, and thus it had to work with and complement rather than duplicate other ICT initiatives being carried out by Commonwealth implementing agencies or those of other donor agencies.

The ToR further underlined that the CCP was to be executed with minimal overheads and had to actively promote trust and regard as the basis for a multipartner execution process. The ToR emphasised that the execution of programmes and projects, thus, rested primarily with existing Commonwealth agencies, networks and institutions, including civil society, rather than any new body. In doing so, the ToR established that the Commonwealth implementing agencies were to actively drive ICT for development initiatives 'on the ground', and to fully engage with governments, civil society, academia and the private sector in this process.

The ToR established that the Commonwealth implementing agencies had an implied mandate to ensure that their individual actions at the SC level and at the projects' execution level translated, on one hand, into a multiple stakeholder approach, and on the other into a results-based approach that focussed on delivery in the five areas of focus of the CCP mandate.[30]

As is shown later in this evaluation, the SC in discussing the projects to be selected from the second call for applications during the 8th Meeting of the SC recognised that, although the ToR provided for the Commonwealth implementing

Table 2.1: Contributions to the Special Fund[35]

Country	Contributions to the Special Fund (£)
India	756,983.47
Malta	129,149.62
Mozambique	15,115.00
Trinidad and Tobago	127,274.29
Total contribution received	1,028,522.38

agencies to take a leading role in projects financed under the CCP, such a situation could result in a potential issue or conflict of interest vis-à-vis the Commonwealth implementing agencies or representatives of governments sitting on the SC.

Given that it was now recognised that potential conflict of interest could arise when the deliberations involved project/s or activity/ies related to the Commonwealth implementing agencies or representatives of member states, the ToR were amended in June 2007.[31] The new amendments underlined that potential conflict of interest could arise when the SC deliberated on:

- the selection of project/s or activity/ies that the Lead Agency/ies had submitted, either singly or in partnership with other Lead Agencies or organisations;

- selection of project/s or activity/ies whose execution involved the Lead Agency/ies;

- allocation of funding to the project/s or activity/ies; and/or

- approval of payments for such project/s or activity/ies.[32]

- To counter such conflict of interest, two governance mechanisms were introduced. The first placed responsibility for the anticipation of a conflict of interest with the implementing agency and, in the event that such a circumstance would arise, such agency or a member state representative had to bring such a potential conflict of interest to the SC's attention at the earliest possible time. The second was that the SC could be reduced in size to allow for a 'consensus on the issue at hand' to be reached.[33]

2.4.3 The Special Fund

The 2005 CHOGM authorised the establishment of a Special Fund and called for contributions to the fund from member states and the international development community (as shown in Table 2.1) . Consistent with this mandate, the Commonwealth Secretary-General established the fund in March 2006 in a way that was consistent with the programme's multistakeholder ethos, so that it could accept[34]:

- voluntary and extra-budgetary contributions;

- support from the international development community;

- private sector participation; and

- in-kind contributions of products and skills.

The purpose of the Special Fund was to provide funding for initiatives that promoted the CCP's core strategy of facilitating ICT partnerships. At the 2005 CHOGM, Malta and India announced that they would contribute finances to the new CCP in order to enable the programme to move forward. Thereafter, commitments to contribute to the Special Fund were also made by Mozambique and Trinidad and Tobago. Table 2.1 shows the contributions to the Special Fund and by which country.

The SC had a primary responsibility for the secure and effective management of the Special Fund in a transparent and accountable manner. The custodianship for the fund, however, rested with the Secretariat under the CFTC rules and regulations. The Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General (DSG) was assigned special fiduciary responsibilities, including signing authority, for the disbursement of funds from the CFTC generally and from the Special Fund specifically.[36]

For this purpose, the DSG was formally recognised as a Secretariat representative on the SC. The ToR provided the SC with the authority to establish a Fund Management Sub-Committee to effect management responsibility. However, no evidence has surfaced that this sub-committee was constituted.

2.4.4 Sub-committees

The SC set up a number of sub-committees to assist with its work. These included a Strategic Advisory Committee (SAC); and sub-committees assigned responsibility for project evaluation and the presentation of recommendations to the SC.

2.4.5 Administrative support to the Steering Committee

Administrative support to the SC was provided by the Commonwealth Secretariat, through the then-GIDD. GIDD acted as the Secretariat, with responsibility for:[37]

- providing the administrative support to the committee in its operations, namely:
  - co-ordinating closely with the chairperson;
  - organising meetings of the SC and any sub-committees it established;
  - organising documentation for the meetings, and producing minutes/notes as needed;
- co-ordinating the activities of the CCP;
- supporting promotion and improved awareness of the CCP;
- facilitating and encouraging the development of national strategies;
- co-ordinating the assembly and dissemination of internet-based resources, including the CCP web portal, and access to expertise;
- assisting with the development and management of the Special Fund; and
- any other responsibilities assigned by the chair in discussion with the Commonwealth Secretary-General.

2.4.6 Performance management framework for the CCP

With regard to the performance management framework, the ToR held the SC accountable for establishing the appropriate mechanisms and implementation strategies for the CCP to the following performance targets set at the 2007 CHOGM in Uganda:[38]

- mature ICT strategy and planning processes in developing member states;
- mature processes for sharing the Commonwealth's intellectual assets for ICT deployment; and
- programmes, projects and activities within the five focus areas successfully completed and others being implemented – in the context of available funding.

The ToR also provided the SC with the authority to introduce performance targets as appropriate to manage the performance of the CCP. The committee also had the same responsibilities for any other performance targets that it may have wished to establish during the course of its operations. In this regard, the SC, at its first committee meeting, introduced a number of performance targets – targets that, however, were set only up to the end of the term of the SC first's presidency. The performance targets set were as follows:[39]

- CCP Special Fund established within three months of the endorsement from CHOGM 2005;
- mature ICT strategy and planning processes in developing member states by CHOGM 2007;
- mature processes for sharing the Commonwealth's intellectual assets for ICT deployment by CHOGM 2007; and
- completion of programmes, projects and activities consistent with funding and resource availability by CHOGM 2007.

2.4.7 Strategy for handling projects and initiatives

Annex D of the 2005 CHOGM-endorsed CAPDD Report contained a collection of projects and programmes for potential execution under the CCP. The SC established the following as the criteria for short-listing:[40]

- was within the five areas of focus;

- was low cost and had a maximum 6-month implementation timeframe;

- was highly visible and promoted the CCP positively;

- had manageable implementation risks;

- would build credibility for the CCP and its partners, if successful;

- was replicable, scalable and sustainable;

- was likely to attract future sponsorship; and

- was likely to be supported by an implementation agency.

A list and description of the Annex D projects is presented in Annex V.

In addition, the SC established that the next stage of the strategy was to identify programmes, projects and activities that could be completed before the 2007 CHOGM. The SC decided that such programmes and projects, particularly those projects with a medium-term horizon, should consider the following criteria:[41]

- whether the project objectives were be in line with the five areas of focus;

- the identification of outcomes/ impacts of the project in the short/long term on the beneficiaries;

- the possible unintended impact on wider social economic and policy environment;

- whether project would be affordable and cost-effective;

- whether the project was implementable;

- whether the project was sustainable;

- the identification of project risks and whether these were manageable;

- whether the project could be replicated or scaled up;

- whether financing or sponsorship could be obtained for the identified project; and

- whether the project could be supported by a Commonwealth implementing agency.

It was further added that projects financed through the CCP would be monitored through the use of standard project management tools.[42]

2.5 Subsequent mandates assigned by the 2009 and 2011 CHOGMs to the Commonwealth Connects Programme

In extending the term of the CCP, the 2009 CHOGM assigned the following mandates to the programme:[43]

i. Bridging the Digital Divide: Promoting strategic partnerships, building ICT capacity and helping member states to access new resources;

ii. Bridging the Digital Divide: Promoting the use of ICTs for development;

iii. Commonwealth Partnership Platform Portal (C2P) Setting up and obtaining support for C2P; and

iv. Science, Technology and Innovation (STI): Committing to increased investment in STI, as well as the rapid dissemination of technologies and ideas.

Mandates (i) and (ii) were a continuation of the original mandate assigned to the CCP under the Malta Declaration made by Heads of Government during the 2005 CHOGM. Mandate (iii) was at face value consistent with the aspects assigned to CCP to meet its mandate to mainly share ICT resources for capacity building and support pan-Commonwealth ICT-based initiatives. The C2P project is one of the case studies evaluated in depth and is discussed in the next chapter. Mandate (iv) was a new mandate assigned to the CCP – though there is no evidence that the CCP sought to meet this mandate.

The 2011 CHOGM extended the mandate of the CCP to include the following:[44]

i. It welcomed the launch of the C2P as a contemporary platform for networking, building partnerships and strengthening the Commonwealth's values and effectiveness, and encouraged its use.

ii. Heads of Government reiterated their support for the CCP, which was encouraging greater effort from member states to harness the benefits provided by technology, through promoting strategic partnerships, building ICT capacity and sharing ICT expertise. They also encouraged member

states to contribute to the Special Fund and requested the Secretariat's continued support for the programme.

The CHOGM meeting also approved the Cyber Crime Initiative (CCI) project submitted by the Secretariat together with the CIGF – the latter resulting from a project financed under the CCP. A proposal submitted by the Commonwealth Internet Governance Forum (CIGF) to support the CCI was subsequently submitted and approved by the SC.

2.6 Implementing the mandate of the Commonwealth Connects Programme

The initiatives undertaken by CCP between its launch in 2006 until 2014 could be categorised into three phases: (a) 2006–2008; (b) 2009–2012; and (c) 2013–2014.

During the first phase, from 2006 to 2008, the CCP sponsored: 'individual projects on a selective and strategic basis' with the selection criteria attaching 'a high value to projects which are replicable across member states' and which involved 'the transfer of knowledge and expertise'.[45] The SC initially selected three projects: (a) the

use of ICT in recovering from the tsunami in India and Sri Lanka; (b) a community radio programme for women entrepreneurs in Cameroon; and (c) a computer refurbishment programme in Trinidad and Tobago.[46]

Subsequently, the SC selected a number of projects which sought to demonstrate how partnerships could be used to realise the wide ranging and innovative potential for ICT4D.[47] The projects included the:[48]

- 'Hole in the Wall' education project that provided unrestricted computer access for children in a playground setting, piloted in Uganda to coincide with the 2007 CHOGM;

- Commonwealth Computer Navigator Certificate (CCNC) scheme, promoted by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL); and

- Jamaica Organic Agriculture Movement (JOAM), which taught women farmers from all over the Caribbean how to use ICT in various aspects of organic farming, from pest control to marketing their products.

Table 2.2 presents an overview of the projects financed by the CCP during this first phase.

Table 2.2: Projects financed by the Commonwealth Connects Programme between 2006 and 2008

Project name	Grant (£)	Grant recipient	Project
'Hole in the Wall'	£52,675	Hole in the Wall Education Ltd	Hole in the Wall Education Ltd were charged with the implementation and testing, commissioning and support of two Hole in the Wall stations in Uganda. The learning stations were designed to provide some exposure by young people from disadvantaged communities to the potential learning benefits of computer technology.
Commonwealth of Learning Network (COLEN)	£15,000	CTO	The CTO was commissioned to develop a Commonwealth-wide learning platform to assist stakeholders in developing countries acquire critically needed knowledge and expertise.
Protégé QV Small Business Training for Women in Cameroon Using Radio	£50,000	Protégé QV (NGO)	The aim of this project was to produce a multimedia resource kit to facilitate the preparation of radio programmes to support women in the creation and management of small businesses, and help them to engage professionally in micro-enterprise.

Project name	Grant (£)	Grant recipient	Project
ICT Factbook	£15,000	CTO	The aim of this project was to develop and disseminate a Commonwealth ICT Factbook, which was intended to incorporate comprehensive statistics about the state of ICT in all member states.
Digital Doorway	£15,000	Council for Scientific Industrial Research (CSIR)	The CSIR and the Meraka Institute of South Africa were engaged to deliver computer literacy through Unassisted Learning in Lesotho. The Digital Doorways were robust, free-standing computer terminals that offered 'minimally invasive education' as an alternative means of promoting wide-scale computer literacy.
RIVERS	£15,000	Uniworks Society India	The aim of this project was to provide mobile communication-based tools for rural and urban areas in India, enabling low-income communities to seek livelihood opportunities and create an ecosystem for social entrepreneurs to use mobile technology in identifying and promoting their business/ livelihood opportunities.
Commonwealth Computer Navigator Certificate (CCNC)	£15,000	COL	The aim of the project was to create multimedia content for the CCNC. The course material for the CNCC was rendered freely for every country in the Commonwealth to use for ICT skills training in their respective countries. The curriculum was based on the European Computer Driving License and International Computer Driving License (ICDL) and used open source software.
JOAM Training of Trainers Workshop in support of Women Farm Entrepreneurs	£15,000	Also sponsored by the UNDP and the Canadian NGO, Networked Intelligence for Development.	The aim of the project was to develop and enhance the facilitation skills of trainers in the region, to expand support and sustain at a local level training methods required for reaching and engaging women in small-scale organic farming.
Rebuilding after the Tsunami: Using ICTS for Change	£24,550	One World South Asia	The project co-ordinated by One World South Asia offered quality web development, e-communication services and training to organisations working on tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in Sri Lanka and India.
Government of Swaziland –Assistance in setting up a Commission for Communications	£8,711	COMNET-IT	The project consisted of a scoping mission in order to establish where Swaziland was in respect of the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector, and to provide a high-level road map for government to follow in pursuit of this.
Government of Belize – National ICT Strategy	£8,556	COMNET-IT	The project consisted of a scoping mission with regard to the design of a National ICT Strategy for the Government of Belize.

Project name	Grant (£)	Grant recipient	Project
Computers for Communities Project	£50,000	Trinidad and Tobago Ministry for Science and Technology	The project consisted of an initiative to refurbish used computers and peripherals donated by governments and enterprises at a limited number of refurbishment centres for use by schools and at-risk communities.
Virtual Career Guidance Centre	£15,000	CBC	The project was directed towards assisting the CBC and the Virtual Career Guidance Service to establish the Africa Recruit Programme on an online platform.
Commonwealth African Rural Connectivity Initiative (COMARCI)	£50,000	CTO	The project sought to draw up a detailed understanding of the current situation of ICT infrastructure in rural Africa. The CCP financed a scoping exercise of the project.

The SAC of the CCP identified, in response to what was observed to be serious flaws in the supporting structure of the SC, a series of projects branded as 'Commonwealth Connects Core Support projects', which were directed to lay the foundation for implementing the CCP vision. These projects were, effectively, initiatives directed to establish core functions of the SC and were quite distinct from the projects previously financed in the first phase, which constituted field projects.[49]

Thus the initiatives undertaken during the second phase of the CCP were directed to place the SC on an operationally sound and sustainable footing. The exception was the C2P project (see Table 2.3).

Table 2.3: Projects financed by the Commonwealth Connects Programme between 2009 and 2012

Project name	Grant (£)	Grant recipient	Project
Developing and Maintaining a Commonwealth Connects Champions Network Group	£77,280	COMNET-IT	A founding pillar of the CCP was the development of a contact network of individuals drawn from each member state. The identified persons were intended as the official interlocutors and champions responsible for advancing the CCP's objectives in their respective jurisdictions: they identified national ICT assets which were shareable at one level and on another identified needs in their respective countries which the programme could potentially address. This core project was extended.
Establishing and Maintaining an Inventory of ICT Wealth	£85,680	COMNET-IT	This project was directed to assist the CCP to fulfil its mission, by enabling it to understand what member states had to offer by way of policies, legislation, best practice, strategies, technical expertise, methodologies and business applications software in the public domain – which knowledge sharing would be achieved through the POC. This core project was extended.

Project name	Grant (£)	Grant recipient	Project
Conducting an Assessment of Needs	£16,400	COMNET-IT	Recognising that the CCP should be demand-driven and premised on intra-Commonwealth collaboration, this project was directed to obtain a clear identification of the needs of member states falling within CCP's mandate.
Developing Multifaceted Partnerships	£16,400	COMNET-IT	The CCP, unlike other ICT4D programmes of development agencies, was not funded. While the CCP made possible the sharing of intellectual property that was in the public domain, where specific project costs were involved, these had to be borne by the recipient country or a development partner. This project, thus, directed a focussed attempt to establish institutional inks with development agencies, with a view to translating these into meaningful partnerships on the ground.
Creating a Project Management Structure	£7,200	COMNET-IT	This project was directed towards designing an effective, monitoring, management, evaluation and co-ordination structure for the CCP. This was to be addressed with immediacy, both with regard to extant projects underway and, most particularly, with regard to future ones.
Promoting Local Access and Connectivity	£12,800	COMNET-IT	The purpose of this project was to ensure that the CCP was active in strategic networks and forums such as the Government Advisory Committee to ICANN, CTO and industry associations or networks.
Commonwealth Connects Portal (C2P)	£185,000	Commonwealth Secretariat	The C2P was to act as the Commonwealth-wide gateway to information, networks and content online – thus becoming the vehicle for technology and knowledge transfer in e-government and other areas. The portal was in line with the Eminent Persons Group's (EPG) vision of a future Commonwealth. The EPG specifically advocated 'the use of technology … to achieve Commonwealth goals and raise profile, especially the "Commonwealth Connects" Portal'.

A presentation was delivered by the Secretariat to the SC meeting of 17 September 2012 on projects proposed for financing under the CCP. The SC was informed that all of the projects were included in the 2011 Connects Report to CHOGM and that the Heads of Government endorsed the recommendations and proposals. See Table 2.4 for the projects that were eventually selected.

Table 2.4: Projects financed by the Commonwealth Connects Programme between 2013 and 2014

Project name	Grant (£)	Grant recipient	Project
Multipurpose Access Centre	£30,000	CTO	This project was envisaged on the basis of utilising benefits of ICTs through the setting up of a telecentre in a community that did not have access to ICT.
M-Governance	£30,000	CTO	This project was aimed at developing, in conjunction with the country's stakeholders, strategy for the leveraging of mobile (m-) technology for governance and the provision of government services for a small island state such as Vanuatu. This would also be used as the basis to develop an application toolkit that would guide other governments in the development of their own comprehensive, country-specific and appropriate m-governance strategies. The toolkit would be in the form of online resources that could be used by multistakeholders in formulating an m-governance strategy.
Digital Connection Project	£25,000	CBA	The project was aimed at enabling capacity building for broadcast practitioners in the daily use of social and new media integrated with broadcast content production.
Commonwealth Cybercrime Initiative (CCI)	£30,000	COMNET-IT	The Initiative resulted as a development of the Commonwealth Internet Governance Forum, which was set up under the aegis of CCP. The initiative received its mandate from the Perth CHOGM. The project sought to establish a platform that outreaches to member states with regard to legislative, policy, technical, development etc. matters relating to cybercrime.
Commonwealth Internet Governance Forum	£7,000		This project was directed towards establishing a platform with regard to issues and discussions related to internet governance, so that these could be shared at a Commonwealth level and thus encourage greater participation from member states to come up with informed solutions or the pooling of good practices to address their needs more directly.

A short description of all of the projects financed under the CCP is presented in Annex VI.

2.7 Review of the Commonwealth Connects Programme

At the 20th SC Meeting, held on 25 October 2010, there was agreement to proceed with a project impact assessment that would be carried out by the Indian and Maltese representatives on the SC. The review was to cover all projects of a non-administrative nature that were approved by the SC for funding from the Special Fund. The objective of the review was to provide the SC with an accounting, as well as an understanding, of benefits derived and lessons learned.[50] The review concluded the following:[51]

• Most of the projects sponsored under the CCP fell into one or more of the areas established in the CCP's mandate. The review added that the projects that were implemented focussed mainly on developing local content and knowledge. The review emphasised that two of the projects for which a financial grant was provided did not have as strong a focus on the ICT aspect as the others. These were the radio programmes on micro-enterprise in Cameroon and the train-the-trainers workshop for organic farmers in Jamaica. The review concluded that these projects were largely about content creation and capacity building applied through the use of 'conventional' communication technology, and thus determined that these two projects fell short of the ICT focus of the programme.

• In the projects that were reviewed, there was considerable focus on improving access to technology for remote and underprivileged communities and encouraging entrepreneurship and wealth creation. The work was primarily local or community based. Indeed, there was only one project that addressed access to technology on a regional basis, and none of the projects dealt with technology transfer on a national or regional basis, which the review considered to be the CCP's 'raison d'etre'.

• It was difficult to assess the true socioeconomic impact of the projects undertaken, as many of the projects were initiated either as exploratory or pilot projects that tested out technology platforms or as scoping or feasibility studies. Additionally, recipient agencies were not obliged to report on the socioeconomic benefits and there were no targets set to be achieved in this area.

• The terms of reference assigned to the grant agreements for the projects did not require the recipient organisations to explore the projects' sustainability over the longer term. The review underlined in the consideration that project-recurrent expenditures such as maintenance, resources, technical skills etc. were invariably not taken into account. Furthermore, it added that in particular projects – such as the ICT Fact Book and the Commonwealth of Learning Network (COLEN) – emphasis was placed on the technology platform, whereas generic and open-source solutions could have served just as well.

• While many of the projects were replicable at a conceptual level, the value of replication at the basic content level, where much of the investment was made, was seen to be debatable.

• Finally, while the projects fulfilled the remit of their ToR, they did not have a significant impact in adding value to the recipient communities.

The review identified the following as lessons learned:[52]

• There should have been less focus on the technology platform, as well as a move away from proprietary platforms to more generic, open-source options. It underlined that tying-in with specific technology providers precluded the opportunity for a more coherent approach to development.

• The development of local content was seen as a significant overhead to projects and should have been considered at a secondary stage rather than being the primary focus.

• Prior to approving projects, the SC should have ensured that all stakeholders were engaged and committed to the project and had the necessary resources.

• The long-term value of the projects could only be attained if the approved project met the criteria for sustainability, replicability and true value to the recipients.

- The ToR should have been designed with clear criteria for added value, deliverables and payment schedules in a consistent manner. Inputs should also have been monitored closely.

- In approving projects, the SC should have considered emerging technological trends that could have been incorporated into the delivery of services such as mobiles, social media and generic content management systems.

2.8 Winding down the Commonwealth Connects Programme

On 27 January 2014, the SC discussed the future of the CCP. The SC was informed that the Commonwealth Secretariat was recommending that the CCP should be wound down, given the new Strategic Plan for the Secretariat and the restructuring of its organisation and budget. Furthermore, there was a requirement to reorientate the Secretariat's staff assigned to support the SC to the implementation of the new Strategic Plan. Moreover, the Special Fund budget was practically exhausted.[53]

The SC, too, concluded that the CCP should be wound down. At the time this decision was taken, the following projects were yet to be completed (these projects would continue to be led by the responsible Commonwealth implementing agencies):

- The e-Waste project. Previously, funding has been assigned to one of the three first pilot projects titled 'Computers for Communities' (Trinidad and Tobago). This, however, did not materialise. During the time that passed from concept to taking forward the original project objectives no longer made sense as in the resulting period cheap smart phones were available on the market and the prices of basic computers fell significantly. In 2014, the grant of £50,000 was shifted to an e-Waste initiative that was to be carried out, also in Trinidad and Tobago.

- Community Technology Access Centre – Trinidad and Tobago.

- M-Governance strategy – Vanuatu.

It was further agreed that the important function of co-ordination and information exchange between Commonwealth organisations working in the ICT4D space performed by the CCP would be conducted by the Secretariat as part of its mandate under the new Strategic Plan.

The CCI and CIGF would initially remain the responsibility of COMNET-IT. In 2014, the decision was taken by the Law Ministers Group to migrate the CCI to the Legal and Constitutional Division (LCAD) within the Secretariat. The POCs were subsequently absorbed within the Secretariat, although as at May 2015 the network is no longer operational.

Endnotes

5. Mansell, R, and N Couldry (2001), A Commonwealth Action Programme for the Digital Divide: Report of the Commonwealth Expert Group on Information Technology for the Commonwealth High Level Review Group, Commonwealth Secretariat, London, p1.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid, p19.
8. Ibid, pvi
9. Ibid, pp31–31.
10. Ibid, p32.
11. Ibid, pxv.
12. See: http://www.chogm2002.org/pub/statements/hlrg.html
13. Ibid.
14. The evaluation team could not find from the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Digital Library or the internet documentation relating to reports presented on progress achieved with regard to the bridging of the digital divide and the communiqués and declarations of the CHOGM 2003 held in Abuja, Uganda. The reference made to the 2002 CAPDD report is through a secondary source: Commonwealth Secretariat (2005b), Networking the Commonwealth for Development: The Commonwealth, ICTs and Development, a report to CHOGM 2005, Co-ordinating Committee, Commonwealth Action Programme for the Digital Divide for the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Commonwealth Secretariat, London.
15. Commonwealth Secretariat (2005b), Networking the Commonwealth for Development: The Commonwealth, ICTs and Development, a report to CHOGM 2005, Co-ordinating Committee, Commonwealth Action Programme for the Digital Divide for the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Commonwealth Secretariat, London, p12.
16. Ibid, p12.
17. Ibid, p4.
18. Ibid, pp14–17.
19. Ibid, p4.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid, pp17–22.
22. See: http://www.mfa.gov.cy/mfa/mfa2006.nsf/All/6477E83F9B8B3366C22571D30025C1B5/$file/Commonwealth%20Malta% 2011.2005%20 FINALCOMMUNIQUE.pdf

23. Commonwealth Secretariat (2005b), Malta Declaration on Networking the Commonwealth for Development, 2005, Commonwealth Secretariat, London, available at: http://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/history-items/documents/malta%20declaration.pdf [accessed 5 February 2016].

24. In the first series of meetings held in 2006, the programme was still called the Commonwealth Action Plan for the Digital Divide. To minimise confusion, the Commonwealth Connects Programme is referred to as the CCP or 'the programme'.

25. (2007), Tools for Development: The Capacity of ICTs to Transform Societies, report to CHOGM 2007, Commonwealth Secretariat, London, p3.

26. Steering Committee for the Commonwealth Connects Programme (2009), Report, CCP documents, p5.

27. Ibid, p6.

28. Steering Committee for the Commonwealth Connects Programme (2011), Report, CCP documents, p8.

29. Commonwealth Secretariat (2005a), 'Commonwealth Connects: Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee', Commonwealth Connects Programme (CCP) documents, 7 March 2005, Commonwealth Secretariat, London, p1.

30. Ibid, p2.

31. Commonwealth Secretariat (2007b), 'Commonwealth Connects: Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee', Commonwealth Connects Programme (CCP) documents, 5 June 2007, Commonwealth Secretariat, London, p3.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. Commonwealth Secretariat (2011b), 'Commonwealth Connects Programme – Approach Paper', CCP documents, Commonwealth Secretariat, London.

35. Ibid.

36. Commonwealth Secretariat (2005a), p4.

37. Ibid; Steering Committee for the Commonwealth Connects Programme (2011).

38. Ibid, p2.

39. Implementation of the CAPDD: Strategy for Handling Programmes and Projects, Inaugural Steering Committee Meeting, 7 March 2005

40. Ibid, p2.

41. Ibid, pp3–4.

42. Ibid, p2.

43. 19th Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Commonwealth Connects Programme, 24 May 2010, p5.

44. 25th Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Commonwealth Connects Programme, 13 January 2012.

45. Notes of Meeting, Inaugural CAPDD Virtual Meeting, 8 May 2006, CCP documentation, p4.

46. Steering Committee for the Commonwealth Connects Programme (2011), p9.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

49. Commonwealth Connects Steering Committee (2009), Agenda Item 16.3, 'Strategic Advisory Committee, Summary of proposed projects: Core Projects', 25 May 2009, Commonwealth Secretariat, London.

50. Narotra, JP, and JV Tabone (2011), Review of the Connects Projects, Report to the Steering Committee, April 2011.

51. Ibid, pp10–14.

52. Ibid, p15.

53. Steering Committee, 30th Meeting, 'Future Direction of the Commonwealth Connects Programme', 27 January 2014, p2.

3. Evaluating the Commonwealth Connects Programme

This part of the report discusses the evaluation findings with regard to the vision, mandate, governance and implementation aspects of the CCP.

3.1 The vision for the Commonwealth Connects Programme and the Commonwealth's comparative advantage

The CCP evolved from the CADDP. At the time that CADDP was conceived, countries were not only discovering that the advent of the internet would change how public administration could be modernised, but were also recognising the impact it could have with regard to national, social and economic development.

At the level of public administration and management, the application of ICT was inward looking up to the late 1990s. ICT was primarily directed at the process transformation of backend administrative services (payroll, pensions, taxation etc.). The internet, however, resulted in a paradigm shift and could transform the interaction between government and its citizens through the provision of service delivery at the convenience of the citizen 24 hours, 365 days from any place. This could also increase access to information and transparency. This advent was called 'e-government'.

From a national perspective, the internet resulted in a seismic change: suddenly, the tyranny of distance was overcome. This resulted in different impacts: e-commerce, wherein a country could provide business and services in real time to a country in a different time zone; e-health, wherein a person in a rural village could obtain a high level of care that was previously unattainable; e-education, wherein a person could take part in education programmes delivered by educational institutions in other countries.

Moreover, the knowledge economy was born. Economic activity was no longer tied to 'bricks and mortar' or to traditional sectors. New sectors emerged such as financial services, i-gaming etc., the underlying infrastructural basis of which was ICT. Moreover, it was recognised that if ICT was applied strategically, it could be a powerful tool to combat poverty, illiteracy, mortality etc.

As nations recognised that a fundamental 'game changer' was now unleashed which would have significant impact on the speed and extent of future social and economic development, it was also recognised that those nations (and from a micro perspective, different cohorts of people within countries) which failed to embrace ICTs were likely to fall further behind compared to those nations that embraced this new paradigm. A paper presented to the International Communication Association (ICA) in 2000 states:

'Presently, hot discussions are going on in America and Europe, in particular, about the question whether there is a so – called 'digital divide' or not. And when it is deemed to exist, the next question becomes whether it will close or widen in years to come. Most of this discussion has a heavy political load. Old views reappear about markets and people solving all problems by themselves, or not, and about the need or rejection of government interference.'[54]

The term 'digital divide' was coined. The definition of the digital divide that was presented in 2001 states that it constitutes: a global divide, entailing a divergence of internet access between industrialised and developed societies; a social divide, resulting in a gap between the information-rich and poor in each country; and a democratic divide, resulting in a difference between those who do, and do not, use the opportunity of digital resources to engage, mobilise and participate in public life.[55]

There is no doubt that in the early-to-mid-2000s, the digital divide issue was very high on the agenda of national and supra-national institutions. It was seen as a timely and powerful opportunity for policy-makers to force positive change, by means of creating opportunities for the empowerment of individuals and their eventual increased social inclusion and long-term security.[56] The European Union (EU), for example, in 2000 launched the e-Europe Strategy directed to position the block as a leading knowledge and information economy.

As the phenomenon of the digital divide emerged and its impact on economic and social development was increasingly recognised in the early 2000s, a plethora of international bodies geared up and built capacity to deliver technical support to developing countries. These included the World Bank (InfoDev), International Telecommunications Union (ITU), OECD, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) etc.

The question, therefore, arises as to whether the Commonwealth should have intervened in this emerging policy area and whether in doing so it brought any comparative advantage to play. The present evaluation is of the considered opinion that the Commonwealth was correct at the time in taking the decision to establish the issue of the digital divide as one of high importance, one towards which it had to direct significant and sustained focus.

The Commonwealth itself at that time exhibited the digital divide among its members. These ranged from sophisticated knowledge and information countries such as Australia, Canada, Singapore and the United Kingdom to developing economies. Among the latter, there is a large number of small and island states which are exposed to unique characteristics and challenges. As the sophisticated knowledge and information countries embraced e-commerce, e-government, e-health etc., they accrued a wealth of knowledge and assets, including lessons learned that could, theoretically, be shared among all Commonwealth member states.

Thus, for example, the EU through its e-Europe Strategy embarked on a programme that ensured that all of its member states shared knowledge, ICT assets, experiences etc., in order to negate the possibility of any of its member states falling behind in the digital transformation that was seen to be crucial for the continued wellbeing of the Union as whole. The concept that the Commonwealth would establish a platform to achieve a similar objective among its member states made, and continues to make, eminent sense. The comparative advantages identified by the Expert Group on Information Technology in 2000 were, and continue to be, real.

3.2 Clarity of mandate of the CCP

The 2005 Malta Declaration endorsed the CAPDD report as its 'roadmap' – with the institutional framework mentioned briefly in Article 8 of the Declaration being that proposed in the afore-referenced 2005 CHOGM report presented by the Co-ordinating Committee.

Of particular importance, however, is that the Declaration does not specify the mandate that is to be achieved through the CAPDD roadmap. The Declaration only makes reference to the Commonwealth's five priority areas. These were the priorities areas that were proposed in the afore-mentioned report, namely: (a) building policy and regulatory capacity; (b) modernising education and skills development; (c) entrepreneurship for poverty reduction; (d) promoting local access and connectivity; and (e) regional networks, local content and knowledge.

The Commonwealth, ICTs and Development report, however, apart from proposing the areas of focus and priority, was not clear on what the specific goals and objectives of the CCP should be. The closest that the report came to defining the mandate of the CCP was through the identification of the performance targets upon which it was to report on at the forthcoming 2007 CHOGM: (a) progress with regard a mature ICT strategy and planning process; and (b) progress with regard to mature processes for sharing the Commonwealth's intellectual assets for ICT deployment.

In fact, no specific terms of reference for the CCP were designed. The only document that comes close to a charter for the CCP was the ToR of the SC. The ToR, as shown earlier, mandated the SC to advise on general strategic discussion and priorities, secure policy cohesion, and determine criteria for action and priorities vis-à-vis programmes and projects financed under the CCP.

The ToR assigned to the SC should never have substituted a well-articulated framework setting out the vision, the strategic goals, general goals and objectives, high-level activities, and outcomes and outputs that defined the strategic direction and orientation over the immediate, medium and long term.

This evaluation concludes that the absence of such a strategic and performance framework established at the genesis of the CCP, handicapped the strategic direction and orientation of the CCP. In fact, it had a negative impact on how the CCP was to evolve, as the SC members at the very outset faced a lack of clarity with regard to what the CCP stood for.

This lack of clarity dominated the agenda of the CCP during its two years, resulting in lengthy discussions between the SC and it members about what the CCP stood for. For example, was it to finance ad hoc projects? Was it to replicate projects that were being carried out by other donor organisations – and thus become a competing agency? Was it a facilitator of projects? Should it not be involved in projects at all? Was it an intermediary – a broker of sorts – between the project owner and funding agencies? Was it a platform for the transfer of knowledge, skills and expertise across Commonwealth member states? Was it a catalyst?

A review of minutes and discussions with key stakeholders show that these and other questions dogged the CCP throughout its lifecycle. It is not possible to bring out the twists and turns that resulted from these discussions. The following, however, seeks to present a 'snapshot' of the situation as it evolved.

In 14 June 2006, seven months following the Malta CHOGM, the chair of the SC raised for discussion with the Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General whether the CCP would fund projects fully or whether it would provide seed funding, and if there was a ceiling for funding projects. The DSG underlined that the SC should take into account that initiatives it supported should become self-sustaining.[57] At the same meeting, a member of the SC stated that the CCP was 'not a funding body', but that it constituted a platform that provided 'an opportunity for Commonwealth countries to collaborate and exchange skills … [with] the main challenge [being that of] tapping into the Commonwealth capacity'.[58]

The impression garnered during the course of this review is that the Secretariat's discourse and positioning tended to see the core mandate of the CCP as one of identifying projects – projects that could be replicated in other countries within the Commonwealth. In the review of documentation and discussions held with members of the Secretariat, the view was expressed that the Special Fund was a vehicle for 'seed financing' for an identified project; and that the projects were, in fact, 'incubators'.[59] The analogy to 'seed financing' and 'incubation' indicates that, on the part of the Secretariat, there was an *a priori* acceptance that a number of projects would fail and that this was an acceptable risk. At one point in time, it seems that the chairman of the SC himself was supportive of a CCP mainly aimed at acting as a financing vehicle and wherein the 'contributions to the fund [were] made to act as seed funding'[60] and that the CCP 'exists to facilitate funding'.[61]

A group within the CCP, however, emphasised that the CCP was to act as a platform that allowed for the sharing of knowledge, the brokering of resources etc.[62] There are too many instances of such interventions to quote them all. One example is the 3rd Meeting of the SC, held in September 2006, where the Malta representative emphasised that the CCP did 'not represent a pot of money … [in its] view that issuing these calls would diminish the Programme's value, in addition to the fact that CCP has insufficient funds'.[63] The Malta representative further added that the CCP "provides the opportunity to transfer expertise and technology throughout the Commonwealth" and this is the strategic direction that should be adopted.

At another time, it seemed that thinking evolved in a manner that saw the primary goal of the CCP to be to: 'migrate to brokering Commonwealth value-added partnerships; and to utilise the Fund to catalyse funding'.[64] The difference in the interpretation of the mandate of the CCP was not one of mere dialectics or nuance. It was far more profound. It questioned the very essence of what the CCP stood for.

Inevitably the direction provided by the SC to the CCP was not a unified one. The initial two years of the CCP was directed primarily towards the financing of pilot projects and 'grand projects'. To some this was perceived to be a grab of the CCP by the Secretariat to extend the financing

project budget of GIDD,[65] and to others a grab by the Commonwealth implementing agencies, which considered the CCP to be a 'honey pot' to finance initiatives falling within their respective charters.[66]

In fairness to the Secretariat and the Commonwealth implementing agencies, even if these observations were correct, the final responsibility with regard to ensuring that the activities financed under the CCP were aligned to the mandate of the CCP rested with the SC. It was the SC that was given the authority to approve or reject initiatives brought to its consideration by the Secretariat or Commonwealth implementing agencies. The fact that impressions arose on the competing interests of the Secretariat and these agencies further shows that the SC itself was not clear, and hence not consistent, on what the CCP actually stood for.

It is the considered view of the present evaluation that this continuous discussion on the mandate of the CCP negatively impaired the focus, and thus the performance, of the CCP. Indeed, the first Chair of the SC acknowledged this. In 2007, the Chair stated that:

'While the intent behind the programme was seemingly clear enough, there has emerged a divergence of views in the manner of its execution. Some SC members saw the programme as a means of technology and skills transfer, while others saw this as a means of funding worthy projects proposed by member states which contained Commonwealth value added elements.

'… In the course of moving forward with the selection of projects the SC found itself mired in a debate about the intent of the programme – was it about technology and skills transfer and if so how will this occur? Or was it about contributing to the cost of projects identified?'[67]

By mid-2007, a consensus was reached vis-à-vis the mandate of the CCP, wherein:

'The majority of the SC members now share the view that the CC fund should be confined to contributing to a few projects that have been identified in the immediate term, with the residue of the fund and future contributions used as the 'enabling mechanism' for CC.'[68]

At the 8th Meeting of the SC,[69] it was 'henceforth acknowledged that CC [was] not about funding projects, but rather about (a) sharing the Commonwealth in ICT developments; and (b) providing Commonwealth value added'.[70]

As is shown in Section 3.7, from this point onwards the SC adopted a different way forward with regard to the selection and financing of programmes and projects from that adopted up to 2007; one that resulted in a better-focussed approach.

Be that as it may, this tension on whether the CCP's mandate was that of a financing vehicle for projects or that of a platform that allowed for the tapping into of the Commonwealth's resources and ICT wealth never completely disappeared. As late as 2011, the Malta representative on the SC – in an official report to the Government of Malta – stated that 'there was confusion about the primary aim of the [CCP] and how it will work [and that] this had to be clarified and tackled as a priority'.[71]

3.3 The institutional framework of the CCP

The setting up of the institutional framework of the CCP, as discussed earlier, stemmed primarily from the CHOGM 2005 report titled *The Commonwealth, ICTs and Development* and previous work carried out by the then-Co-ordinating Committee of the CAPDD. The report presented key recommendations with regard to: (a) areas of focus and priority; (b) leadership and co-ordination; and (c) execution, implementation and resourcing. In essence, the proposal with regard to the CCP was that this would be established as a 'special operating vehicle' sitting outside of the institutional and organisational framework of the Commonwealth Secretariat itself. Moreover, as a mandate of CHOGM, the CCP reported directly to the Commonwealth Secretary-General, whose Office would provide oversight.

As a 'special operating vehicle', the CCP was to have its own governing body (the SC); its own financing mechanism (a Special Funding vehicle, with initial seed financing from the governments of India, Malta, Mozambique, and Trinidad and Tobago); and its secretarial support assigned on a non-cost basis by the Secretariat. Thus, while sitting outside of the Secretariat's institutional

and organisational framework, the CCP would enjoy strong institutional links with the Secretariat, mainly through:

- the representation on the SC by the Office of the Commonwealth Secretary-General;

- the Secretariat's custodianship of the special fund under the CFTC rules and regulations, with the Deputy Secretary-General empowered with special fiduciary authority; and

- GIDD's role as the Secretariat to the SC.

The placement of the CCP outside of the Secretariat was seen to endow the CCP with more authority and empowerment with regard to the setting of its strategic and operational programme. As a result of this institutional model, it was argued that the CCP would not be constrained to operate within the strategic and business parameters of the Secretariat itself. Yet it was seen to still enjoy major benefits, with one exemption, that would have been available to it had it been set up as an organisational function of the Secretariat: access to the Secretariat's resources and networks; direct access to the Office of the Commonwealth Secretary-General etc.

The exemption was that as a special operating vehicle, the CCP was by virtue of its organisational set up excluded from the business and financial planning and allocation process of the Secretariat. The financial mechanism for the CCP, rather, was to be through the ad hoc introduction of a Special Funding Vehicle. The setting up of the Special Funding Vehicle was seen to constitute a key breakthrough in the institutional set-up of such a programme. This resulted from the fact that the CCP would secure financing directly from member states, rather than seeking financing from the Secretariat under its CFTC (or other) programmes to finance programmes and initiatives with regard to networking for development.

The present evaluation identifies a number of issues with regard to the institutional framework of the CCP that affected its success or otherwise. These are discussed below.

i. The CHOGM 2005 report upon which the CHOGM declaration on networking for development was based, presented a strong case for why the Secretariat should occupy the space related to the digital divide with regard to its member states. The report's main focus was on the issue of the digital divide and the areas in which the Secretariat should focus its attention.

The report, however, failed to present a robust way forward of how the adoption of such a mandate, were it to be approved, was to be attained. The report was far too high level: the recommendations presented in the report with regard to its implementation were short of detail vis-à-vis how these could be attained and whether they were attainable.

The design and subsequent successful realisation of the institutional framework presented were underpinned by one fundamental assumption: that member states would contribute to the Special Funding Vehicle. There was no recognition of the fact that in an absence of contributions – as indeed actually happened – the CCP would collapse. In the presentation of such a core recommendation, one would have expected an assessment of member states' positions on such a financing mechanism over and above the contributions they already made as members of the Commonwealth.

There was, however, no supporting strategic plan, nor a business and financial plan, nor a robust performance management framework setting out outputs and outcomes for the programme, let alone an operational plan. Indeed, there was no documentation at all that could have formed the basis upon which Heads of Governments could reach an informed decision on whether the CCP as proposed would substantially deliver on the mandate.

This evaluation, therefore, is of the considered opinion that the CCP proposal as presented should have been approved, if at all, in principle and activated by the Commonwealth's Board of Governors as a mandate only once a detailed way forward of how the CCP was to successfully meet its mandate on a sustained basis had been delivered. Indeed, if the experience of the Co-ordinating Committee of the CAPDD was anything to go by, this should have clearly signalled that the rather-loose institutional framework proposed for the CCP was unlikely to be successful. The Co-ordinating

Committee, as shown earlier, had not managed by the 2005 CHOGM to fulfil the potential and promise for the Secretariat in the area of the digital divide.

ii.   Oversight for the implementation of CHOGMs' mandates is held by the Office of the Commonwealth Secretary-General, rather than by a specific or dedicated function within the Secretariat organisation. In fact, the Office of the Commonwealth Secretary-General was represented on the CCP's SC by the Deputy Secretary-General, while the Commonwealth Secretary-General himself also met with the SC at various intervals.

This evaluation is not directed towards the oversight and scrutiny of CHOGM mandates by the Commonwealth Secretariat – and the CCP mandate is only one of a number of others that are being implemented by the Secretariat. This evaluation, however, clearly shows that serious deficiencies were in place with regard to programme management oversight of the CCP mandate. The continuous debate on what the CCP's mandate stood for, the lack of a chair for more than 12 months, the lack of a financial sustainability plan for the programme itself, and the absence of sustainability mechanisms for the individual projects financed under the programme all debilitated the effectiveness of the CCP.

The situation with regard to the management of the issues discussed in the present report stem directly from the absence of a strong programme management and oversight framework continuously monitored by the Secretariat, which would have allowed for immediate identification of issues as they arose and for a follow-up mechanism that would assure timely resolution.

A key example of failure resulting from the absence of such a strong oversight framework is C2P. The project was aborted very late in its lifecycle, after more than £500,000 had been invested, following the undertaking of an internal review that discovered significant issues which, had a strong oversight framework been introduced, would have been caught much earlier.

The evaluation concludes that the establishment of a tight relationship between the implementation of a CHOGM mandate such as the CCP and the Secretariat is necessary. This report recommends that the Secretariat should assess the oversight mechanisms it has in place with regard to the management of CHOGM mandates to strengthen these, as appropriate.

iii.   As was mentioned earlier and is discussed in more detail below, the key institutional link between the CCP and the Secretariat rested with GIDD which, at least initially, provided the resources to the Secretariat of the CCP and which assumed the resulting opportunity cost. The identification of GIDD as the Secretariat of the CCP resulted from the complementarity of interactions by GIDD and CCP with member states. GIDD was responsible, among others, for public sector development. As part of its programme, GIDD was responsible for 'developing the effective use of information and communication technologies strategies, e-governance and knowledge management' and within the 'global context' it responded to 'CHOGM mandates' relating to ICTs for development.[72]

Among the four clusters for which GIDD was responsible was the promotion of the use of ICT, with results to include 'national e-governance strategies, policy frameworks and smart practices implemented in support of selected countries' development priorities'.[73] That there was complementary between the programme deliverables of the CCP and GIDD is beyond doubt. The question arises whether overlap existed between the CCP and GIDD and, if so, whether from an institutional and organisational perspective it would have made more strategic sense for the CCP to have been housed within GIDD, rather than positioning GIDD as the Secretariat of the CCP.

This evaluation concludes that there are at least three good reasons why the CCP should have been housed within GIDD rather than established as a separate operating vehicle. First, the demise of the CCP stemmed primarily from the fact that the Special Fund was exhausted. This evaluation hypothesises

that an institutional framework that saw the CCP designed as an integral function of GIDD might have resulted in a different outcome. A CCP sited within GIDD that delivered on its mandate would have been in a position to influence the strategic, as well as the business and financial, planning of the Secretariat and to secure both programme and recurrent financing as part of the annual business and financial planning process.

It is pertinent to underline that while the CCP was visibly struggling to replenish the Special Fund to maintain its operations, the Secretariat was, at least since 2011, reporting an under-spending on its Strategic Plan of £4m to £7m annually. As an entity that stood outside of the institutional framework of the Secretariat, the CCP was not in a position to formally present a case for the virement of an element of such underspent funds to replenish in part or in full the Special Fund of the CCP.

Positioning the CCP as a business function within the Secretariat, and specifically as a programme within GIDD's remit, would not have guaranteed the CCP permanency. The CCP would still have been subject to scrutiny and strategic, policy and organisational alignment over time, and its continued operation would have been dependent on the value it was contributing. Indeed, GIDD itself did not survive the new strategic overview of the Secretariat, which was carried out in 2014. Yet, a CCP that constituted a formal part of the Secretariat organisation, as opposed to the 'Special Operating Vehicle' model adopted, would have strategically and organisationally positioned the CCP to state its case for continued financing during the annual financial and budgetary process.

Second, ICT in the new the Secretariat strategic overview introduced in 2014 is marked by its absence. The Secretariat Strategic Plan for 2013/14 to 2016/17 underlines in the chapter titled 'Context: Challenges and Opportunities' that:

'Technology is radically changing the way in which individuals, organisations and the world work and interact. The world internet population is predicted to reach 3.4 billion by 2016. There is a huge potential for the countries

and peoples of the Commonwealth to leverage this technological resource. The Commonwealth Secretariat is poised to benefit from this opportunity. 'Commonwealth Connects' and other ICT tools will be used to facilitate intergovernmental linkages and pan-Commonwealth interaction among practitioners and people of the Commonwealth.'[74]

The above sums all that is stated on the application of ICT4D within the new Strategic Plan. A review of the Strategic Plan shows that the GIDD programme has been abolished and replaced by a public institutions programme. The new 'Development: pan-Commonwealth' programme limits reference to 'knowledge management and exchange leads to sharing of good practices and strengthened Commonwealth network';[75] while the new programme on 'Development: Small states and vulnerable states' limits the strengthening of the policy development implementation capacities of such states to the areas of growth, resilience, trade and regional integration, and sustainable development.[76]

The present evaluation emphasises that the complete absence of ICT for development in the new Strategic Plan for the Commonwealth is a lacuna and that there should be reconsideration in this regard. The evaluation posits that a CCP that constituted an intrinsic part of GIDD, as discussed above, would have anchored ICT4D far more strongly in the policy design framework programmes and across the Secretariat. This stems from the fact that ICT is today of ubiquitous importance and is an integral policy and programme design component that transcends across many, if not all, policy sectors.

From discussions held with senior staff within SPED, the primary reason that ICT4D does not play a role within the new Strategic Plan for the period leading up to 2016/17 is that in the consultation process on the Strategic Plan, no requests were formally placed by member states for programmes and initiatives related to ICT4D. The evaluation further concludes that the fact that the CCP was set up as a vertical special operating

agency with specific streams – connectivity, education etc. – sitting outside of the Secretariat resulted in the creation of an artificial barrier, which decoupled ICT4D from mainstream policy design.

Thus, and the third reason, a GIDD with a broader mandate for being the lead 'entity' for ICT4D policy design was more likely to embed across the Secretariat policy sectors and programmes joined-up policy and programme design in policy areas where ICT plays a key supporting role (education, health, poverty, agriculture etc.). The evaluation believes that such an approach would have resulted in a far stronger critical mass for implementation, elimination of overlap, consolidation and increased synergies.

3.4 Commonwealth Connects Programme's capacity to deliver

As shown earlier, the Commonwealth Secretariat through the CAPDD Secretariat, and later through GIDD, was assigned primary responsibility for executing the core functions of the CCP. In the afore-mentioned report by the Co-ordinating Committee for the CAPDD presented to the 2005 CHOGM, it was stated that funding to support the core functions could be drawn from the CFTC. This did not occur.

In the institutional design of the CCP, it was underlined that the administrative costs of running the programme were to be kept to the absolute minimum. The direction was for the Steering Committee (SC) to work with the Secretariat and its Board of Governors to agree the core CCP work programme and reflect this in the Secretariat's overall strategic and operational plans.

The CCP's ToR established GIDD to act as the Secretariat to the CCP. The provision of resources to staff the CCP Secretariat was the Commonwealth Secretariat's contribution to the CCP, as these resources were assigned at no cost. Additionally, support to the CCP Secretariat in its set up phase was also complemented by COMNET-IT, which played a key role in core functions of the SC – such as evaluation of the call for applications and the setting up of an inventory asset database etc.

While the rationale for this institutional set up, prima facia, made sense, in reality it resulted in a number of issues. The resource allocation throughout the lifetime of the SC by GIDD approximated 30 per cent of the time of the resources allocated – mainly an ICT adviser and two junior staff. COMNET-IT assigned resources, including the sourcing of employees from Malta's government IT agency, on an assignment basis.

For the CCP to secure traction, it required sustained critical mass within the Secretariat's core functions to enable it to: undertake project co-ordination and monitoring; promote the programme to member states, multilateral agencies, potential sponsors and partners; prepare discussion papers; formulate and implement funding and communication strategies; develop and nurture networks; devise good practice

Table 3.1: Strategic and core projects identified to establish a sustained capacity for the Commonwealth Connects Programme

Strategic partnering projects	
a.	Developing and maintaining a CC Champions Network Group
b.	Create a Commonwealth Internet Governance Forum
c.	Conducting an assessment of needs
d.	Developing multifaceted partnerships
e.	Promoting local access and connectivity
Core enabling projects	
a.	Establishing and maintaining an inventory of ICT wealth
b.	Conduct an assessment of ICT needs in the five key areas of Commonwealth competencies
c.	Creating a project management strategy

guidelines; organise related events, plan SC meetings and appropriate follow-up; and maintain of a web portal, publications etc.

The SC, however, did not have full-time or dedicated resources that would have enabled it to establish and maintain momentum needed to take the CCP forward. The SC, thus, depended on resources that were external to it and which had their own separate mandates and priorities to meet. The resources that it could call upon, however, were always subject to the workload, priorities and tasks of two organisational bodies that were external to it: GIDD and COMNET-IT.

While, the SC sought to activate core functions such as the Points of Contact (POC) network, an inventory of Commonwealth assets, networking, partnership building etc., these activities never achieved a focussed sustained critical mass. The outgoing chair in 2007 recognised that the absence of a fully committed, resourced administrative capacity had hindered the SC from placing the CCP on a firm foundation during its early years of operation.

While recognising the good efforts of the officials assigned to work with it by GIDD, it was 'evident' that the 'function of this Secretariat was not sufficiently clear and its capacity inadequate for the purpose' and that this issue was 'in dire need of addressing if the programme is to make any marked impact on the digital divide by substantively exploiting collaborative opportunities for which the CC was designed'.[77]

A potential solution that was mooted was the possibility of the Secretariat or the SC outsourcing some or all of these functions through agency agreements (for example, COMNET-IT to be responsible for the POC Network, CBC for events planning and co-ordination, CTO for communications etc.).[78]

During the course of the 2007 CHOGM, the Government of Malta volunteered its support to move the CCP forward – particularly in light of the very modest progress achieved since its inception. Soon after the constitution of a new SC, the Commonwealth Secretary-General followed up with the Prime Minister of Malta with regard to his offer of support. In his reply, the Prime Minister of Malta confirmed inter alia that Malta would honour its offer subject to the programme being placed on a sounder operational foundation, with Malta

having a say in this.[79] The Prime Minister proposed that COMNET-IT would negotiate the precise terms of Malta's participation.[80] COMNET-IT based its negotiations with the Secretariat on the following principles:[81]

- There was confusion about the primary aim of the programme and how it would work. This had to be clarified and tackled as a priority.

- The concept of the programme was sound, but its feasibility needed testing.

- The Secretariat did not have the capacity to drive and provide the operational support to the programme.

- The developed member states had to be fully engaged if the programme was to provide any value.

- A contact network needed to be established to enable interactions with member states.

- Since the CCP was not a funded programme, the Secretariat needed to forge partnerships with donor agencies to enable project financing.

- There was no attempt to identify member states' specific ICT needs.

- While the programme was about technology transfer and sharing ICT developments, there had been no attempt to identify which country had what to offer.

In the main, the negotiation principles presented by COMNET-IT were directed to address what was now recognised to be a strategic weakness in the institutional set up of the CCP. This was the need to have in place an appropriate critical mass to undertake core business functions on behalf of the SC, without which the CCP, as experienced, would be unable to take the CCP forward on a sustained basis.

Subsequent to these negotiations, the Strategic Advisory Committee (SAC) to the CCP agreed to recommend to the SC the adoption of a number of 'core projects, which [would] lay the foundation for implementing the vision' of the CCP.[82] The projects are presented in the Table 3.1.

The Secretariat proposed that 'in the interest of efficiency and effectiveness and given the inter-dependence of these functions, these functions

Table 3.2: Proposed funding strategy – 2006

Project funding	• Project owners would meet some of the funding needed for their projects
	• Developing an approach for co-funding projects with other agencies or with governments
	• Raising the profile and the need for funding for projects and national ICT strategic planning and implementation
	• Capping of funding to projects and activities to an agreed maximum
	• Approaching regional banks to identify and allocate funds for in-country ICT projects that have been 'approved' by CCP
General funding	• Developing fundraising drives led by a committee specifically tasked
	• Approaching funding agencies and donor agencies to fund the development of NICT plans
	• Developing possible funding models
	• Identifying best practices in funding projects
	• Assisting with the development of funding proposals by member states, NGOs etc.
Other strategies	• Defining roles for other CCP partners in raising funds
	• Promoting the project marketplace www.commonwealthconnects.net and, in particular, the donor facility
	• Encouraging contribution of non-financial (in-kind) resources from the developed countries of the Commonwealth:
	– people – experts from government and volunteers
	– software applications
	• Developing and running special fundraising events, e.g. concerts
Long-term funding	Show casing the CCP at the Uganda CHOGM in 2007 to make the case for a better-funded five year programme

would be outsourced for a period of two years to one of its partner agencies'.[83] Additionally, the Secretariat recommended that 'in consideration of Malta's past and continuing contribution to Commonwealth Connects, the Commonwealth Secretariat is proposing to outsource these core functions to COMNET-IT and to contribute the following towards the deliverables specified above'.[84]

The SC meeting of February 2009 'recognised that COMNET-IT had an important role to play in implementing the projects identified by the SAC', as well as 'the contributions and continued support from the Government of Malta'.[85] In consideration of this, COMNET-IT was commissioned to carry out the above core functions on behalf of the SC

for €300,000 over a period of two years with effect from 1 July 2009. This contract was subsequently extended by the SC.[86]

The decision to identify an existing Commonwealth agency to provide the CCP with the necessary critical capacity, once the decision was that the CCP would be an institution operating outside of the Secretariat, was correct. Indeed, this decision should have been taken at the outset. The fact that it was not resulted in lost time with regard to placing the CCP on a long-term sustainable basis.

3.5 Financing the Commonwealth Connects Programme

As discussed earlier, the total value of the Special Fund during the lifetime of the CCP was £1,015,562.38. There is no doubt that financing of the CCP was foremost among the priorities of the Steering Committee (SC). Among the 24 minutes of meetings and supporting documents reviewed by the evaluation, the financing of the CCP was discussed 14 times, preceded only by project monitoring (23 times) and CHOGM (15 times). At the second meeting of the SC, the chair underlined that a position paper on the fund would be made available at the forthcoming meeting, which paper would present a contributions policy to deal with individual contributions.[87]

The funding strategy identified the challenges that needed to be addressed:[88]

- donor fatigue;

- the inherent difficulties in measuring the impacts and outcomes of small ICT initiatives;

- structuring projects such that they appeal to donor agencies, banks or the private sector;

- the inability to sustain ICT projects in many developing countries; and

- the organisational and managerial challenges in implementing many projects in many countries by a single centralised body.

The strategy proposed a four-pronged approach (see Table 3.2).[89]

The discussion on the funding strategy was inconclusive, as different views on the way forward were expressed. One position underlined the importance of creating synergies and integrating efforts between the Office of the Commonwealth Secretary-General, not the CCP, and other development networks (including the EU) with regard to the sourcing of funds. According to this view, such a request from the Office of the Commonwealth Secretary-General would be far more effective than if it was made by the CCP. Another position expressed was that the CCP should act as a stamp of approval, rather than being an actual partner – for instance, with the EU on a particular programme, given that CCP should not own projects, but should act as an intermediary between the project owner and funding agencies for large capital projects.

One other view expressed was that other initiatives, such as the African Regional Action Plans on the Knowledge Economy (ARAPKE) Plan were similar to the CCP with respect to projects, and that the CCP should create synergies with them, as well as with similar other platforms. Another view was that the fund was modest and that financial injections should be pursued, underlining that countries such as South Africa, which had initially tabled the digital divide issue for CHOGM endorsement, should be engaged. This view further emphasised that, apart from seeking CFTC contributions, the SC should invest in lobbying CFTC governors for support in the next budgetary round due in February 2007.[90]

The end result was 'a fudge'. The SC concluded by underscoring that once the POCs were actively engaged, interest from member states to make contributions, including in-kind contributions, would increase. The SC delayed any decision as it concluded that there would be future opportunities to discuss financing of the CCP, and that one of the next priorities was to research other organisations' initiatives and the funds available for possible partnerships and future collaboration.[91]

It is noted that while the SC fudged its decision with regard to adopting a financing strategy, it agreed to undertake an International Partnership Summit (IPS), which aimed at engendering a multistakeholder approach to both project and programme delivery, wherein the IPS would 'aspire to be recognised as the premier forum where sustainable strategic relationships between the private sector and key stakeholders are created'. If this objective could be realised, IPS would fulfil its requirement to be largely self-funding.[92] The IPS was held in India, with the CBC acting as the organising entity.[93] There is no evidence, however, that the IPS resulted in new financing streams or in-kind contributions to the CCP.

It is the evaluation's conclusion that in adopting this ad hoc position towards the financing of the CCP, the SC lost an important opportunity to introduce at the very outset of the CCP's lifecycle, a long-term and structured financing programme directed to place the CCP on a sustained financial standing.

At the 10th Meeting of the SC, held on 26 June 2007, the SC discussed a paper titled 'CAPDD Fundraising Strategy', which was presented by GIDD and the Secretariat. The paper

emphasised that a fundraising strategy was now necessary given the development of the CCP programme's current and future needs, and that the 'institutionalisation of fundraising as a tactic [would] ensure long-term sustainability.[94] The objectives of the strategy were to:[95]

- increase the CCP's funding base for long-term capacity building and sustainability of the CCP;

- increase unrestricted funding;

- develop new and untapped sources of funding through private enterprises, sub-regional and regional inter-governmental organisations and institutions and individuals; and

- institutionalise fundraising as a key function and expertise in the CCP.

The strategy presented a SWOT (strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats) assessment of the CCP, which underlined as:[96]

- **Weaknesses**: Lack of a diverse, developed source of funding and depending on a few donations by member states; unexplored public-private partnerships (PPP); lack of adequate expertise to effectively exploit and develop fundraising opportunities; failure to develop a comprehensive long-term fundraising strategy; and a lack of follow-up activities after major events such as the IPS which was organised by the CCP; and

- **Threats**: Lack of resources to institutionalise fundraising within the CCP Secretariat; and competition from other more-established initiatives in ICT4D.

The strategy is far too detailed to quote at length. Among the recommendations presented, it proposed the setting up of a core team within the Secretariat which would incorporate volunteers and would be responsible for fundraising and resource mobilisation to co-ordinate the CCP's fundraising activities.[97]

The evaluation views the fundraising strategy presented to the SC as a well thought out and detailed plan that, if supported by a critical resource mass, could have resulted in diverse and developed sources of funding. The strategy, had it been adopted, could have placed the financing of the CCP on a long-term sustainable basis. The

paper was discussed at the 12th SC Meeting, held on 9 November 2007 – four months after the paper was first presented for discussion. The SC concluded that the CCP Secretariat should commission an external party to produce a suitable fundraising paper.[98]

Once again, the SC fudged this important matter. The SC's hesitant decision-making with regard to endorsing a long-term fundraising strategy resulted in another missed opportunity. As discussed earlier, the SAC recommended to the SC, and which recommendation was accepted, that COMNET-IT, as part of the new core-enabling functions responsibilities assigned to it, should include establishing multifaceted partnerships which would also lead to fundraising. COMNET-IT subsequently presented a project request titled 'developing multifaceted partnerships'.

The project sought to design an effective engagement strategy for the CCP, directed to identify and build high-level network partnerships with international organisations, funding agencies, the private sector and civil society, which would in turn be tapped to fund individual projects. The ToR included the:[99]

- identification of organisations to develop partnerships;

- development of an engagement strategy and areas of mutual interest;

- organisation or participation in networking events that target a broad base of different stakeholder groups, including the private sector, international organisations, development banks and funding agencies; and

- establishment of healthy and ongoing public-private partnerships for projects.

The outcomes for this project included the:[100]

- participation of Australia, Britain and Canada (ABC) in the CCP;

- engagement of development banks from the respective Commonwealth regions – Asia, Africa and Caribbean;

- engagement of funding agencies; and

- establishment of public-private partnerships.

As a result, the CCP established contact with the following agencies:[101]

Table 3.3: Pro forma funding request for mainstreaming the CCP

Activity	Estimated cost (£)
Provision of seed funding to develop strategic incubator projects with emphasis on National ICT Strategies, e-government, multipurpose access centres and cybercrime model legislation. These proofs of concept will be utilised to demonstrate value and impact on lower-income countries to increase the level of ICT sophistication. In addition, this will provide the basis for submitting a compelling funding proposal to donor agencies to implement the projects across the Commonwealth.	500,000
Mainstreaming foundation programmes implemented by COMNET, i.e.: partnership development; ICT inventory; Champions Network; the Commonwealth Internet Governance Forum; and maintenance of the Commonwealth Connects website.	170,000
Developing and implementing outreach programmes to increase the visibility of Connects. This activity includes presentations at international conferences, publishing articles in journals and conducting research on ICT for development/governance.	70,000
Insertion of short-term experts to assist countries with the design, development and implementation of ICT policies, standards and procedures. This could also include the provision of an objective evaluation of reports and the preparation of funding proposals.	60,000
Conducting technical scoping missions to assess the current situation of countries requesting assistance and recommending intervention strategies to deal with the issues and areas where the Secretariat could be of assistance.	50,000
Delivering effective capacity-building initiatives that emphasise knowledge transfer, case studies, site visits, sharing of best practices and lessons learned.	150,000

- The African Development Bank (ADB)
- Australia's Overseas Aid Program (AusAID)
- The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
- The Caribbean Association of National Telecommunication Organisations (CANTO)
- The Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD)
- CARICOM
- The Caribbean Development Bank
- The Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU)
- EU, particularly the Directorates for Development
- Co-operation (DEVCO) and Information Society (INFOSOC)
- The International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
- ITU
- Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)
- The Internet Governance Forum (IGF)
- The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) E-Africa Commission
- The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)
- The UN and UNDP and other subsidiary agencies
- The US Agency for International Development (USAID)
- The World Bank and its subsidiary agencies

There is no evidence, however, that COMNET-IT was successful in engaging the participation of Australia, Britain and Canada (the ABC countries) in the CCP. It was, nevertheless, more successful in engaging the ABC countries and PPPs with regard to the CCI intervention, initiated together with the Secretariat – which stemmed from a different CCP financed project – the CIGF. This is discussed as a case study later in the report.

At the 17th Meeting of the SC, held on 15 September 2009, South Africa was welcomed as a member to the SC though formal acceptance following the Secretary-General's approval. There is no evidence that South Africa did actually formally become a member of the SC, as no representation from South Africa could be identified in future SC meetings. There is also no evidence that South Africa contributed to the CCP's Special Fund.[102]

Thereafter, the first warning regarding the sustainability of the CCP was raised at the 20th Meeting of the SC, held on 25 October 2010. It was underlined that once the Special Fund was depleted, the programme would exist in name only and to ensure its sustainability, further funding was required – especially given the situation of unplanned financing of the C2P project (placed as a CCP mandate following the 2009 CHOGM).[103]

A consensus was reached that the SC would submit a formal request to the forthcoming 2011 CHOGM, which would seek to secure further funding for the CCP.[104] In its report to CHOGM 2011, the SC stated that to 'successfully implement the future strategies of the CCP, a stable stream of funding was required' and it recommended that the programme should be mainstreamed, with the Secretariat reviewing its priorities and allocation.[105] The pro forma funding request presented in the report to CHOGM amounted to £1 million. A breakdown of this request is shown in Table 3.3.[106]

The CHOGM Communiqué, as shown previously, included the following mandates relevant to the work of the CCP:[107]

i.   improving legislation and capacity in tackling cybercrime and other cyberspace security threats;

ii.   welcomed the launch of the C2P as a contemporary platform for networking and encouraged its use; and

iii.   reiterated support for the CCP, which was encouraging greater effort from member states to harness the benefits provided by technology and encouraged member states to contribute to the Special Fund.

Thus, while the CHOGM 2011 underpinned the importance of the continuation of the CCP, it rejected the SC's recommendation that the CCP

was to be mainstreamed and that it would be supported by an injection of £1 million. The SC, in discussing the 2011 CHOGM mandate to the CCP, underlined that the necessary funds to satisfy the CHOGM mandate were not in place. It thus concluded that member states that had made inquiries with regard to receiving assistance from the CCP had to be 'made aware as to whether the programme had sufficient resources to assist in the way promised'.[108]

In the discussion on the way forward, the Deputy Secretary-General underlined that the 'Special Fund and SC were set up because it was initially outside of the immediate priorities of the Secretariat and that while funding was successful, could be no expectation of the Secretariat filling this deficit either for the central fund or particular organisations'.[109] In simple terms, the institutional set-up of the CCP rendered it impossible for the CCP to tap into the Secretariat's finances.

The SC decided that funding approaches were to be made only to those countries sympathetic to the CCP's aims and the Secretariat was to prepare a paper on the way forward, to which SC members were encouraged to contribute to.[110] There is no evidence that this paper was prepared and circulated to the SC for discussion, given that the ensuing discussion of such a paper was not traced in the SC's minutes.

Given the deteriorating situation of the Special Fund, the SC approached the Commonwealth Secretary-General to reimburse the funds contributed to the C2P project through the CCP, which amounted to £185,000. This request for reimbursement was rejected, with the interim Head of the Deputy Secretary-General's Office stating that C2P as a knowledge-sharing tool was a core function of the Secretariat, and that the C2P was an ICT4D project which was in compliance with the requirements of the CCP.[111]

While it was agreed that the SC should formally write to member states for extra financing, no letter was sent, as the representative of the Office of the Commonwealth Secretary-General expressed concern that such a letter could cause confusion and erode the Secretariat's ability to attract further funds. Recognising that the SC's attempts to solicit contributions from further member states was not successful, other than an additional donation of US$100,000 to the fund by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in July

Table 3.4: Chairs of the Steering Committee of the CCP

Chair	Member state	Donator to the Special Fund	Tenure	Number of meetings held
Michael Frendo	Malta	Yes	7 March 2006 to 9 November 2007	12
Acting			December 2007 to January 2009	2
Salomao Manhric	Mozambique	Yes	26 February 2009 to 19 October 2009	4
Kiran Karnik	India	Yes	24 May 2010 to 6 October 2011	6
Fazal Karim	Trinidad and Tobago	Yes	13 January 2012 to 12 April 2012	2
Rupert Griffith	Trinidad and Tobago	Yes	17 September 2012 to 24 January 2014	4

2011, the representative of the Secretary-General expressed scepticism that further attempts to obtain contributions from member states for the CCP's Special Fund at this stage would be successful.

It was further expressed by the representative of the Office of the Commonwealth Secretary-General that it was more likely to obtain funding for the CCP's individual projects, which had a demonstrable and measurable impact.[112] Subsequent to this discussion, the chair tasked the Secretariat of the CCP to prepare an option paper on the future of the CCP.[113]

At the 30th Meeting of the SC, held on 15 July 2013, the future of the CCP was discussed. The statement was made that the CCP's financial sustainability issue should be raised at the forthcoming CHOGM meeting, given that since the setting up of the CCP the digital gap had in fact widened, which necessitated an increasing need for collaboration and resources.[114]

The Secretariat proposed to the SC that clarity was required vis-à-vis the Secretariat's new Strategic Plan, and that discussions should ensue with the Office of the Commonwealth Secretary-General and the Political Affairs Division regarding next steps. Indeed, at the next meeting of the SC held on 27 January 2014, the narrow focus of ICT as a key enabler to deliver public administration and governance programmes within the new Strategic Plan was noted.[115]

Given this new strategic focus and orientation of the Secretariat, together with the fact that the Special Fund was practically exhausted, the SC decided that it would reverse its previous decision and actually recommend the dissolution of the CCP, with projects that were underway to be assigned to the Secretariat or the Commonwealth implementing agencies the mandate of whom best met the terms of reference of these projects.

The review of the minutes of the SC, together with accompanying documents, from its inception to the decision to wind down the CCP taken in January 2014, leads the evaluation to conclude that no sustained and systematic approach was taken by the SC to establish the long-term sustainability of the programme on a sound financial footing. The attempts towards securing financing were sporadic and not structured.

The impression garnered is that while financing of the CCP was high on the agenda of the SC during its lifetime, the impetus for this came from the Secretariat and not the SC itself. Twice the Secretariat presented funding strategies for discussion – at the very onset in 2006 and later in 2010. Twice the SC fudged the decision in this regard. The ensuing result was the absence of an organised, business-like and methodical approach to financing.

The evaluation agrees with the statement made by last chair of the CCP that a key lesson is that in such programmes, one of the primary initiatives should be that of dealing 'first with practical issues such as funding as the objectives [would] then fall in place'.[116] By the time, however, that the CCP started to adopt a more focussed approach towards its financing, i.e. by the latter part of 2012,

Figure 3.1: Analysis of senior representation on the Steering Committee of the CCP
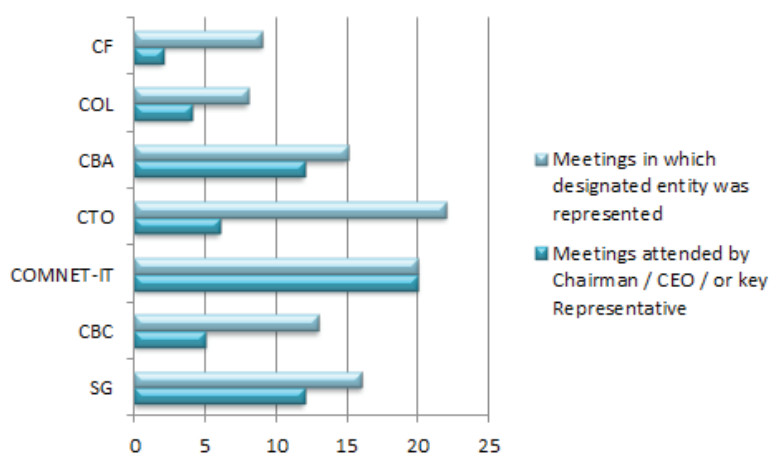
it was then too late for the fundraising measures that would have placed the CCP on a more sustainable financing footing to take root.

From a governance perspective, as referred to in the previous chapter, the custody and management of the Special Fund was placed with the Secretariat and not the SC. This is an example of good governance with regard to the management of funds, as the institutional framework ensured a system of checks and balances which secured transparency and accountability. This system of checks and balances was secured by the Special Fund under the custodianship of the Secretariat, and was managed by the Secretariat under established Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) rules and regulations. In this regard, the Deputy Secretary-General of the Commonwealth was the custodian of the fund under these CFTC rules and regulations. The DSG therefore had specific fiduciary responsibilities, including signatory authority, with regard to disbursing funds from the CFTC generally, and from the Special Fund specifically.[117]

Additionally, in order to protect the integrity of the Special Fund and the Office of the DSG, the institutional framework for the CCP recognised and acknowledged that opinions, advice and views presented by the DSG as a member of the SC at SC meetings would not prejudice his or her opinions, actions and decisions taken as the custodian of CFTC, under the Secretariat's rules and regulations.[118]

3.6 The Steering Committee of the Commonwealth Connects Programme

3.6.1 The composition and membership of the Steering Committee

The constitution of the Steering Committee (SC), as shown in the previous chapter, was designed to be innovative, inclusive and pragmatic, recognising that the Commonwealth implementation agencies that committed resources to address the digital divide were relatively small on a global scale, which magnified the need for effective collaboration and co-ordination. Thus, the SC incorporated a strategic coalition that included seven independent Commonwealth organisations, four member states and civil society organisations. The SC was designed as a team of independent bodies working through consensus to achieve progress. Moreover, the members of the SC were to provide a leadership role in delivering the programme based on their specific expertise, experience and available resources.

The report by the SC to the 2007 CHOGM stated that the CCP was designed as an exemplary approach to building a multistakeholder partnership for delivery in an environment of competing initiatives, wherein the CCP, as a multistakeholder partnership, was a product of the Commonwealth's experience and way of working built on trust and a common sense of purpose.[119] Did the CCP meet this bold aspiration?

Figure 3.2: Analysis of agendas of the Steering Committee of the CCP
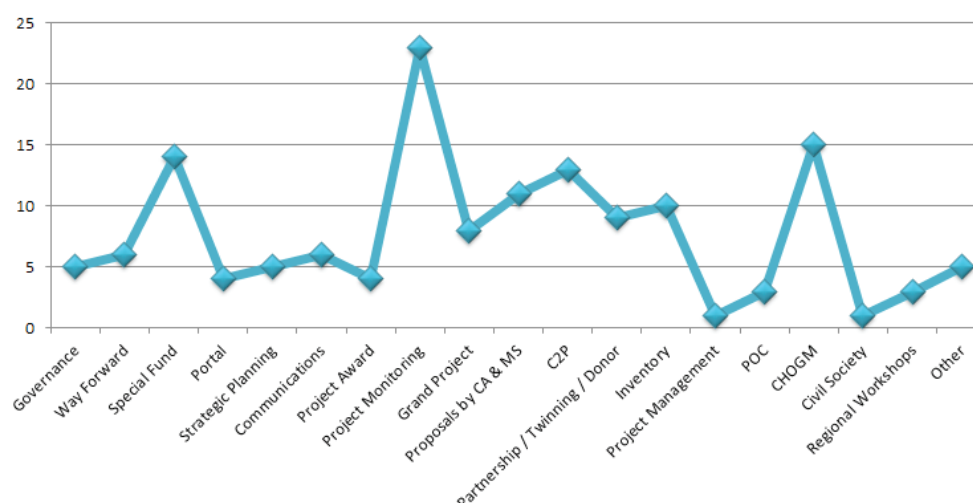
The Steering Committee met 31 times during its lifecycle. During its lifecycle, the SC had four chairpersons, as shown in Table 3.4. Of particular note was the fact that between December 2007 and January 2009, the SC had no chair. As a result, the CCP experienced a hiatus of 14 months during which only two meetings were held under an acting chair. It is understood that this hiatus was the result of difficulties incurred by the Office of the Commonwealth Secretary-General in identifying a chairperson.

It is, however, not clear why an acting chair was not appointed by the Office of the Commonwealth Secretary-General until such time that a suitable person was assigned as a permanent chair to ensure that momentum in the work being carried out by the CCP was maintained. The ensuing result was that the CCP was leaderless for the resulting period of 14 months, which negatively impacted its work.

It is pertinent to underline that the Malta Declaration and the resulting ToR of the SC were not clear vis-à-vis the specific designation of the representation on the SC. Despite this degree of vagueness, it is reasonable to assume that given the CCP was a CHOGM mandate, the expectation was that the most senior person of the identified Commonwealth implementing agency would represent the said agency on the SC.

Of the 31 meetings held by the SC, this evaluation was provided 24 of the minutes of these meetings. An analysis of the persons present at the meetings shows that an expectation that the senior person representing the implementing agency or country representative would be present at the SC on a consistent basis was not the case.

As can be seen from Figure 3.1, participation by senior representatives of the Commonwealth implementation agencies was sketchy. Only two of the agencies were present in 20 or more of the 24 meetings analysed, CTO and COMNET-IT; CTO was represented by its senior official only six of those times, while COMNET-IT was always represented initially by its CEO (six times) and then by its Executive Chairman (14 times). The Office of the Commonwealth Secretary-General was only present 16 times.

The present evaluation recognises that flexibility is necessary in order to fill in when it is not possible for senior officials to attend meetings and in doing so to ensure continuity. Such absences are likely to occur at one time or another. Nevertheless, the above analysis shows that there were too many instances when the key representative of an agency was not present for a SC meeting. Additionally, in most cases it seems that no decision was made to identify a permanent delegate to represent the key official when the latter could not be present for a meeting. Moreover, as Figure 3.1 shows, the participation of a number of the Commonwealth implementation agencies was less than optimal.

Of particular note is the role of civil society on the SC. The representation of civil society on the SC of the CCP was seen as an innovative measure, as it ensured its active participation in the implementation of the CHOGM mandate regarding to the digital divide. As shown in the previous

chapter, the three civil society entities represented at the launch of the SC were the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association (CBA), ANAIS and the Electronic Commerce Industry (ECI).

As a matter of fact, these civil society organisations were the only such institutions appointed to the SC during its lifetime. In terms of presence, ANAIS was only present for two meetings, CBA for 15 meetings and ECI for 10 meetings – though the Director General representing ECI from the 24th Meeting onwards was appointed as the Executive Director for the C2P. Of particular relevance is the fact that the Commonwealth Foundation (CF) was only present in nine of the 24 SC meetings reviewed.

There is little doubt that this situation was disruptive and that continuity from one meeting to a next was not attained given the different mix of people that would be present. There is ample evidence in the minutes of the SC that shows that such discontinuity did occur. Indeed, this situation was recognised by the first chair of the SC:

'... *composition of the CC SC is somewhat unclear, as is the specific designation of membership. In various meetings we have had situations where it is not clear who the representative for a country or agency is, with more than one person speaking for the same country/agency. It is therefore necessary for the membership to the SC to be clear and structured with a person and an alternate named for each country/agency represented on the committee.*'[120]

To overcome these deficiencies in the operation of the SC, the-then chair recommended the following as necessary measures that should be introduced:[121]

- the membership to the SC was to be clear and structured with a person and an alternate named for each country/agency represented on the committee;

- the principles and operating guidelines of the SC were to be clearly defined, including the appointment of the chair and the term of appointment of the committee members;

- meetings should be scheduled, for example six months in advance, rather than from one meeting to the next; and

- meetings should be scheduled for alternate months to reduce the size of the agenda, as well as to allow for better follow-up and for progress to be made.

There is no doubt that these recommendations made sense. They represent good governance with regard to any committee. What is puzzling to the evaluation, however, is why it took so long for such basic committee management practices to be proposed, let alone introduced.

Figure 3.2 presents an analysis of the agenda items discussed by the SC – of which the evaluation assessed 28 agendas (and 24 minutes) of SC meetings. As can be seen from the figure, the item most discussed by the SC was project monitoring (23 times), followed by CHOGM reports (15 times) and the Special Fund (14 times). With regard to the latter, there were nine agenda items that discussed partnering, twinning etc. Particular note relates to the C2P as an agenda item. Following the C2P mandate assigned to the CCP at the 2009 CHOGM, this project dominated the SC agenda from the SC's 18th meeting onwards.

It is pertinent to underline that civil society was presented as an agenda item only once in the 28 agenda documents reviewed.

3.6.2 The role of the Commonwealth implementing agencies in relation to the CCP

The first wave of projects that were selected by the SC were three pilot projects which, as discussed in more detail in this document, were not identified through a call for applications but rather through a process of consultation. Of these three projects, two were presented by Commonwealth implementing agencies that sat on the SC, and a third by a Commonwealth implementing agency and a NGO.

As shown in the discussion in the previous chapter with regard to the ToR of the SC, these ToR tasked Commonwealth implementation agencies with the authority to initiate, facilitate and manage CCP programme and projects in so far that these were consistent with the respective agencies' charter. Despite this, the presence of the Commonwealth implementing agencies in the three shortlisted pilot projects sparked a rigorous discussion within the SC.

The conclusion of this debate was that the participation of the Commonwealth implementing agencies was consistent with the Expert Group's position when it recommended that in the setting up of the CCP, the 'idea was not to create a new institution, but to use existing ones to bring ICT initiatives forward'.[122] It was further stated that allowing the Commonwealth implementing agencies to participate in CCP-financed projects allowed such agencies to come together on projects directed to bridge the digital divide, rather than adopt separate and individually driven projects in this regard.[123]

Thus, it was agreed that the Commonwealth implementing agencies would be allowed to participate directly in calls for project financing, which were yet to be issued by the SC, or to present project proposals directly to it. The SC recognised, however, that allowing the Commonwealth implementing agencies to participate in call for applications or directly nominate project proposals could result in situations of a conflict of interest. In this regard, the potential for a conflict of interest was not seen to be limited to the Commonwealth implementing agencies, but also included those countries which had governmental representation on the SC: Malta, India, Mozambique, and Trinidad and Tobago.[124]

As shown in the previous chapter, in order to counter such conflict of interest, the SC amended its ToR in June 2007 to include governance mechanisms to neutralise such situations as they occurred. A review of the minutes shows that these governance mechanisms were indeed applied by the SC whenever the SC discussed projects that resulted in a conflict of interest. One example is the discussion by the SC on the core and high-priority projects where representatives from CTO and COMNET-IT 'left the meeting and returned when the CCP SC members concluded their deliberations'.[125]

Although the evaluation concurs with the position taken with regard to the active participation of Commonwealth implementing agencies in calls issued under the CCP or in the direct nomination of projects to the SC, it resulted in a particularly negative impact. The impact arises from the fact that although both COMNET-IT and CTO were Commonwealth-recognised institutions, they were dependent on funds secured from the governments of member states,

or through membership and other non-formal Commonwealth fundraising strategies. This was unlike the Secretariat, CF and COL, which obtain their financing directly from the Commonwealth. This resulted in the perception that one or both institutions viewed the CCP Special Fund as a potential 'money pot' for which they were aggressively competing.

While relationships between COMNET-IT and CTO on the SC were always cordial, there is evidence that tensions did arise with particular regard to the assessment reached by the SC on project financing submissions. In the discussions regarding the core and high-priority projects referenced earlier, for example, the representative of CTO formally stated his disagreement with the decision reached, given that COMNET-IT was selected as the implementation partner for 10 out of the 14 projects.[126]

The CTO representative questioned the neutrality and transparency of the SAC's decision-making processes, particularly given the absence of documentation setting out the criteria used by the SAC to package the projects and assign implementation partners. Furthermore, the CTO representative expressed his concern with regard to duplication of efforts given that in his opinion, some deliverables of the proposed projects were already available from other partner agencies. It was strongly underlined by CTO that SAC and SC should look further into leveraging partner agencies before implementing new projects. It was stated that the project proposal for the CIGF project presented by COMNET-IT was similar to CITU's efforts in this area.[127]

The CTO representative further requested the SAC to provide to the SC with information detailing project plans, work packages, tangible deliverables, delivery dates and decision criteria that were assessed, so that the SAC's recommendations could be evaluated. Moreover, the CTO strongly argued that the CTO-proposed Commonwealth African Rural Connectivity Initiative (COMARCI) 2 project should have been approved.[128] The chair and SC members rejected the claims made by the CTO representative, emphasising that the issue of transparency was discussed in detail and considered seriously by the SC during its deliberations with regard to project approval, including the rejection of the COMARCI 2 project as presented.[129]

Table 3.5: Recommendations following initial project assessment presented by COMNET-IT and the Secretariat with regard to Annex D projects

Rank	Project selected	Project name	Budget requested	Budget proposed
1	36 or	Putting ICTs in the hands of women	£26,800	£26,800 or £32,200
2	45	Extension of Self-Help Community ICT Centres into tsunami-affected communities and deepening of existing centres into multimedia entities	£32,200	
4	47	Websites, improved e-mail services, and e-communications training for NGOs involved in tsunami reconstruction work.	£24,500	£24,500
5		Computers for Communities.	£200,000	£60,000 to £70,000
6		Small Business Training for Women in Cameroon using Radio Programmes.	£107,500	£60,000 to £70,000
Totals:				£171,300 to £196,700

3.7 Implementing the mandate

3.7.1 The framework for project selection for financing under the CCP

Selection of the first three pilot and three pan-Commonwealth projects

As shown earlier, Annex D of the 2005 CHOGM-endorsed report contained a collection of projects and programmes for potential execution under the newly re-established CCP initiative. These 62 projects, which had the basic details required to perform interim assessments on their appropriateness for possible funding and implementation support, were identified prior to the setting up of the CCP.

The identification of this list of projects was undertaken by the Secretariat through a series of consultations, as part of the process leading to the Malta CHOGM, with a view to gauge the demand for ICT4D projects. The consultations involved government representatives and organisations such as the CF, CTO and COMNET-IT, which allowed the inclusion of a broad range of projects. Moreover, a number of workshops/meetings were held in Antigua, Trinidad and Tobago, Malta, Cameroon and the United Kingdom (London) to generate ideas for projects, which were eventually included in the final report.

There is no doubt that 'Annex D' shaped the strategic direction that the SC was to adopt vis-à-vis taking forward the newly reconstituted CCP.

Expectations had been raised with the 62 project owners and, thus, the SC felt compelled that its immediate-term strategy for the CCP was to assess these projects by no later than December 2006. The medium-term strategy for the CCP would subsequently be the programmes, projects and activities that would be completed before the 2007 CHOGM.[130]

The virtual CCP meeting held in May 2006 directed that four projects should be selected from Annex D. It underlined that the identified projects should achieve a high-people impact, be low cost, result in quick wins, and should promote the digital divide. The SC further underlined the importance of kick-starting the CCP with such pilot initiatives, given that there was 'little time left to CHOGM 2007.'[131]

COMNET-IT, in co-ordination with the Secretariat, established three basic criteria against which the project proposals were judged, namely the:[132]

- degree to which they were able to generate good public relations for the CCP;

- ability to deliver visible/tangible results within a period of about six months; and

- cost (relative to the deliverables, as well as to the size of the Special Fund).

The project evaluation process was divided into two stages: Stage 1 consisted of a prequalification phase, where proposals had to meet 'minimum requirements'. The eligible minimum requirements included: eligible country; eligible bodies/type of

Table 3.6: New criteria as established by the Steering Committee for the re-assessment Annex D projects

Aspects concerned with proposal's inherent qualities – or 'desirability'	Aspects concerned with project's execution – or 'executability'
Commonwealth value-added (25%)	
Impact and relevance (25%)	Feasibility (20%)
Sustainability (10%)	Accountability (10%)
Replicability (10%)	
Overall score (%)	Overall score (%)

beneficiary; relevance to CCP goals; timeframe to first benefits; visibility; and reasonable funding requirements. Stage 2 consisted of the assessment criteria that were to be applied to all short-listed projects.[133] The criteria set for Stage 2 were the following:[134]

- Feasibility: 40%
- Impact and relevance: 15%
- Follow up and dissemination: 15%
- Diffusion: 15%
- Accountability: 15%

COMNET-IT, together with the Secretariat, presented recommendations to the SC on its second meeting held on 14 June 2006.[135] These are presented in Table 3.5.

COMNET-IT, together with the Secretariat, stated that although the evaluation process was relatively smooth, the process leading to the request for proposals required improvement. Among the improvements proposed, the Secretariat recommended:[136]

- a formal proposal submission process should be established and communicated to member states via POCs, who would be responsible for running the process locally, linking proposals with the national ICT strategy, and maintaining local proposal documentation and proponent details;
- a new improved proposal template and clear guidelines should be designed;
- sufficient time should be given to the evaluator(s) to communicate with proponents at least once during every stage of the evaluation process;

- undertaking of an assessment to determine the preparedness of the proponent organisations to execute the project; if found inadequate, alternate choices could be made by the evaluator(s); and
- ownership should be assigned within the structures of CCP for the processes of proposal submission, proposal evaluation and subsequent project management.

In assessing the recommendations presented, the SC concluded that the project evaluation process should be revisited to include the following criteria for assessment:[137]

- addressing the highest digital divides and, more specifically, focussing on projects that yield the highest return for the smallest investment;
- evaluating the social impact – that is, the number of people affected by the project, such that the higher the number, the higher the ranking in the evaluation process;
- recognising the importance of the Commonwealth-value added criterion, where joined-up projects should be given priority;
- maintaining a balance between in-country and pan-Commonwealth projects selected; and
- maintaining a balance between the five focus areas established in the SC's mandate.

Furthermore, in discussing the evaluation process itself, the SC concluded that:[138]

- Selection criteria should be made public.
- Project funding should be provided on the achievement of pre-determined project targets.

- Funding for identified projects under the CCP should not be 100 per cent financed by the programme, given that projects that raised their own funds were likely to be more successful. In this regard, it was established that the financing for 'each pilot project [would be capped] to £50,000. This cap was directed to preserve the amount of funds available to the CCP. Furthermore it was decided that the financing for each project would be distributed in three separate instalments of £15,000, £20,000 and £15,000. This would ensure that financing would be released in accordance to progress achieved'.[139]

  It is nevertheless pertinent to note that at a later meeting[140] of the SC, it was stated that this strategy was adopted for the first three pilot projects only. Be that as it may, with the exception of one project – the C2P project – none of the other projects financed through the CCP received grants that were larger than £50,000.

- Feasibility should be a pre-eligibility criteria.

- The CCP POCs were to act as an important filter vis-à-vis submissions following calls for proposal.

- The first three to five projects were to be termed as 'pilot initiatives'.

The SC instructed COMNET-IT, together with the Secretariat, to carry out the evaluation process afresh, wherein the assessment process was to incorporate the decisions of the SC. For the re-evaluation of the selection process, the criteria were grouped as shown in Table 3.6, with a percentage score calculated for each group.[141]

Subsequent to the application of these criteria, the projects were further reviewed by COMNET-IT and the Secretariat with regard to geographical spread (that is, to give an appropriate representation across Commonwealth regions) and choice of focus areas (that is, the projects were to target the five focus areas as evenly as possible) in order to achieve equity in both areas.[142]

The re-evaluation process did have a minor effect on the rankings of various proposals regarding the projects presented in Table 3.5: the top six previously selected now came out in the top seven.

On the basis of the re-evaluation, COMNET-IT and the Secretariat recommended the following projects for financing under the CCP:[143]

i. Commonwealth of Learning Network (COLEN) – a pan-Commonwealth project – together with the suggestion that this project was to be re-scoped and re-staged to be significantly less expensive, in order to develop a proof-of-concept.

ii. Email and websites to NGOs in tsunami areas – India and Sri Lanka. This was a technically uncomplicated project by OneWorld that would deliver practical benefit to NGO members by helping those on the ground in disaster areas.

iii. Small Business Training for Women in Cameroon using Radio – Cameroon. The fact that Protégé QV had previously worked with the COL and, from a recent communication with them, were partnering with UNESCO, presented a 'level of comfort with regard to project execution'.

Nevertheless, the SC selected (ii) and (iii) above to be among the first three pilot projects and included the Computer for Communities project presented by the Government of the Trinidad and Tobago to ensure that the Caribbean region was also covered.

In parallel with the identification of the first pilot projects, the SC decided on the adoption of three core pan-Commonwealth initiatives, which were presented for its attention by the Secretariat and COMNET-IT. These proposed core pan-Commonwealth initiatives were deemed to be: 'vital … [and constituted] the base of what the CCP [was] trying to achieve; one aspect of which [was] determining the needs and the other [was] the resources that [could] be offered by member countries to fulfil those needs … [which] can be done through collaboration'.[144]

The first related to the creation of a Commonwealth ICT Intellectual Assets Inventory. The inventory was to encompass documentation, products and expertise. Leadership for sponsoring the harnessing of the inventory was to rest with the Government of Malta, through COMNET-IT, which would work closely with the Secretariat. The indicative budget that was allocated by Malta was £50,000–£60,000 for the setting up of a pilot

Table 3.7: Recommendations with regard to the selection of projects under the first call for applications

Project – In order of ranking assigned by the COMNET-IT evaluation	Project submitted by	Mandate focus area	Assigned Commonwealth implementing agencies
Commonwealth ICT Factbook	CTO and CBA	Entrepreneurship for poverty reduction	CTO
Commonwealth Computer Navigator Certificate 05. Digital Doorway Computer Literacy Unassisted Learning	COL and Fondazzjoni T Zammit (Malta) Department of Science and Technology and Meraka Institute South Africa and community in Lesotho	Modernising education and skills development Regional networks, local content and knowledge	COL
Commonwealth Learning Network (COLEN)	COL and CTO	Modernising education and skills development	CTO
Using ICT to strengthen the capability of African youth to enter the job market: Establishment of a virtual career guidance service	CBC and Africa Recruit	Entrepreneurship for poverty reduction	CBC
06. Creating digital content for enhanced learning experience at school level (primary and secondary)	Makerere University (Uganda)	Modernising education and skills development	COL; subsequently selected as a grand project
07. ICT tools and services in support of small business development in organic farming	Jamaican Organic Agriculture Movement, Networked Intelligence for Development, Canada (Jamaica and Canada)	Entrepreneurship for poverty reduction	CBC
08. RIVERS	Uniworks Society (India)	Entrepreneurship for poverty reduction	CTO

framework, with subsequent funding to be sought from the CCP Special Fund and potential sponsors.[145]

The second related to the launch of a Commonwealth Connects Portal. The portal was structured in five key categories: (i) Skills Exchange; (ii) Expert Forum; (iii) Digital Library; (iv) Project Marketplace; and (v) Software Directory. Additionally, it established five focus areas based on the five key areas of the CCP's mandate.[146]

The third related to the approval of an Action Plan for National ICT Strategic Planning. The Secretariat presented an assessment to the SC, which identified 38 member states that required assistance with their national ICT planning. As an initial first step to take forward this key action within the CCP's mandate, the Secretariat recommended the holding of a workshop where the 38 member states would be invited to review their national ICT planning or implementation processes through the application of a toolkit or methodology, which the Secretariat would develop based on best practices.[147]

Proposal for the introduction of an ongoing selection process and outcome

At the next SC meeting, following the selection of the afore-mentioned three pilot projects by the SC, the Secretariat presented its recommendations on how new projects should be identified. It proposed that the future identification of new projects should be through a formal call for projects issued to member states, including governments, the private sector, NGOs, academia and citizens, through a number of channels such as formal correspondence to POCs in each member states; formal correspondence to High Commissions based in London; advertisement on the CCP website; advertisement on the websites of members of the SC etc.[148]

It further recommended that the formal call for projects would be issued every three months, with the evaluation of the projects submitted being completed within two weeks and made available for consideration at the next SC meetings.[149] Additionally, it proposed that the Secretariat would be assigned responsibility for the evaluation process. The Secretariat underlined that the adoption of this process would increase publicity and visibility for the CCP and that it would result in five new calls being completed before CHOGM 2007.[150]

In discussing the recommendations presented by the Secretariat, the SC noted concerns with regard to financial viability; capacity to manage the evaluations arising from each call; building expectations that the CCP would not be able to meet with regard to the number of projects to be financed; and that the evaluation process would constitute an administrative burden on the Secretariat.

The SC rejected this recommendation and optioned for the issuance of two calls, where the first evaluation would take place at the start of December 2006 and the other (which call was never issued) was to take place before the Uganda CHOGM in 2007. The issuance of these two calls for applications was seen to be a vehicle that would generate new ideas and would act as an effective communications tool, as well as enable the SC to obtain a sense of demand.

It is pertinent to underline that COMNET-IT cautioned against the adoption of this approach, observing rather that 'needs should be identified by the countries concerned, reflective of the countries' priorities ... [and] that the most effective way to determine these needs [was] to engage countries by building a dialogue and that the POCs [were] crucial in this process'.[151]

The issuance and evaluation of the first call for applications

The first call for project proposals was primarily directed towards government agencies, academic institutions and NGOs and closed on the 5 January 2007. A purposely-designed application form was made available to prospective proponents together, with guidelines on both the nature of projects sought, evaluation criteria, as well as other submission requirements. A total of 162 proposals were received. As previously decided by the SC, the 16 short-listed yet unsuccessful projects from the Annex D proposals were automatically added to call. The total number of submissions evaluated was 178.

The evaluation process was in this instance also managed by COMNET-IT. The evaluation criteria were similar to those applied in the second evaluation of the Annex D projects (as shown in Annex V).[152] The 8th Meeting of the SC held on 21 and 22 May 2007 discussed the recommendations presented by COMNET-IT. The chair of the SC personally presented a paper recommending to the SC the adoption of the projects shown in Table 3.7. The presentation of this paper stemmed from a degree of frustration by the chair that the process had dragged significantly and that there 'need[ed] to be closure' of the call for applications, which was seen to be taking far too long and distracting the CCP from moving forward.[153]

In presenting his recommendations, the chair underlined that he was recommending that each project be assigned a grant of £15,000. This recommendation was consistent with previous discussions of the SC that the CCP was not a financing vehicle, but rather an instigator of projects through seed financing.

Additionally the low financing value was premised on the principle that a project was likely to be more successful if it was motivated to raise financing. Furthermore, the chair underlined that in adopting such a position on the total value of financing that was to be assigned to a project, the SC would be consistent with the CCP's role as a catalyst.[154] The proposed assignment of a

Table 3.8: Recommendations presented by the Secretariat for in-country projects

a.	Virtual facility to facilitate micro-financing for SMEs (Government of India).
b.	National ICT strategy – with the initial project to be carried out in Belize. External donor agencies, such as the Small States Network for Development of the World Bank and the Caribbean Development Bank, would be approached to provide financial resources (COMNET-IT).
c.	Regulatory/Communications Authority – with the initial project to be carried out in Swaziland, where the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector would result in economic growth (COMNET-IT).
d.	Commonwealth Internet Governance Forum (COMNET-IT).
e.	Implementation of a proof of concept mobile project in conjunction with Media Lab Asia (Government of India).
f.	Implementation of a telemedicine proof of concept (Government of India).
g.	COMARC Phase 2, presented by CTO.

Commonwealth implementing agency to each of the projects was specifically directed to assist the project owners with the raising of financing for the respective project given the formers' experience in financing and raising funds in ICT4D research and consultancy projects.

The recommendation relating to the value of the grant raised a strong a reaction by a number of SC members. It was stated that a project provided with significant financing was more likely to create an impact. Furthermore, it was added that this was 'not the manner in which CC [should] move forward' as it was 'queried as whether the £15,000 was sufficient for these projects to succeed'.[155] The discussion resulted in a sharp retort from the chair, that the SC had to bring to closure the call for applications before proceeding to the 'Big Bang' projects: 'everyone wants "Big Bang" projects'.[156]

Grand projects

At the 2nd CCP virtual SC Meeting, held 1 November 2006, it was decided to design and implement one grand project that would encompass a number of elements from some of the projects proposed under Annex V or the call for applications. This was outlined at the 3rd SC Meeting, held 28 September 2006. The SC emphasised that so-titled grand projects would deliver higher value than proposals presented under Annex V and the call for applications. In the view of the SC, a grand project would make a significant contribution to the development of its members, in keeping with the ideals of the Commonwealth, and to help position the CCP as the premier ICT4D programme of the Commonwealth.[157]

In order to operationalise and implement the initiative, the SC set up and mandated a sub-committee to present the SC with a project proposal and ancillary documentation with regard the grand project by January 2007. The sub-committee comprised the Secretariat, COMNET-IT, CF and CBC and was chaired by CTO.[158]

Table 3.9: Final set of projects to be financed under the CCP

a.	Setting-up Multipurpose Services Centres to provide e-governance, e-education and e-healthcare services, presented by the Government of India. The proposal was modified and subsequently implemented in Trinidad and Tobago with the assistance of CTO.
b.	Undertaking of a Commonwealth Cybercrime Initiative, presented by COMNET-IT.
c.	Digital migration project, presented by CBA.
d.	Design of an m-government toolkit and implementing this in one country, presented by CTO.
e.	Re-scoping the Computers in Communities projects to an e-waste project within Trinidad and Tobago.

Two project ideas were presented to the SC for acceptance as a grand project. The first project idea, and one which also was accepted by the SC, was the undertaking of the Commonwealth African Rural Connectivity Initiative (COMARCI). The proposal was submitted by the CTO. The grand project proposal was directed to assemble a body of knowledge that could constitute a connectivity roadmap for Africa, which would be of enormous interest to various stakeholders, most particularly the investment community and ICT sector interests. A detailed profile of the COMARCI project is presented in Annex VI of this report. The SC approved the undertaking of Phase I of the project, with the chair announcing that Malta was ready to contribute £50,000 specifically to support this grand project.[159]

The second project idea was the 'Hole in the Wall' project proposed by the Government of India. The purpose of the project was to introduce two 'Hole in the Wall' learning stations in one or more select member states, and use the learning and experience from earlier projects carried out in India and Cambodia to help spread computer literacy and life skills. The proposed grand project was welcomed by the chair, who stated that the Special Fund could be used to provide seed funding to this project as well as for the CCP to broker the project to a number of countries through bilateral arrangements.[160] The SC approved this grand project proposal and full financing was provided.[161]

It was further decided that the project would be implemented in Uganda (where the 2007 CHOGM was to be held) and the objective was to have the project operational by the time CHOGM was held November 2007. Moreover, the chair was to contact the ICT Minister of Uganda to seek his endorsement to implement the 'Hole in the Wall' grand project, his commitment to identify and provide appropriate locations in Uganda, and to seek Uganda's commitment to assume responsibility for the project's ongoing sustainability. A detailed profile of the 'Hole in the Wall' project implemented in Uganda is presented in Annex VI to this report.

Core enabling and in-country projects

Following the 2007 CHOGM's endorsement of the CCP for a further period of two years, the Secretariat felt the need to rotate the chair of the SC every two years and, as a result, the SC was disbanded following CHOGM with a view to its re-constitution once the new Secretary-General took office on 1 April 2008. Nevertheless, as shown earlier, the Secretariat struggled to identify a new chair for a relative long period of more than one year. There is no doubt that the absence of a chair for such a long period disrupted the functioning of the CCP.

Once a new chair was appointed, the SC radically changed the way projects were selected. The project evaluation process introduced with regard to the call for applications was discarded. The Commonwealth implementing agencies, representatives of governments on the SC and the Secretariat were invited to present project proposals. The projects were bundled into two categories with a view to take advantage of synergies, economies of scale and strategic linkages between projects given CHOGM mandates and budget constraints. Additionally, the primary implementers to progress the programme were now the lead Commonwealth agencies, with the caveat that the project must fit their mandates.[162]

The first category of projects, as discussed previously, related to those termed to be 'core enabling projects', which were to be directed to strengthen the institutional capacity of the CCP itself. The second category of projects was 'in-country' projects, which the Secretariat presented to the CCP in February 2009; these are presented in Table 3.8.

Phase 2 of the COMARCI project submitted by CTO was not approved in the form presented and CTO was requested to unbundle the project into its constitutive parts. However, in-country projects (a), (e) and (f) were never financed, while projects (b) and (c) did not progress beyond the scoping stage.

Further to the above, between October 2011 (the 24th Meeting) and 27 January 2014 (the 30th Meeting), the SC agreed to finance the projects shown in Table 3.9.

Each of these projects was presented by either members of the SC or governments represented on the SC; the SC approved all of the projects. These projects constituted the final category of projects financed under the CCP before it was wound up in January 2014.

Conclusions with regard to the framework for project selection for financing under the Commonwealth Connects Programme

Table 3.10: Projects and initiatives financed by the Commonwealth Connects Programme

Type	Number	Remarks
Pilot projects selected from Annex D to the 2005 CHOGM report	2	Initially three, but one project never materialised and the grant was vired to a new project (e-waste) at the end of the CCP's lifecycle.
Projects selected following the only call for applications issued by the CCP	7	One of the grand projects was initially short-listed from the call for applications.
Grand projects selected by the CCP	2	
Projects nominated by Commonwealth implementing agencies	7	
Projects mandated by CHOGM	1	
Projects identified to build core functions to support the SC	6	
Total	25	

The identification of the 62 projects presented in Annex D of the 2005 CHOGM report presented a major issue for the newly set up CCP, which impacted the pace, performance and effectiveness of the CCP during the first years of its operation.

These 62 projects were not identified on the basis of a structured call for applications issued under the newly set up CCP. The outgoing Co-ordinating Committee for the CAPDD, thus, in soliciting expressions of interests did so in the absence of criteria, available funding for each project and how many projects were to be financed, among other issues.

Although the projects were demand-driven, as they emerged from needs identified in meetings and workshops, there was no fair representation of the demand of Commonwealth governments. Moreover, given that these projects were not identified through a call for applications, the projects presented were not structured within the context of the five focus areas established as the mandate for the CCP.

The newly set up SC, therefore, was placed in a dilemma. Should it ignore the list of projects identified in Annex D and issue an open structured call, where the framework for project selection was well designed? Or should it proceed with the identification of projects now that expectations were raised among those member states or entities that expressed interest by presenting a project for consideration?

The SC sought a compromise. On the one hand, it sought to meet expectations now raised once it was faced with the list of 62 projects. In this regard, the SC decided to select three pilot projects from this list. The absence of a pre-structured project selection framework, however, meant that the SC had to design such a framework in order to undertake a fair and transparent selection process. As shown earlier, this took time to design and reach agreement on. The result was that by the end of 2006, the SC had only three pilot projects to show for considerable effort.

On the other hand, on the basis of the newly designed project selection framework, which was still subject to lengthy discussions, the SC agreed to issue a fresh call for applications – with projects to be underway before the 2007 CHOGM. This decision resulted in a number of impacts.

First, the value of the grant made available to projects under this call for applications was £15,000. The grant value was insignificant, and this evaluation agrees with those members of the SC who questioned the value added that would result from such projects, given that the grant awarded would limit the scale, scope and impact of the identified projects. While the rationale behind the allocation of such a low financial grant was that it was to act as 'seed' money, which would allow the project to be initiated with sustainability to be achieved through other financing, the fact is all of these projects 'died a natural death' once the grant was exhausted.

Figure 3.3 Assignment of grants under the Commonwealth Connects Programme
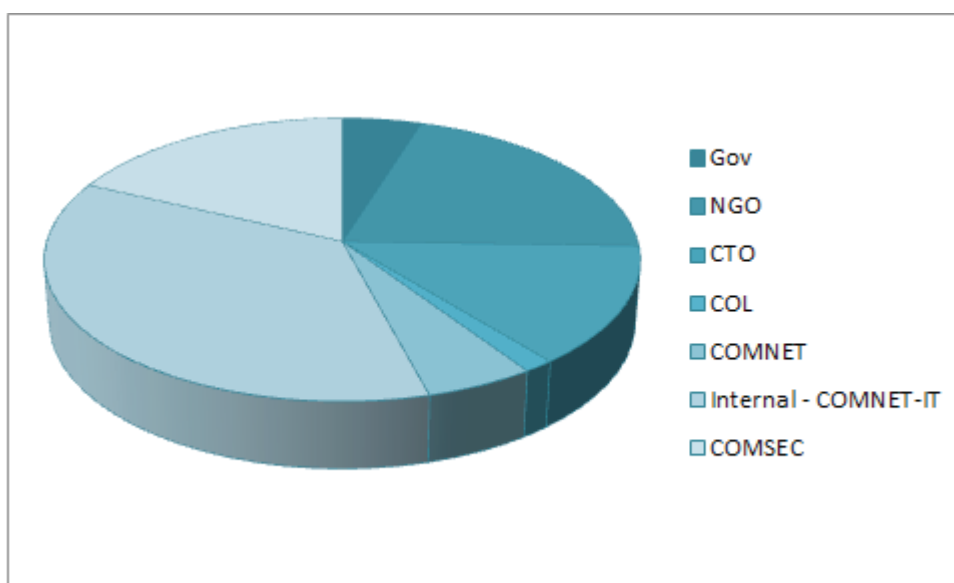
It is the considered view of the present evaluation that the approach adopted depleted the Special Fund quite considerably, while resulting in little value added beyond the actual application of the project itself until the allocated grant was exhausted. At the same time, this approach unnecessarily raised expectations. In the first instance, it raised expectations among the project beneficiaries, while the project was underway, which it could not sustain once the grant was exhausted and additional funds were not garnered to secure the project's sustainability.

Additionally, the call for applications served to raise expectations regarding the funding of projects, giving the impression that the CCP was more about funding than brokerage. It is the considered opinion that this expectation was further inculcated with the approach to adopt two 'grand projects'. The initiative also served to deplete the fund significantly, leaving little for the ongoing nurturing of CCP – for which funds were required (not to fund projects, but rather to provide the necessary facilitation and brokering in order to get projects underway).

The Secretariat to the SC as established did not result in the required sustained capacity, due to the fact that resources were assigned on a part-time basis; this in turn resulted in a further negative impact on the sustainability of the CCP. While it was imperative that the CCP had sustained capacity, the importance of such capacity was underestimated in the institutional design of the

CCP. Thus, crucial financial resources originally marked for programme or project financing had to be vired and invested in the administrative aspect of the CCP through the outsourcing of such capacity to COMNET-IT.

The assignment of the C2P as a mandate by the 2011 CHOGM placed the CCP in a spiral of terminal decline. The C2P not only detracted the CCP from the necessary focus and resources required to secure a sustained focus to raise financing for the CCP, given that the SC's recommendation to mainstream the CCP was not endorsed by the 2011 CHOGM, but also had an immediate and direct impact on the cash flow and Special Fund reserves which, as discussed earlier, led to the winding down of the CCP.

The situation was not helped by the indifferent way that the £50,000 assigned for the Computers for Communities project were vired to an e-waste project which, in the considered view of this evaluation, should never have been eligible for a CCP grant, as it did not meet any of the mandates assigned by CHOGM to the CCP.

3.7.2 Taxonomy of projects and initiatives financed by grants under the CCP

During its lifecycle, the CCP financed the projects and initiatives shown Table 3.10. Of particular significance is the fact that the C2P project was mandated by the 2007 CHOGM. It is to be noted that six projects out of the total of 25 projects –

that is, nearly one quarter of all projects financed by the CCP – were directed to build a sustainable core business function to support the SC.

Figure 3.3 presents the beneficiaries of the grants issued under the CCP. It is to be noted that of the £1,015,562.38, the balance of funds in the Special Fund as at June 2015 stood at £59,133. Of the funds allocated, the £50,000 granted to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for the Computers for Communities project were vired in late 2013 to the said government for the e-waste project, which project has only recently been initiated.

As can be seen Figure 3.3, the main beneficiary under the CCP was COMNET-IT – which was assigned 41.4 per cent or £426,297 of the total grants awarded, of which 36.2 per cent or £372,030 was directed towards the undertaking of core functions in order to support the SC to meet the objectives of the CCP.

The second main beneficiary was NGOs from civil society, which were assigned 20.6 per cent or £212,225 of the total grants award. The Secretariat – the C2P project – was the third main beneficiary of the grants awarded: 18.0 per cent or £185,000.

3.7.3 The absence of a project management framework

Best practice underlines that a programme such as the CCP should be subject to a programme and project governance framework. The main activities of a programme governance framework relate primarily to: (i) programme direction; (ii) programme and project ownership and sponsorship falling under the said programme; (iii) ensuring the effectiveness of the programme management functions; and (iv) reporting and disclosure, with particular regard to output and outcome indicators.

A review of available documentation shows that the SC at least twice sought to establish a formal framework in this regard. The first was the decision taken at the second meeting of the SC to procure Partnership Brokering Management software – which was to include a tool to track and record progress of the programme.[163] There is no evidence that this software was procured.

The second relates to the project discussed earlier in this report titled 'Creating a project management strategy', assigned to COMNET-

IT as part of the strategic projects portfolio contracted to it in 2009. COMNET-IT highlighted that this report was forwarded to the SC, but it could not be traced. The GIDD-supporting Secretariat states that it received this report and implemented the recommendations presented. Although this may be the case, neither the report nor evidence of a formal project management report were presented by the ex-GIDD supporting Secretariat to this evaluation. It was stated that the appropriate documentation could not be accessed due to data-corruption issues.

Be that as it may, the fact is that the evaluation has not managed to come across a formalised project management framework supported by appropriate templates – other than in the case of the C2P project. The framework introduced by the SC should have been two-tiered – with one tier directed towards the programme itself and one tier directed towards the individual projects financed under the CCP. With regard to the latter, it is pertinent to emphasise that such project reporting should be commensurate to the size of the project. The application of the full PRINCE2, for example, project framework on projects with a total value ranging from £15,000 to £50,000 would undoubtedly have constituted an unnecessary and expensive overhead.

The evaluation expected to be provided with project reporting templates that sought reporting, at least monthly, during the lifetime of the respective projects, with regard to:

- 'traffic light' reporting status;
- % completion of project by core activity;
- deadlines;
- monthly deliverables per month;
- budget burn rate;
- an issues register, setting out the top five issues;
- a risks register, setting out top five risks/ mitigation strategies; and
- comments.

The above elements are seen to constitute a minimum baseline that the evaluation expected to find in place for an important programme such as the CCP.

As shown earlier in this report, specific programme indicators were only set in the terms of reference (ToR) of the SC on its constitution. There is no evidence that monitoring against these indicators was carried out for the SC's attention. While the ToR for the select projects financed by grants under the CCP set out deliverables, there is no evidence that reporting against these deliverables was carried out.

3.7.4 Evaluation of the projects and initiatives financed by grants under the CCP

As shown earlier in this report, the total number of projects and initiatives carried out under the CCP was 25. This high number of projects and initiatives across different regions rendered it impossible to carry out a field audit with regard to each of the projects and initiatives.

In agreement with SPED, it was decided that the evaluation of projects and initiatives financed by grants under the CCP would be carried out on a two-tier basis. The first tier would constitute a high-level review based on desktop research and responses to two surveys circulated to: (i) owners of projects financed under the CCP; and (ii) POCs champions. The limitations encountered and discussed in the introduction to this report impacted the completeness of this assessment.

The second tier related to an evaluation focussing in further depth on a select number of projects carried out under the CCP, presenting these as case studies. The projects and initiatives selected in this regard were: (i) the C2P; (ii) the CCI; (iii) the Government of Swaziland Assistance in setting up a Commission for Communications; (iv) the Digital Doorways project; and (v) the Commonwealth Multipurpose Telecentre Initiative. With regard to projects (iii), (iv) and (v,) the evaluation carried out field audits, wherein discussions were held with the responsible project owners, POC champions etc.

High-level evaluation of the projects and initiatives financed by grants under the CCP

Table 3.11 presents a high-level assessment of projects and initiatives financed under the CCP regarding their respective contribution to the five focus mandates of the CCP and the key evaluation criteria.

Table 3.11: High-level assessment of projects financed under the CCP

Project name	Focus area	Evaluation criteria	Observations
COLEN	Modernising education and skills development	**Relevance:** High. COLEN was designed to create an online training portal for ICT professionals. **Effectiveness:** High. **Efficiency:** The grant assigned was not sufficient. COLEN required a budget of £50,000. The shortfall was invested by CTO. **Impact:** Not known. **Sustainability:** Negative. CTO lacked the resources to maintain the programme.	COLEN was an e-learning platform designed by the CTO to facilitate the flow of learning content from rich sources to needy ones. Content was directed to address areas such as ICT, health, education, governance and the like. The platform was to be developed in three phases: (i) implementing the learning content engine; (ii) establishing centres in Commonwealth countries to receive learning content; (iii) establishing connectivity to expand the service. The purpose of the project was to: (i) undertake a needs analysis; (ii) procure a customised software solution/learning management system (LMS); and (iii) pilot the solution. CTO, following a request for proposals (RFP), opted to adapt Moodle, an existing free open source software (OSS), given that the licenses costs of software submitted following an RFP were too expensive. CTO secured the first 31-course content supplier agreement with a UK supplier. It had hosted up to 200 ICT courses by March 2009. Detailed terms of reference as presented in Annex VI.
COMARCI	Building policy and regulatory capacity	**Relevance:** High. COMARCI was directed to identify policies, regulations, technology, business models etc. to promote connectivity in Africa as a prerequisite for leveraging ICT for development. **Effectiveness:** High. The outcome included recommended policies, regulations, business models etc. with regard to extending connectivity in Africa, which continue to be referenced. **Efficiency:** The grant assigned was not sufficient and constituted only 30 per cent of the project budget. The shortfall was invested by CTO. **Impact:** Not know. **Sustainability:** Negative. CTO made a request for financing for COMARCI 2 under the CCP. Although CTO was requested by the SC to unbundle the ToR, no grants were made available under the CCP.	The COMARCI project sought to: (i) improve infrastructure knowledge; (ii) break down policy and regulatory barriers to change; (iii) promote best practice-sharing; (iv) facilitate funding and investment; (iv) forge collaboration between partner agencies; (v) broker match-making; (vi) secure technology transfer; and (vii) undertake mapping and gap-analysis. Detailed terms of reference are presented in Annex VI.
Small Business Training for Women in Cameroon using Radio	Entrepreneurship or wealth creation and poverty reduction	**Relevance:** Low. The technology applied was radio. At the time the project was launched, mobile technology had sufficiently advanced to all for 'push' down education information and m-services were considerably advanced at the time. It is believed that the project would have been more relevant if it applied mobile technology. **Effectiveness:** Not known. **Efficiency:** Not known. **Impact:** Not known. **Sustainability:** Negative. The project was limited to the original target group. There is no evidence that an increased number of persons benefited from repeat programmes.	A multimedia resource kit was produced, covering eight topics relating to starting up micro-enterprises. This comprised 58 scripts and programmes in two official languages (English and French); 500 copies were distributed as CDs and books, and 25 one-hour radio programmes were broadcast over two public service radio stations in Cameroon. Detailed terms of reference are presented in Annex VI. The project sponsors did not respond to the survey forwarded to them as part of this evaluation.

Project name	Focus area	Evaluation criteria	Observations
'Hole in the Wall'	Modernising Education and skills development	**Relevance**: High. 'Hole in the Wall' met the objectives of the CCP. Although mobile broadband connectivity has increased in Africa, rendering the use of kiosks in rural areas less relevant due to smart phone technology, the concept of structured self-learning remains one of importance. **Effectiveness**: High. **Efficiency**: Not known. **Impact**: Positive. **Sustainability**: Negative. There is no evidence that the project was extended beyond the original cohort of persons.	'Hole in the Wall' (HIWEL) is a concept that spurs the ingenuity of children and their capacity for self-learning through play and experimentation. 'Hole in the Wall' originated in India and learning stations were implemented in more than 25 locations across rural India. 'Hole in the Wall' was also implemented in Rwanda, Mozambique, Zambia, Swaziland, Botswana, Nigeria and in Cambodia. The learning station installation for the Uganda project was undertaken in two phases. The first learning station was inaugurated in Kiswa (inhabited by the people from different tribes and cultures, where the majority were educationally and economically disadvantaged and attending a co-educational school which had 1,600 children). The second was incorporated in Bubaare (where the school was a co-educational institution with more than 600 students, the majority of whom belonged to low-income groups and where a high rate of parental illiteracy prevailed), and was commissioned in January 2008. The following feedback was presented in a report on project status:[164] **Children**: Surveys conducted on the children residing in the project areas indicated that though they knew what a computer was (some had even seen one) they never had access to one. Many children from Kiswa indicated that the station was helping them in the acquisition of computer knowledge. Educational videos as well as games were deemed as helpful in preparing classroom lessons. The teachers reinforced the children's views. **Teachers**: Surveys showed that the project helped pupils compete with students in urban schools, given that they now had access to similar facilities. It was further stated that the teaching of science and the effort in imparting lessons was eased and rendered more attractive to children by the audio-visual learning aspects. The project also showed that a teacher could carry out research lessons on the internet and no longer depended on his or her knowledge and access to books. **Community**: The community seemed to be aware of the facility in their vicinity and they viewed it in a positive light. Detailed terms of reference are presented in Annex VI. It is not known whether the project was sustained or expanded, as the project sponsors did not respond to the survey forwarded to them as part of this evaluation.
ICT Factbook	Regional networks, local content and knowledge	**Relevance**: High. The ICT Factbook met objectives of the CCP. **Effectiveness**: High. **Efficiency**: Not known. **Impact**: Positive. **Sustainability**: Negative. The knowledge and information researched and captured in the Factbook had limited time relevance. This was because the information became outdated, as there were no updates beyond the original ICT book.	Although there were plans to publish a hard copy, only a web-based Commonwealth ICT Directory was created due to insufficient funding. Phase 2 of the project, which was to result in the project evolving into a permanent resource promoting the Commonwealth and its ICT sector, was never carried out. Detailed terms of reference are presented in Annex VI.

Project name	Focus area	Evaluation criteria	Observations
RIVERS	Entrepreneurship or wealth creation and poverty reduction	**Relevance**: High. The purpose of the project was to develop a generic mobile technology platform to enable beneficiaries to utilise m-services to exchange contents through SMS messages regarding low-cost employment bureau services, daily job markets etc. in India. The platform was also to be capable of supporting other related technologies such as multimedia messaging. **Effectiveness**: High. **Efficiency**: Not known. **Impact**: Positive. **Sustainability**: Not known.	The project was launched in July 2009. The pilot deployment was to account for a 3,000 short-term labourer database for one city, with 50 job alerts to be generated on a daily basis and free advertisements. At the time the CCP review was carried out in 2011, the project had support from Bharti/Airtel, successful trials of the technology and network coverage had been achieved in the Orissa state, and a 'rural employment bureau' solution was being implemented in towns adjacent to major agricultural districts to attract labourers to work on farm or government forest sites. Detailed terms of reference are presented in Annex VI. The project sponsors did not respond to the survey forwarded to them as part of this evaluation.
Commonwealth Computer Navigator Certificate (CCNC)	Modernising education and skills development	**Relevance**: High. The aim of the project was to develop high-quality print-based study manuals under a free content license that could be used to support the teaching of Open ICDL, as well as the development of multimedia support components. **Effectiveness**: High. **Efficiency**: Not known. **Impact**: Positive. **Sustainability**: Limited. The CCNC modules were developed and distributed at CHOGM 2009, with extended modules being produced through to 2011.	Detailed terms of reference are presented in Annex VI. The project sponsors did not respond to the survey forwarded to them as part of this evaluation.
Jamaica Organic Agriculture Movement (JOAM) Training of Trainers workshop in support of Women Farm Entrepreneurs	Entrepreneurship or wealth creation and poverty reduction	**Relevance**: High. The aim of the project was to develop and enhance the facilitation skills of trainers in the region, to expand support and sustain at a local level training methods required for reaching and engaging women in small scale organic farming. UNDP and Networked Intelligence for Development also supported the project. **Effectiveness**: High. **Efficiency**: Not known. **Impact**: Limited. **Sustainability**: Unknown. There is no evidence that the project was extended beyond the original cohort of persons.	The project stemmed from a successful joint venture in 2004, where 50 women farmers from 13 Caribbean countries participated in the first 'Knowing and Growing' training workshop. The partner organisations subsequently committed to continue working to deliver applied and technical expertise in organic farming, small business development and ICTs to women farm-entrepreneurs in the region. A second regional workshop was carried out in Grenada in 2006, followed by the third workshop in Guyana in 2007. The workshops offered a comprehensive training programme on the new opportunities for women-led farming businesses and start-ups within the context of the growing demand for organic produce and products. Detailed terms of reference are presented in Annex VI. The project sponsors did not respond to the survey forwarded to them as part of this evaluation.
Rebuilding after the Tsunami: Using ICTS for change	Regional networks, local content and knowledge	**Relevance**: High. The project was undertaken with the objective of harnessing the democratic potential of ICT for effective communication and networking; and to use these digital opportunities for economic development and social empowerment of communities. The project aimed to offer quality web development, e-communication services and training to organisations working on tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts – in Sri Lanka and India. **Effectiveness**: High. **Efficiency**: Not known. **Impact**: Positive. **Sustainability**: Not known.	A series of training programmes were held between September 2006 and September 2007 in Sri Lanka and India. Training was directed to inculcate basic skills to create websites, develop content etc. A series of websites was created, including www.vishwae.org; www.monlar.org; www.folkartsrilanka.org. None of these websites are still active. Detailed terms of reference are presented in Annex VI. The project sponsors did not respond to the survey forwarded to them as part of this evaluation.

Project name	Focus area	Evaluation criteria	Observations
Government of Belize – National ICT Strategy	Building policy and regulatory capacity	**Relevance:** High. The project was directed to draw up a scoping exercise for the design of a National ICT Strategy for Belize. **Effectiveness:** High. **Efficiency:** High. The grant was sufficient to carry out the scoping exercise. **Impact:** Partial. The end goal was that the scoping exercise would be used to obtain funding from other small states and ICT4D donor organisations to carry out the drafting of a national strategy. This end goal was not achieved. **Sustainability:** Partial.	Although this end goal was not achieved, the Government of Belize outsourced the drafting of an ICT National Strategy in 2012. See: www.caribbeanelections.com/eDocs/strategy/bz_strategy/bz_national_ict_strategy.pdf. The strategy was aligned with the national policy sectors the scoping exercise recommended such a strategy should address: affordability, access, education, modernisation, legislative framework etc. Detailed terms of reference are presented in Annex VI.
Virtual Career Guidance Centre	Entrepreneurship or wealth creation and poverty reduction	**Relevance:** High. The project was directed towards assisting the CBC and the Virtual Career Guidance Service to establish the Africa Recruit programme on an online platform. The project was to be carried out in two phases. **Effectiveness:** Not known. **Efficiency:** Not known. **Impact:** Partial. Not known. **Sustainability:** Not known.	Detailed terms of reference are presented in Annex VI. The project sponsors did not respond to the survey forwarded to them as part of this evaluation.
Developing and maintaining a CC Champions Network Group	Internal core business function of the Steering Committee	**Relevance:** High. **Effectiveness:** Not known. **Efficiency:** Low. The initial cost of this initiative was £77,280 – and the contract with COMNET-IT was renewed when it expired in 2011. The evaluation concludes that the contractual cost for the maintenance of the POC network was, prima facia, relatively expensive. **Impact:** For the duration of the CCP. **Sustainability:** Dissolved following the winding down of the CCP.	A contacts network for member states was created to forge links with development partner agencies to facilitate project funding, building a repository of ICT assets and to engage with contacts in order to obtain a good understanding of development and related ICT priority needs. Within the contacts network, 52 of the 54 member states were represented. A Connects workspace was set of up for the POCs in August 2013. The workspace was set up based on feedback received from the POCs. The platform did not generate active use, as can be seen from Figure 3.4, below. Primarily, this was the result of the fact that the platform was cumbersome to use – for example, the uploading of documents and the sharing of specific documents required POCs to send these to an administrator to upload. **Figure 3.4: Use of Connects workspace and document system**[165] Detailed terms of reference are presented in Annex VI.

Project name	Focus area	Evaluation criteria	Observations
Establishing and maintaining an inventory of ICT wealth	Regional networks, local content and knowledge	**Relevance:** High. **Effectiveness:** Not known. **Efficiency:** Low. The initial cost of this initiative was £85,680 – and the contract with COMNET-IT was subsequently renewed when this expired in 2011. The evaluation concludes that the contractual cost for the establishment and maintenance of the inventory of the ICT wealth was, prima facia, expensive. **Impact:** For the duration of the CCP. **Sustainability:** Dissolved following the winding down of the CCP.	Regarding this project, the CHOGM 2011 report states that 'a systematic inventory of ICT wealth is being assembled, demonstrating what member states can offer in the areas of policy, best practice, strategies, technical expertise and business applications software. This database will provide information on "who is doing what?", facilitate collaboration, improve co-ordination and minimise duplication'.[166] The report further added that the: 'ICT assets repository currently holds a good number of assets from Malta ... there have been additional contributions from Canada and Australia ... Project profiles can be submitted onto the database once they are identified and resourced ... the national Points of Contact from the champions network have been tasked with contributing information to the ICT assets repository, but this has proved difficult'.[167] This evaluation could not assess the inventory of ICT wealth database. COMNET-IT initiated a formal dissolution process in February 2015, and this platform was taken offline. Although this evaluation followed up with the liquidator to obtain access to this and other COMNET-IT documentation, it was informed that only those documents that were required by legislation for the undertaking of the dissolution process were kept. Detailed terms of reference are presented in Annex VI.
Conducting a Needs Assessment	Regional networks, local content and knowledge	**Relevance:** High. **Effectiveness:** High. **Efficiency:** High. The cost of this initiative was £16,400. The evaluation concludes that the contractual cost for the undertaking of such an assessment across different regions was, prima facia, reasonable. **Impact:** For the duration of the CCP. **Sustainability:** For the duration of the CCP.	Regional meetings were carried out in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean, among others. Development partners such as UNDP, African Development Bank etc. within the respective regions, as well as POCs, were invited to such meetings. The regional meetings identified appropriate needs with regard to each respective region. For example, the Sub-Saharan Africa regional meeting identified the following as the top five priorities, shown in ascending order: e-government services; ICT infrastructure into communities; ICT policy and governance; e-skills and educational content through ICT; and access to government services.[168] The Caribbean regional meeting identified the following top five priorities, shown in ascending order: ICT strategies; educated leadership on ICT; capacity building and skills development; integrated e-government services; and jobs in ICT. Detailed terms of reference are presented in Annex VI.
Developing multifaceted partnerships	Internal core business function of the Steering Committee	Discussed in Section 3.5 above, titled 'The financing of the Commonwealth Connects Programme'.	Detailed terms of reference are presented in Annex VI.
Creating project management structure	Internal core business function of the Steering Committee	**Relevance:** High. **Effectiveness:** Negative. **Efficiency:** Negative. The contract for the project was £7,200. The evaluation concludes that the contractual cost for the undertaking of this initiative was far too expensive. Free documentation on project methodologies, such as PRINCE2 and PRINCE2 Lite, for example, are readily available for free on the Internet. **Impact:** None. **Sustainability:** None.	COMNET-IT documentation states that a report was prepared and forwarded to the SC. This report could not be traced in the SC's records and, as stated earlier, COMNET-IT's records were no longer available. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that the recommendations presented by COMNET-IT with regard to a project management structure were implemented by both COMNET-IT, in its contracted role as a core function to the SC, or by the official Secretariat of the SC. Detailed terms of reference are presented in Annex VI.

Project name	Focus area	Evaluation criteria	Observations
Promoting local access and connectivity – subsequently in 2011 contract renewed as the Commonwealth Internet Governance Forum	Regional networks, local content and knowledge	**Relevance:** High. **Effectiveness:** High. The clear priorities that emerged from regional meetings of the CIGF were in the areas of cybercrime and child protection policies. This led to the setting up of the CCI project, which the 2011 CHOGM established as a mandate under the CCP. **Efficiency:** High. The value of the contract was £12,800. The evaluation concludes that, given the successful evolution of the CCI as one direct output stemming from this initiative, this project constituted excellent value for money. **Impact:** For the duration of the CCP. **Sustainability:** Dissolved following the winding down of the CCP.	The prominence of internet governance and ICT-related public policy issues led to the institution and sponsorship of the CIGF. The CIGF was established in 2009, and held its first open forum at the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. COMNET-IT assumed the role the CIGF's Secretariat with the mandate to promote and co-ordinate CIGF activities. The CIGF, under the CCP, sought and obtained the 2011 CHOGM's endorsement to assist low-income member states to build their institutional, human and technical capacities with specific regard to cyber security. This resulted in the design of five handbooks, published online and continually updated, covering capacity building, child pornography, computer misuse, computer-related forgery and fraud, and infringements of intellectual property rights (IPRs).169 The CIGF website generated healthy traffic, with approximately 600–700 visitors per month. Figure 3.5 Use of CIGF website170 Detailed terms of reference are presented in Annex VI.
M-Governance Strategy and Toolkit	Building policy and regulatory capacity	**Relevance:** High. **Effectiveness:** High. Mobile technology and its application for economic and social development, as well public administration and governance transformation, is a 'game changer' for regions like Sub-Saharan Africa which cover huge, difficult terrains, or for small and island states where the installation of terrestrial fibre may be far too costly. This is because mobile technology facilitates the meeting of these challenges. **Efficiency:** High. The cost of this initiative was £30,000. The evaluation concludes that the contract provides excellent value for money. It is pertinent that the project was also co-financed by the Center for Electronic Governance within the United Nations University International Institute for Software Technology. **Impact:** High. Mobile technology has a tectonic impact on the social, economic and sustainable development of most, if not all, developing countries – large as well as small. The ease of use and lower prices render the mobile phone in developing countries accessible and affordable. Statistics show that increasingly persons across regions prefer mobile phones as the technology of choice to access the internet, and the ever-decreasing cost of smart phones is likely to reinforce the status of mobile technology in this regard. **Sustainability:** High. The project resulted in the development of a toolkit. Earlier in 2015, the Secretariat issued a tender for the engagement of consultancy services to apply the m-government toolkit for the development of two m-government strategies in Africa.	The work carried out on this project sought to establish a policy and implementation framework for m-governance for development (MGOV4D) within Vanuatu as a pilot for application in other Commonwealth member states. This was to be achieved through the design of a toolkit that would act as a guide for other small island developing states in their efforts to develop and implement national MGOV4D strategies. Detailed terms of reference are presented in Annex VI.

Project name	Focus area	Evaluation criteria	Observations
Digital Connections project	Modernising education and skills development	**Relevance:** High. **Effectiveness:** Not known. **Efficiency:** The initial cost of this initiative was £25,000. The evaluation concludes that the cost of the contract, prima facia, was quite high. This can only be explained if it covered travel expenses for nominated persons to attend the training event. **Impact:** Not known. **Sustainability:** Negative. There is no evidence that the project was extended beyond the original cohort of persons.	The CBA Digital Connections project was directed towards capacity building for broadcast practitioners in the Caribbean in the daily use of social and new media integrated with broadcast content production. The pilot project was launched at the annual meeting of the Caribbean Broadcasting Union in August 2013. The target audience was 57 participants from broadcasting organisations in the Caribbean. Detailed terms of reference are presented in Annex VI. The project sponsors did not respond to the survey forwarded to them as part of this evaluation.

Evaluation of selected case studies

a   The Commonwealth Partnership Portal – C2P

The C2P was the most expensive project financed by grants issued under the CCP. The total grant was £185,000. Table 3.12 shows the disbursements issued to the project under the CCP. As from November 2010, the CCP Special Fund was approached for financing for the engagement of a Project Executive to direct the development and implementation of the C2P.

As shown earlier, the C2P was established as a CCP mandate in the 2009 CHOGM. The 2009 CHOGM stated that the Commonwealth 'will share its ideas and best practices, and deliver practical support through Commonwealth networks, including a new Commonwealth Partnership Platform Portal'.[171] The Commonwealth Secretary-General, in a formal communication to the chair of the SC of the CCP, declared that the C2P was the 'most ambitious partnership paradigm undertaken by the Commonwealth'.[172] On 19 January 2009, a request was submitted for the financing of the C2P under the CCP on the basis of the following terms of reference:[173]

- provide a single portal for Commonwealth governments and the Secretariat;

- provide a virtual meeting room;

- provide a virtual market place;

- create a Digital Repository for Development Knowledge;

- provide a 'push' facility that would: (i) create a personalised profile for each user; and (ii) send e-mail alerts and other relevant information to users based on the above profile, subject to the approval of the user;

- develop metrics to track usage metrics, popular sites and load times, which would be used as intelligence to improve performance and user satisfaction; and

- develop a robust security infrastructure and policy to prevent unauthorised access to the portal, applications and information.

The deliverables were identified to include a project plan, requirements definition, research on other portals, technology solutions, infrastructure sizing, security requirements, portal documentation, operation and sustainability, and training of users. The request for proposal further identified the following benefits:[174]

- facilitating the sharing of wealth and knowledge across the Commonwealth;

- increasing the level of communication and collaboration among countries; and

- creating a virtual marketplace to promote the good work being conducted in the Commonwealth, jobs available in member states, procurement opportunities etc.

The Secretariat to the SC assessed the project to be high with regard to impact and relevance, feasibility, sustainability and replicability. Tata Consulting Services was engaged to carry out a concept note and a feasibility report on the C2P. The feasibility study underlined that the C2P would be differentiated from Google, as it would act as the electronic gateway to the world of the Commonwealth; this in turn would allow it to build and nurture partnerships so that the Commonwealth increased its reach and impact. Thus, unlike Google, the C2P would not be a simple search engine, but would offer capabilities for 'many to many' interactions and transactions to enhance partnerships, as well as apply the Google,

Table 3.12: Financing of the C2P Project under the CCP

2010											
November	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November
21,444	6,538	12,000	18,940	11,800	7,500	8,800	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000

2011	Other
December	
15,000	7,798

Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and many other innovative sites to leverage the power of social networking to build partnerships.[175]

Additionally, the C2P would act as an umbrella site or a single window, which would showcase information from a wide range of Commonwealth websites and other identified sites (for example, UN, OECD etc.) selecting the most relevant and current information to the visitors to the Portal. Moreover, the C2P would provide 'interactive' and 'transactional' features over and above a consolidated single window on informational content. Such a feature was seen to provide additional 'value added', and hence constituted an important differentiator, vis-à-vis the web presence (websites) of all Commonwealth entities.[176]

Tata Consulting Services also carried out an assessment of needs by surveying more than 415 respondents from government, business, civil society and youth across the Commonwealth. The needs assessment identified the five top focus areas to be, in descending order: knowledge sharing; fostered enhanced collaboration; promoted youth engagement; job or trade options; and connecting decision-makers. Meanwhile, the top five collaboration areas were identified, in descending order, to be: education; youth; skills development; democracy; and entrepreneurship.[177]

The SC was, due to the fact that it was an established group with multistakeholder representation from major Commonwealth agencies and civil society, designated as the interim governance body for the development phase of the project, with primary responsibility for policy and for financial oversight and reporting. The SC, while underlining that the CP2 project was an 'exciting project' emphasised:

- the scope of the project required more clear definition;

- the Secretariat had to convince stakeholders, including the private sector, in seeking financing that it had the capacity to implement a project of this scale;

- the project presented an opportunity to partner with other donor organisations, and focussed initiatives should be undertaken to achieve such synergies; and

- the need to explain to member states the relationship between the CP2 and the CCP.

At the 17th Meeting of the SC held in September 2009, members of the CCP underlined their support for the C2P project, given that 'there is a need to support these initiatives with a strong content contribution and management strategy to sustain it in the long run'.[178] During the meeting, it was cautioned that the C2P project was not a technology one and that the 'present proposal does not go in the details of the content contribution plan for the C2P'.

It is to be noted that the C2P project dominated a number SC meetings, where it was the main discussion item: 21st (18 January 2011); 22nd (19 April 2011); 24th (6 October 2011); and the 27th (17 September 2011).

A Business Plan for the C2P project was presented for the attention of the SC at the committee's 17th Meeting. The Business Plan established that the 'fundamental purpose of the C2P' was to:

'... *use the advanced communications and networking power of the Internet and World Wide Web to strengthen the political, social and cultural ties that tie together the Commonwealth and to enable people, organisations and governments to form new kinds of dynamic partnerships at the international level.*'[179]

The Business Plan was divided into a number of sections, mainly: (a) current needs and requirements; (b) architecture and structure of the CP2; (c) the functions of the C2P; (d) main elements of governance; (e) revenue and cost models; and (f) considerations and success factors.

However, the Business Plan did not present a roadmap of how the C2P project was to be structured with regard to both the delivery of goals and objects, as well as the supporting structural capacity. Nor did the Business Plan map out how the information content of the C2P was to be gathered and moderated to allow for the promulgation of knowledge among member states. Moreover, it did not provide financial estimates with regard to the cost of the project and its sustainability following implementation.[180]

It is clear, that the vision for the C2P project was 'top down' – set by the Commonwealth Secretary-General. The Business Plan did not undertake an assessment of the 'demand side of the project'.

Table 3.13: Estimated cost of the C2P project[181]

Cost components	Phase 1 (0–9 months)	Phase 2 (9–18 months)	Phase 3 (18–24 months)
Infrastructure	£250,000		
Hardware	£400,000		
Software	£400,000		
Portal development	£950,000	£500,000	Not required
Enhancements, support and maintenance	0	£280,000	£280,000

A presentation delivered to the 19th SC Meeting sought to rectify these matters. A three-phase implementation approach was presented:

- Phase I, from 0 to 9 months, directed to launch the framework of the C2P with three thematic areas, branding, core support team etc. The three thematic areas identified were: Democracy and Good Governance; Education and Skills Development; and Youth.

- Phase II, from 9 to 18 months, leading to the launch of four new thematic windows.

- Phase III, 18 to 24 months, resulting in enhancing and supporting the C2P framework.

In terms of organisational structure, it was envisaged that a supporting technical team of five persons would be required to provide enhancement, support and maintenance. Content management was to be organised through POCs, and Memoranda of Understanding with partner agencies. The C2P project was estimated to cost £3.25 million – as shown in Table 3.13.

In taking the C2P project forward, the SC sought to address the following strategic issues:

- The appointment of a Project Executive to provide leadership and focus to the project.

- The use of open source software (OSS) to reduce the cost of the C2P platform. A Memorandum of Understanding was reached with OpenText for the use of its social networking product.

- The importance of the C2P platform in demonstrating special value differentiators – including that of allowing the Commonwealth to reach out and be more effective. Of particular note was ensuring that the platform would act as the principle inter-governmental forum that would allow for networking vis-à-vis CHOGM, inter-governmental meetings and inter-member states policy areas.

- Synergising with other Commonwealth soft infrastructure, such as the POCs.

- The design of a strategy that would identify long-term roles and responsibilities, as well as the sustainability of the project over the long term. Of particular relevance was the need to assess the financing and funding streams required.

- The C2P project was to be branded and a communications/marketing strategy articulated and implemented.

- A content strategy was to be developed to establish the C2P platform as a 'gateway' to knowledge and material that should largely be leveraged from the wider Commonwealth.

- The ability for the C2P platform to be accessible from devices such as mobile phones and tablets – with an architecture that would allow people in rural areas to access and download documents from this platform.

In providing governance oversight of the C2P project, the project team introduced a project performance monitoring structure to capture baseline project management and reporting requirements. In October 2011, an operational plan was developed for the period 2012–14. The plan established the requirements 'following the formal launch of the "live" site' prior to the CHOGM meeting in Australia at the end of October 2011. The plan was divided into a number of sections:

Table 3.14: Projected annual operation budget for the Commonwealth Connects Portal[182]

Governance	Multistakeholder, representative steering committee, meeting three times annually	£25,000
Executive lead (if required)	(part-time)	
	• 50 days over 12 months	£20,000
	• Travel & other expenses	£5,000
Support team	• Web services manager	£40,000
• Management	• Technical support	£35,000
• Programme support	• Content editor	£30,000
• Content editor	• Travel (marketing)	£15,000
	• Admin and overheads	£20,000
Total		£190,000

a. Current policies and practices, which discussed: (i) content management; (ii) privacy and security; (iii) terms and conditions of use; (iv) communications and marketing; and (v) partnership arrangements.

b. Development priorities for 2012, which discussed: (i) introduction of a mobile functionality; (ii) extending thematic windows; (iii) increasing and strengthening online communities; (iv) supporting ministerial meetings and mandates; (v) expanding the scope and utility of the pan-Commonwealth search function; (vi) strengthening and extending strategic partnerships; and (vii) intensifying the application of social media.

c. Operational arrangements, which discussed: (i) governance; and (ii) executive, management and technical support.

d. Resource implications, which discussed (i) internal resourcing; and (ii) external sources of funds.

The plan recommended that a multistakeholder, representative steering committee was the best governance instrument for the C2P and that this should be supported by an ad hoc content and technical support team led by a C2P web services manager. The role of the full-time Project Executive would no longer be necessary once the C2P was in operation. The plan identified an annual operational budget of £190,000 for the operation of the C2P – which excluded the financing of further development and enhancements.

The operational plan underlined that while in the pre-development phase it was managed as a 'special project', operating for the most part on a stand-alone basis within the Secretariat, and financed by the CCP and the CFTC; however, the ongoing operation of the Portal would require a more formal organisational arrangement. The plan proposed four options with regard to the placement of the loci of responsibility for the Commonwealth Connects Portal, but presented no specific recommendation: SPED; Communications and Public Affairs Division (CPAD), GIDD; outsourcing.

The CHOGM 2011 communiqué stated the following with regard to the Commonwealth Connects Portal:

'*welcomed the launch of the Commonwealth Connects portal as a contemporary platform for networking, building partnerships and strengthening the Commonwealth's values and effectiveness, and encouraged its use.*'[183]

In April 2012, a C2P project status report carried out by GIDD identified that costs incurred as at November 2011 with regard to the development stage of the C2P. These are presented in Table 3.15.

Of particular concern is that the status report, which was presented following a thorough site test, accessibility assessment and review of site design, based upon industry best practice and W3C web standards – including user journey; functionality; platform integrity and scalability; integration with

Table 3.15: Platform costs incurred as at November 2011 on the C2P[184]

Module		£
Design work	Design and communications support	25,200
	Design, extension of thematic window, mobile mock up for CHOGM	88,000
	Other	11,800
Connect Portal development and build by Open Text	Discovery Phase – requirements gathering and project schedule	19,320
	Infrastructure Phase – design and project engagement	5,796
	Infrastructure Phase II – design, build and content transfer	15,456
	Development Phase pt. 1 – navigation, search, delivery, IA	39,284
	Development Phase pt. 2 – personalisation and portal configuration	16,100
	Testing Phase – deployment and testing to UAT, system testing	12,880
	Deployment Phase – go live and product launch	12,880
Video		34,000
Project Executive		180,000
Mobile site development: Work in progress	Phase 1.0: Basic site development and render	25,920
	Phase 1.1: Advanced site development and render	29,440
	Phase 2.0: Full mobile site	18,720
	Strategy and rebrand	8,400
Total		543,196

social media; and product stability – identified a number of strategic concerns. These were with regard to the following:[185]

- Interactive features for knowledge sharing: The user experience in this area was fragmented and inconsistent, leading to confusing user journeys – for example, unclear registration and login processes, which rendered it difficult for users to engage on forums and access digital repositories.

- Customised OpenText Search: The results generated by this search tool were inaccurate or poorly categorised, returning unrelated pages and content that ended onsite engagement abruptly.

- Site accessibility: This was inconsistent with W3C usability standards. The site structure was inconsistent with the design and site map, making it difficult for users to access content, and for this content to be seen by screen readers (for users with disabilities) or found through search. This also impacted Google page rankings.

- Site design and content: An unclear content and marketing (brand) strategy significantly impacted C2P's ability to attract key decision-makers and other users to the Portal and communities.

- Technical platform: C2P, although supported by two OpenText content management products – Web Experience Management (WEM) driving the C2P Portal content and OpenText Social Community (OTSC), housing the online community – occasioned concerns with regard to the level of inter-operability between the products. These generated a number of issues that significantly affected the user experience, i.e. poor custom search results, inconsistent site navigation and browser compatibility.

The report stated that such issues were 'damaging the ability of the organisation to meet the objectives for this web initiative and C2P's value proposition as outlined by the Commonwealth Secretary-General at the 2009 CHOGM'.[186] Moreover, each bug was costing the CCP £1,000 to fix, with a mean bug-fixing time of five days.

The report concluded that 'in light of money spent and outstanding technical issues, it is recommended that we do not pursue any further technical or digital developments with OpenText until the issues outlined above have been resolved and an updated technical roadmap is provided'. It further proposed:[187]

- Reviewing alternative solutions: A review of the digital landscape with regard to content management and collaboration platforms respectively, given that the C2P platform failed to deliver against user expectations and W3C usability standards.

- Migrating platform(s) so that the C2P delivered against organisational priorities by moving to an established off-the-shelf-product, designed specifically to manage network and collaborative working, which had a proven track record in the field. This would take place before moving to a new content management platform for the website build.

- Terminating the OpenText supplier relationship, given that the costs and time required to repair and further develop the OpenText products to specifications could not be justified. This was particularly so

because alternative solutions were available at a significantly lower price point, offering far greater levels of functionality and integration.

- Using an established web-build methodology through an iterative and incremental development approach – 'Agile Project Management'.

- A digital strategy was essential to ensure alignment with organisational goals, brand and communications standards, and to demonstrate added value to member states, external and internal stakeholders.

- That a management and reporting structure which positioned the C2P team within the ICT section of the Secretariat should be introduced to ensure consistent performance management and informed decision-making, specifically regarding platform development, marketing and communications and user engagement.

In short, the C2P as developed was scrapped. On 23 May 2012, the Secretariat issued a request for proposals directed to 'develop a secure online collaboration platform for effective networking and professional collaboration between the Commonwealth's target audiences globally', with the object of:[188]

- strengthening the working relationship of existing networks and reaching new online communities of practice, by creating an influential Commonwealth network of expertise;

- providing a space for low-income member states, especially those which are not usually effective users of professional networks, to contribute to the development of sustainable long-term solutions and glean new knowledge from a global network of expertise and practitioners; and

- facilitating online discussions among nascent networks which endure periods of low activity due to difficulties in convening, circumventing issues associated with location and ensuring sustainability.

The request for proposals established the outcomes shown in Table 3.16.

Table 3.16: Outcomes placed in the request for proposal with regard to Commonwealth Connects: Online Collaboration[189]

Different components of the community	What is being shared	The role of what is being required	The results of knowledge sharing through communities of practice		
			Short term	Medium term	Long term
Information component	Documentation of projects, articles and links	Improved access to information	Better-informed dialogue Better-informed decision-making	Improved approaches Improved programmes Improved projects	Better development outcomes
	Reuse of assets				
Knowledge sharing component	Facilitating quick response for questions and answers	Embracing formal training			
	Access to pool of expert knowledge	Facilitating progress from 'novice' to 'expert'			
	Discussion of current issues	Mapping of knowledge			
Social component	Personal contacts	Increased satisfaction			
	Increased social interaction	Sense of belonging			
Organisational component	Increased synergy				
	Increased co-ordination				

The Secretariat opted for the Huddle collaboration and document platform, including mobile and third party access at an annual cost of £36,000 for 100 'full users' and unlimited 'light user' licenses, full access to all features, premium customer support and no hosting fees – compared to an annual license bid presented by OpenText of £220,000.[190]

The present evaluation assesses this project as follows:

Relevance: The initial mandate for the CCP was to forward the digital divide agenda within the Commonwealth. Projects undertaken in this regard under the CCP included the inventory on ICT assets. This evaluation agrees with the concept of creating a virtual space that brings together assets and resources of Commonwealth member states that are fragmented across many different national and government portals. Different countries, including those that are not Commonwealth members, will often have already faced issues relating to the digital divide – with research, solutions, lessons learned etc. carried out. Short-circuiting the learning curve by leveraging such resources makes eminent sense.

The C2P, however, extended the concept of knowledge and information sharing as well as collaboration beyond the digital divide. Although this was a CHOGM mandate, it is this evaluation's considered opinion that the C2P was ultimately a knowledge and collaboration platform for the Secretariat as an institutional entity, and not a project or initiative that looked to foster knowledge related to the core business purpose of the CCP: addressing the digital divide within the Commonwealth.

At its very essence, the C2P was a document-sharing and collaborative IT solution for the Secretariat. The CCP was neither geared nor prepared to design and implement what ultimately constituted a corporate IT system for the Secretariat. It is pertinent to underline that the technical aspect of document-sharing and collaborative platforms is only one part of such an IT project. Other key aspects are information management and the governance framework that are to be introduced in this regard.

The evaluation, therefore, concludes that the C2P was outside of the scope of the CCP and should not have been mandated to it for design and implementation.

Effectiveness: The C2P project was a top-down programme. The discussions and documents relating to this project suggest that it was directly driven by the Office of the Commonwealth Secretary-General. That the Office of the Secretary-General identifies and champions a vision that it considers to be of strategic importance to the Secretariat is laudable.

Nonetheless, the identification of the CCP as the locum of responsibility for the C2P and the securing of a CHOGM mandate in this regard was, in the opinion of this evaluation, not the correct decision. This evaluation unequivocally underlines that the locum of responsibility for an internal IT solution for the Secretariat should have rested with the Secretariat's IT function.

This evaluation considers the feasibility study carried out by the external consultants to be somewhat limiting with regard to the depth of the business and technical assessment carried out. One would have expected that a feasibility study would have carried out a business assessment with regard to adopting an off-the-shelf product as against the customisation of a product, the adoption of a proprietary solution as against an open-source solution, and a market assessment thereof with regard to maturity, strengths, cautions, service, overall viability, pricing, vision and roadmap, inter-operability and standards, customer experience etc.

However, the feasibility study was instead extremely high level, setting out basic business, technical and architecture requirements. The feasibility study was limiting, at best, in terms of setting out considerations with regard to a way forward on the C2P project.

Efficiency: The conventional wisdom is that open-source solutions are likely to provide better total cost of ownership over proprietary solutions. There is no doubt that open-source solutions do reduce cost. This, however, is not always the case. The decision to opt for an open-source solution should only be based on a specific understanding of how such a solution compares with established proprietary solutions vis-à-vis the business function or process that is being addressed. As stated above, the fact that the feasibility study did not carry out such an assessment was a key limitation.

Be that as it may, a project cost of £3.25 million for a document-sharing and collaborative platform that is both internet and mobile technology interfacing should, in itself, have raised alarm bells within the Steering Committee. Independent research, such a Gartner's Magic Quadrant and independent White Papers are readily available at no cost over the internet. A cursory review of such literature would have immediately shown that something was significantly wrong in the manner in which the C2P project was being scoped.

The document-sharing and collaborative platform market in 2009 was considerably mature. A high-level assessment of proprietary solutions in this regard would have shown that an off-the-shelf solution could have been procured at a fraction of the estimated £3.25 million. Yet, nowhere is there evidence that the cost estimate of £3.5 million was challenged. It is difficult to understand where this figure came from and why a market assessment was not carried out.

Impact: The C2P project was a failure. At least £543,000 was invested in the C2P project before a decision to abort was taken. Research suggests that 20 per cent of IT projects fail, and up to fifty per cent have a cost overrun, time overrun or do not meet requirements, with only a third that could be described as good projects.[191] Research clearly suggests that one of the primary reasons why IT projects fail is the absence of a strong project management framework that allows for the early identification of risk and its management. The absence of a robust project management governance framework for projects financed under the CCP, as shown earlier in this report, contributed in no small way to the failure of the C2P.

This evaluation could not uncover the trail of basic project management documentation relating to this project – for example, a project initiation document, scope and change management, stakeholder management and engagement plan, a quality management plan and register, a risk management plan and register, or an issues management plan and register etc.

Discussions with members of the Secretariat to the SC stated that the C2P had partial success, as the selection of the Huddle off-the-shelf platform was based on work carried out by the C2P team with regard to a user requirements study, organisational priorities, cross-team working and statistical data to inform the stages

of development.[192] This evaluation unequivocally disagrees with this conclusion. An investment which resulted in a write-off of £543,000 cannot be partially justified on the basis that it contributed to the success of the new platform that is replacing the one being written-off.

Sustainability: The fact that the C2P was aborted shows that the project never progressed to a stage where its sustainability could be determined. The financial license, maintenance and support, and hosting costs of the replacement platform, Huddle, on the other hand show that the proprietary application procured was sustainable.

b   Scoping mission with regard to Swaziland Commission for Communications193

The Government of Swaziland, through the Director of Communications within the then Ministry for Telecommunications and Information Technology (MTIT), approached the Secretariat for assistance in the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector.[194] GIDD forwarded the request to the SC to assess whether this request qualified for financing under the CCP and to determine the extent of the assistance to be provided, if at all. The SC agreed to finance a scoping exercise, which exercise was carried out by COMNET-IT. The ToR for this initiative were:

- meeting with relevant ministers and government officials to draw out and validate objectives for sector liberalisation and regulation;

- establishing contact with incumbent service providers to secure information on the extant licensing environment, turnover, service offerings and costs, investment levels, state of infrastructure, subscriptions, quality of services, technical capacity and accessibility;

- establishing capacity building requirements to establish a national regulatory agency;

- looking at national radio spectrum entitlement and utilisation of existing capacity;

- reviewing the broader environmental context to determine whether the conditions were conducive to sector liberalisation and investment; and

- assessing the country's skill base in regulatory disciplines – economics, engineering, law, accounting and public policy.

Additionally, the project was to explore the following areas:

- the present situation – government, sector, conditions, capacity, economic investment;

- issues and impediments that needed to be addressed as a pre-condition to embark on the road to liberalisation and the options for dealing with these;

- resources – people, organisation and money – which would be required to achieve an effective regulatory body;

- options for sourcing expertise and funds to enable successful implementation;

- critical success factors; and

- provision of an outline project plan for a way forward.

COMNET-IT, as a result of financing the scoping mission under the CCF presented to MTIT a comprehensive report on 9 October 2009 setting out its findings and recommendations. The recommendations were wide ranging and included, but were not limited to: sector liberalisation; service provision; developing capacity; relevant funding; national ICT strategy; and universal access/universal service. The report also identified critical success factors, which included, but were not limited to: top-level endorsement; independence of the commission; allocation of resources; and mentoring assistance.

The present evaluation assesses this project as follows:

Relevance: One of the five focus areas of the CCP was building policy and regulatory capacity. Experience in both developed and developing countries shows that an open telecommunications sector is a key enabler for the ICT sector to flourish. This has also been Africa's experience. Telecommunications in Africa became far more dynamic as a result of liberalisation. Policy and legal frameworks support the development of a competitive ICT market in the country, based on principles of open markets and fair competition.

At the time the scoping mission was carried out, Swaziland had one of the few remaining monopolistic telecommunications sectors on the continent. Issues of market structure, absence of private operators, regulatory and service provisions, fused within the incumbent government-owned monopoly regulations, limited greater affordable access for individuals and enterprises to internet and mobile computing services.

The relationship between the lowering of the price of telecommunications, as well as the increase in accessibility to the electronic world, with the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector is well documented. Indeed, the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector, wherever it has been well implemented, has resulted in competition in every aspect of the telecommunications sector, leading to a remarkable range of service innovations, tumbling of service costs and increases in penetration levels for fixed, mobile and broadband telecoms.

Thus, the importance of the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector, with regard to addressing the digital divide in Swaziland, was of significant importance and relevance.

Effectiveness: The project assistance to Swaziland with regard to the liberalisation of the telecommunications exercise came to an end once COMNET-IT presented its scoping report. This, however, was the start of a relationship between COMNET-IT and the Government of Swaziland with regard to the preparation of the regulatory framework underpinning the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector, as well as in undertaking capacity building with regard to the newly set up Swaziland Communications Commission.

Between late 2009 and 2013, COMNET-IT – under specific direct contractual arrangements with MTIT and the newly set up Swaziland Communications Commission – undertook a number of other important initiatives. These included assistance in the:

i.   drafting of the Electronic Communications bill, which was subsequently enacted;

ii.   drafting of the Swaziland Communications Commission bill, which was subsequently enacted;

iii.   identification of issues acting as an impediment to the actual realisation of a liberalised telecommunications sector following the enactment of the above legislation;

iv.   undertaking of knowledge sharing to the board of commissioners of the newly set up Swaziland Communications Commission vis-à-vis telecommunications, broadcasting and postal services in general, the enacted legislation, best practices etc.;

v.   undertaking of an organisational design and development framework for the Swaziland Communications Commission;

vi.   drafting a national spectrum strategy for Swaziland; and

vii.   drafting of a national strategy for the liberalisation process with regard to the telecommunications, broadcasting and postal sectors, together with the design of appropriate policies for consultation and the government's eventual approval.

It is pertinent to underline, that item (vi) above was not completed by COMNET-IT, as it concluded that it would not be correct to undertake such a strategy given that the required strategic direction was unresolved with regards to important issues. These included issues such as embedding in the Electronic Communications Act exclusivity with regard to the incumbent operator to establish, construct, maintain, and operate the national telecommunications backbone infrastructure; the joint venture between the mobile operator, MTN, and the incumbent operator; etc.

Efficiency: The scoping exercise was carried out at a cost of £8,711. It is the opinion of this evaluation that this project provided excellent value for money. During the field audit, discussions were carried out with the Director of Communications at the MTIT, and it was stated that one of the reasons why the Government of Swaziland entered into a strategic relationship with COMNET-IT was because of the value it provided to MTIT during the articulation of the scoping exercise. Here, the effort invested by COMNET-IT was of excellent quality and was of a breadth and depth that were far greater than the value of the grant financed under the CCP for the project.[195]

Impact: In discussions with MTIT, the Director of Communications stated that the most pervasive impact of the project financed under the CCP was that it introduced the Government of Swaziland to COMNET-IT. The director underlined that COMNET-IT was the most appropriate partner with whom it could have been twinned, given that the consultants assigned to the project had exceptional experience in the communications sector – not only vis-à-vis best practices in the EU and other member states, but also given the fact that they had successfully implemented such a complex reform in a small state.[196]

It was further emphasised that the recommendations presented where not conceptual, but rather solutions that were tried and tested and, thus, implementable once tailored to take into account the specific characteristics of Swaziland. It was also stated that the attachment of an expert to the COMNET-IT team from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) would have shortened the learning curve for COMNET-IT vis-à-vis the specificities of the Swaziland polity.[197]

That MTIT gave so much credence to the relevance of the advice it received from COMNET-IT is highlighted in that when the Swaziland Communications Commission departed from the organisational design framework proposed for it by COMNET-IT, it placed a hold on all recruitment.

Sustainability: The dissolution of COMNET-IT was seen to be a negative development vis-à-vis the continued work that needs to be carried out on the liberalisation of the communications sector in Swaziland.

c   **Commonwealth Cybercrime Initiative[198]**

In 2011, COMNET-IT, in its capacity as chair of the CIGF, instigated the formulation of the Commonwealth Cybercrime Initiative (CCI) in response to the increasing importance of cyber security in the face of the internet's exponential growth. The CCI was designed to assist developing countries in member states with regard to:[199]

a.   Supportive policy frameworks and harmonisation of legislation (model law and global conventions on cybercrime). This included: the undertaking of awareness programmes directed at different stakeholders, including parliamentarians and legislators, police and prosecutors, the judiciary, policy-makers etc.; putting in place the necessary complementary elements to support the assessment, preparation, adoption and implementation of cybercrime legislation through discussion with policy-makers and regulators; carrying out assessments and gap analyses of the status of legislation and law enforcement capacities; and undertaking technical assistance and mentoring with regard to legislative drafting.

b.   Technical assistance, mentoring and capacity building following the enactment of cybercrime legislation vis-à-vis the drafting of secondary legislation on matters such as evidence collection, investigative powers, prosecutorial services, procedures for investigative agencies, inter- and intra-private sector and technical co-operation, including the setting up of a Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT).

c.   Technical assistance, mentoring and capacity building with regard to the preparation for ratification and training for readiness for international co-operation within the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime; requests for accession/ratification (including reservations/declarations); liaising with the Council of Europe; and assisting regulators and law enforcement to obtain, install and utilise appropriate tools for the operational enablement of investigations, including computer forensics laboratories, infrastructure for monitoring, surveillance, interception and preservation of computer data, traffic data and intelligence with respect to cybercrime and cyber security.

d.   Training and mentoring, including 'train the trainers' programmes, civil society awareness raising and the engagement of civil society organisations for empowerment of individuals in cyber security; and exchange programmes for the sharing of best practices.

Following positive signals with regard to the CCI that emerged from the Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting in July 2011, the Secretariat agreed to place the CCI on the agenda of the 2011 CHOGM meeting. The CCI was endorsed by CHOGM and the CHOGM communiqué stated that:

'maintaining their commitment to a stable and secure national and international environment, as a foundation for sustainable growth and resilience for Commonwealth countries and the broader international community … Heads committed to improve international security… (7i) by improving legislation and capacity in tackling cybercrime and other cyber space security threats, including through the Commonwealth Internet Governance Forum's Cyber Crime Initiative.' [200]

A governance structure for the project was set-up, which consisted of an Executive Management Group, with COMNET-IT acting as the Secretariat for the initiative. A start-up fund of £200,000 was set-up with equal contributions from the governments of Malta and the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth Secretariat.[201] In early 2013, COMNET-IT submitted a proposal for the CCP to provide a grant of £30,000 to the CCI on the basis that the CCP was the 'genesis of the CIGF, which in turn spawned' the CCI.[202] The request for financing submitted to the CCP was directed to contribute to the cost of relevant scoping missions carried out in small countries or island states. The objectives of the scoping missions were:

- translating requests for assistance into specific terms of reference as a prelude to an in-country project;

- conducting analysis of legislation to establish the extent of effort required to bring it in line with essential cybercrime provisions;

- conducting analysis of current operational capacity;

- reviewing policies, strategies, plans or related documentation;

- selecting, planning and conducting meetings with in-country stakeholders for validating and assessing the scope of assistance being sought;

- assisting in the setting up of an oversight structure for cybercrime-related matters, both for the scoping mission and subsequent stages;

- drafting a report/gap analysis to be submitted to the requesting state, with recommendations on a way forward; and

- identifying fast-track initiatives that could be launched in parallel with the formulation of a national strategy.

The deliverables set were:

- allocating the funds consistent with the geographic spread of the Commonwealth, but confining these to small countries or island states;

- considering the CTO as the preferred option for leading or featuring in these missions where possible;

- furnishing the SC of the CCP with copies of reports of each project supported through this contribution;

- contributing to finance projects at early stages so as to enhance prospects of securing financing for subsequent stages; and

- an accounting to the SC on how funds were spent and benefits derived.

The CCI undertook a number of initiatives. Table 3.17 presents a select number of such initiatives.

The present evaluation assesses this project as follows:

Relevance: It is recognised that digital divide and information security have inevitable mutual effects upon each other. The International Centre for Scientific Culture (ICSC), as far back as 2005, concluded that countries at the wrong end of the digital divide face particular security vulnerabilities, which need to be addressed.[204] Research in 2004 suggested that the current model of the internet was a source of digital divide as it created inequalities in access of online services.

Viruses, spyware, cookies, bugs of nuisance operation, compatibility issues between different software systems, conflicts between devices, and interoperability issues between services are some of the many issues and difficulties that may be faced when accessing services online. If these complications are insurmountable for developing countries, given the level of expertise and technologies required, then such issues result in a significant internet access barrier to less technical people and become one of the limiting challenges to the creation of an information society and economy.[205]

Table 3.17: Projects carried out under the Commonwealth Cybercrime Initiative[203]

Ghana	The projected included the: (i) undertaking of university collaboration with two Ghanaian institutions; (ii) undertaking of a resource and training needs analysis for the criminal justice system; (iii) undertaking of a public awareness campaign on internet safety for the general public; and (vi) design of a framework for online child protection.
Eastern Africa Regional Approach led by the Government of Uganda	The project, carried out in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), focussed on improving mutual legal assistance with regard to public awareness campaigns; establishing a regional CERT; establishing a Centre of Excellence; and mobile money.
Uganda	The projected included the: (i) development of awareness across all stakeholders; (ii) implementation of an appropriate network architecture and standards; (iii) review and development of cyber legislation; (iv) the undertaking of resource and training needs analysis for the criminal justice system; and (v) review of the national strategy on information security.
Kenya	The projected included the: (i) development of a cyber-security strategy, policy and legislation; (ii) the undertaking of resource and training needs analysis for the criminal justice system; (iii) the design of a framework for online child protection; and (iv) the establishment of university partnerships.
Trinidad and Tobago	The projected included the: (i) development of awareness across all stakeholders; (ii) review and development of cyber legislation; (iii) undertaking of resource and training needs analysis for the design of a national online child protection framework; and (vi) presenting advice with regard to the setting up of a cyber-security agency.

The narrowing of the digital divide through the increased use of access, affordability and use of, say, smart technology, paradoxically, results in an increase in cyber-threats, theft of information, online fraud, child abuse etc. There is, therefore, a parallel between the state of maturity for an information society and economy and its vulnerability of cybercrime.

Too often, strategy and implementation work on bridging the digital divide tend to focus on important measures such as affordability, accessibility, connectivity etc. and less on the digital and information literacy process, which is a major factor when using ICTs for development, and risks producing a 'technology for development' solution which is not the same as 'technology for human development'.

The evaluation concludes that the CCP was forwarding looking when it positively decided to finance the setting up of the Commonwealth Internet Governance Forum (CIGF), which led to the setting up of the CCI and thereafter contributing to the CCI itself. This is because the digital divide is concerned not only with technological issues and materials, but also with the capabilities of those who use them. Indeed the primary focus of the CCI, together within the promulgation of resources such as cyber-legislative models, threats assessments etc., was addressing the direct relationship between human development and the digital divide through skills-based training across different stakeholders on matters relating to cybercrime – ranging from the judiciary and law enforcement agencies to the general public.

Effectiveness: The CCI is a unique and innovative multiple stakeholder partnership that seeks to leverage the expertise of its partners by securing their buy-in into a collective needs assessment process. This is the underpinning kernel of the CCI, where it 'acts as a catalyst and broker working with the broad alliance of partners, each partner having a unique contribution to make'.[206]

The strength of the CCI's convening power is best demonstrated by the fact that the international partners involved in the CCI continues to grow – to approximately 40 international organisations and member states. Indeed, the list of partners

underlines the CCI's potential including but not limited to: the Anti-Phishing Working Group (APWG), Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU), Centre for Internet Safety at the University of Canberra (CIS), Children's Charities' Coalition on Internet Safety (CHIS), Commonwealth Business Council (CBC), Commonwealth Secretariat, CTO, COMNET, Council of Europe, Cyber Ethics Cyprus, DiploFoundation, European NGO Alliance for Child Safety Online (eNACSO), Global Prosecutors' e-Crime Network (GPEN), Institute for Security Studies, South Africa (ISS), International Center for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC), TU, ICANN, Internet Watch Foundation (IWF), Interpol, Kenya Communications Commission, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) and UNODC.[207]

The list of international partners that have joined the Operations Consortium to the CCI has also continued to grow: the UK Department for International Development, the World Bank, the African Union Commission, the Organisation for American States, the World Economic Forum, Microsoft and Vodafone.[208]

The CCI operates as a brokering platform that brings together member states or Commonwealth regions with strategic partners to undertake cybercrime-related projects. Requests for assistance are made to the Secretariat and considered by the CCI's Cybercrime Executive Management Committee (CEMC), composed principally of representatives of governments, GIDD and Rule of Law Division of the Secretariat and a representative from the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA)/National Crime Agency (NCA).

The committee is responsible for the overall policy of the CCI and prioritises requests for assistance. If following a preliminary study the CCI decided to act on a request, it will send a team of experts to member states concerned to conduct a Gap Analysis and Needs Assessment, using a checklist developed by the CCI, and undertake a Needs Assessment Report. In a few cases, such assessments have been conducted by a CCI partner agency (or a group of such agencies) or a team of individual experts, with their expenses covered by a project fund established within the CCI and in part supported by a CCP financial grant.

Once agreed upon by requesting member states, the Needs Assessment Report is shared with the CCI's Operations Consortium of agencies, organisations and individual experts willing to contribute to its work. This meets physically about twice a year, but information is also exchanged through its virtual network. The Operations Consortium may identify a range of different types of assistance needed by the member states visited – which is carried out in close consultation with that member state's government.

Many aspects of the assistance identified and agreed with the government fall within the mandate and expertise of a CCI partner, and will be undertaken by the partners concerned under their usual procedures in terms of funding and responsibility. Otherwise the CCI and its partners seek to assist in identifying funding and/or expertise from elsewhere. The CCI also assists the requesting state in co-ordinating the various pieces of work to ensure an effective outcome. It is pertinent to underline that the representatives of the newly set up cybercrime agency within the Government of Trinidad and Tobago informed the evaluation that the consultants and implementation partners assigned by the CCI to work with the government on the initiatives mentioned earlier were of 'excellent' quality and professional, and that the work carried out by these partners with the government rendered significant value.

The effectiveness of the CCI is further underlined by the fact that the initiative – apart from the initial start-up fund and the financial grant award under the CCP – has been successful in obtaining direct financing from member states. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in the United Kingdom and the Government of New Zealand, for example, have provided significant contributions to the CCI's project fund.

Efficiency: The CCI responded to requests from Ghana, Kenya, Maldives, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uganda, together with expressions of interest from a number of other Commonwealth countries. Indeed, the Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting (CLMM) in Botswana in May 2014 recognised that the work carried out by the CCI was a 'strong record for a new initiative'. [209]

Figure 3.6: Project framework applied by the Cybercrime Initiative
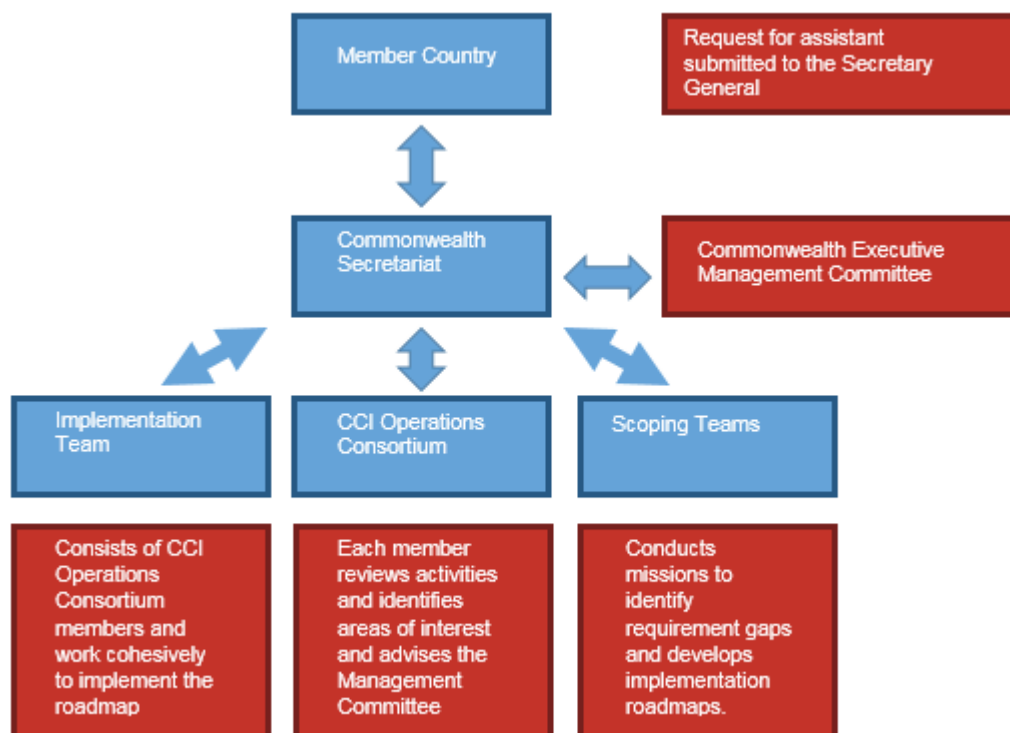
The financial grant of £30,000 provided under the CCP resulted in perhaps one of the more significant value-added impacts stemming from the programme.

Impact: Of importance is the fact that the 2013 CHOGM mandated that: 'Heads noted the Commonwealth Cybercrime Initiative and the recent endorsement of its methodology by senior officials of Commonwealth Law Ministries in September 2013 and called for the provision of assistance to developing countries on their cybercrime issues'.[210] The law ministers stated that while they had 'not previously had an opportunity to consider the work of the CCI ... the Group recommends that Law Ministers should follow the lead of CHOGM in endorsing the Initiative and should ensure that their colleagues in government are aware of it and should, as appropriate, facilitate its work'.[211]

The law ministers underline that the: 'CCI is thus an innovative umbrella-type construct, comprising a consortium of partners including states, organisations, networks, NGOs and individuals who are able to offer their expertise and capacity to develop projects to assist jurisdictions within the Commonwealth'.[212] It added that it: 'finds

the innovative methodology adopted by the CCI to be one likely to secure co-ordinated and comprehensive assistance to a Commonwealth member state. It should help avoid the duplication of effort sometimes found, with different agencies responding to requests by different departments of the same government'.[213]

The communiqué issued by the law ministers: 'noted that the CCI governance structure had been strengthened, it endorsed the CCI methodology and agreed that member states should support it and engaged with it' and 'recognised that the Commonwealth was leading the way in developing mechanisms to combat cybercrime'.[214]

The group also praised the quality of COMNET-IT's work as showing: 'both energy and creativity'.[215]

Sustainability: The law ministers concluded that 'it became clear that the CCI's governance structure was preventing the participation of some prospective partners and that funding for administration as opposed to project work would not be forthcoming once the initial phase was over ...[hence] the management of the CCI should pass from COMNET-IT to the Commonwealth Secretariat itself'.[216]

Furthermore, the group underlined that, given that the Secretariat was already involved in cybercrime issues such as money-laundering and terrorism, the LCAD was more of a natural home for the CCI, which will benefit from the Secretariat's established financial management and procurement procedures.[217]

Subsequent to this, steps were taken to consolidate the CCI within the Rule of Law department within the LCAD of the Secretariat.

d   Digital Doorway project – Lesotho[218]

The Digital Doorway was a joint pilot initiative carried out between the Council for Scientific Industrial Research (CSIR) and Department of Science and Technology (DST) in South Africa, to use the 'Hole In The Wall' initiative (discussed previously) to investigate the value of unassisted learning in a South African rural context.

The aim of the Digital Doorway project was to better understand the issues behind using technology for the promotion of computer and information literacy in South Africa, specifically in the context of remote, unsupervised kiosks in impoverished areas of the country, where target users had little or no previous exposure to computers. The end goal of the Digital Doorway was to provide a wide range of services, including ICT access to school and out-of-school services, to communities such as internet/e-mail, online counselling on relevant topics (HIV/AIDS), distance learning, ICT literacy training and education support, youth entrepreneurship training, local government policies and strategies, tourism development and related information dissemination etc. The initial research objectives of the Digital Doorway project in South Africa were to:[219]

- test the viability of unassisted learning as an alternative mechanism for attaining large-scale computer literacy in South Africa;

- determine the efficiency of the concept as a mechanism to enable computer literacy, as well as information and service delivery in South Africa;

- determine whether potential users in a rural community in South Africa would use a PC-based outdoor kiosk without any instruction (unassisted learning);

- determine whether a PC-based kiosk could operate without supervision in an outdoor location in South Africa; and

- provide a platform for the evaluation of appropriate technology solutions and open-source applications.

Additionally the high-level objectives of the project were to:[220]

- Narrow the 'digital divide'

- Provide technology for social inclusion

- Prepare users, both young and old, for the information society

- Expose users in previously disadvantaged areas to computer technology

- Provide meaningful software and content to underprivileged communities

As at 2015, more than 250 Digital Doorway kiosks had been implemented in South Africa.

As shown earlier in this document, the Digital Doorway project was ranked second by the COMNET-IT evaluation from a total of 178 which responded to the call for applications issued in late 2006. The project submission for the Digital Doorways project was presented by CSIR. CSIR considered the financing to be sufficient to carry out a pilot for 12 months in Lesotho given that – due to the geographical proximity to South Africa – a Lesotho kiosk installation would benefit from the research, maintenance and support structures in place. The Motataisi Foundation in Lesotho was subsequently selected to be the implementation partner.

The Lesotho Digital Doorway project under the CCP was divided over three phases. The ToR of the first phase were:

- a Community Needs Assessment to be undertaken with the University of Lesotho, which would inform the choice of the Digital Doorway content; and

- the identification of a suitable location for the Digital Doorway kiosk.

The second phase consisted of the following:

- The delivery of basic training with regard to accessing content.

- The creation of user content, with the goal of improving computer literacy in remote rural areas and which would support ICT-related entrepreneurial activities. Content was to include Open Office Suite, educational games and programmes, scientific software, 10,000 books from Project Gutenberg, Wikipedia and various applications for adults and children.

- Ensuring that the Digital Doorway would be used as a gateway through which community members could capture their experiences of ICT, suggestions on improvements of intervention and thoughts regarding potential income-generating activities, which ICT could foster in the community.

The third phase consisted of the articulation of a project sustainability action plan. The plan would target:

- A SWOT analysis of fundraising capabilities.

- Identification of realistic targets.

- Identification of resources, budgeting and costing.

- Identification of how other funding sources would be leveraged. This would include integration into other development programmes such as the UN/British government initiative in Lesotho that focuses on e-government and community access, as well as showing how ICT-related entrepreneurial activities would be supported.

This evaluation assesses this project as follows:

Relevance: The project entailed the provision of ICT access to people in rural and disadvantaged areas through a multiterminal multimedia computer system, which provided access to various educational applications and information. The objectives of the project were to:[221]

- provide a free-standing computer terminal that allowed access to members of the community, that was cost-effective and required low maintenance;

- initiate the creation of a sustainable ICT programme orientated around the design, development and deployment

of new telecommunications, which would be used to support ICT-related entrepreneurial activities;

- introduce the Digital Doorway as a model in building support networks and online information resources, which would assist communities to improve their capabilities and expand their knowledge;

- develop the basic ICT skills required for online communication and introduce initiatives that would contribute to the development of business and management skills of people in the communities;

- expand the coverage of training and educational establishments, notably literacy programmes, as well as components of programmes that enhance the potential and status of illiterate people; and

- deliver basic information on 'how to' and 'what is', in sectors such as agriculture, tourism, health, local government and education.

The Digital Doorway kiosk – which allowed for three persons to have separate sessions underway – was implemented in the Ha Tsolo community. The characteristics of the Ha Tsolo community are shown in Table 3.18.

Effectiveness: In implementing the project, CSIR introduced no framework that allowed for the capturing of empirical data to determine the effectiveness of the project. Empirical research carried out in South Africa suggests a number of outcomes as a result of the Digital Doorway project implementation. These are shown in the Table 3.19.

The Digital Doorway in the Ha Tsolo community was placed in a shed in the garden of the Lesotho Programme Coordinator, which was sited close to a primary school. The research findings (Table 3.19) were consistent with the qualitative statements that were expressed by parents, NGOs, children and the Motataisi Foundation representative to the evaluation during a field audit visit.[223] The following distinct observations were also made:

- Parents initially perceived the kiosk to be a threat, but subsequently embraced it, particularly because they knew that their children were now clustered around it daily rather than running around in the streets.

Table 3.18: Characteristics of Ha Tsolo community, where the Digital Doorway kiosk was implemented[222]

Composition	The majority of the families were run by women, who were single, had left their husbands in rural homes, or were widows.
	Almost half of the children were orphans or had one parent surviving.
	A minority worked mostly in the textile industry, while the rest were self-employed as hawkers at the factory sites and in the city.
	Peri-urban environment.
IT knowledge	Everybody had knowledge of a telephone and a cell phone, but most did not possess one.
	A few of the community members had never used a computer, but most were aware of them.
	All members of the community knew about television, but few actually owned one.
Social status	The lowest level of education was Standard 7 (seven years of primary education).
	Members were poor to very poor.
	Electricity was only recently introduced covering most of the community.
	Accommodation was mostly on a rental basis, with few privately owned homes.
	Water was sourced from communal taps scattered throughout the community.

- Youths from other villages conglomerated around the kiosk once they became aware of it. This resulted in fist fights with the children from the Ha Tsolo community, as they saw such village neighbours as usurping 'their' kiosk.

Efficiency: CSIR informed the evaluation that the project in Lesotho only made financial sense because of the proximity of the kiosk installation to the CSIR, as well as to other rural installations in South Africa. CSIR underlined that it would otherwise not have been in a position to maintain the kiosk, which in itself constituted an expensive capital outlay.

CSIR informed the evaluation that the major issues related to the Digital Doorway project – and these were not specific to the Lesotho project only – were maintenance and support. Given that the kiosks, to a large extent, were not connected to the internet, this meant that the project had a significant overhead with regard to updating content, as well as carrying out of software and hardware maintenance and support through remote trouble shooting.

The CSIR sought to counter the issue of maintenance and support in South Africa by training appropriate persons within the school or community where the kiosk was located.

Impact: Discussions with the project co-ordinator, NGOs, parents and children clearly show that the implementation of the kiosk in the Ha Tsolo community had a positive impact. Although no empirical data was available, it was stated that performance in school had improved following the implementation of the kiosk within the community. One specific example mentioned was how, through the use of the kiosk, an early school leaver built a radio station from scavenged hardware.

It is the considered view of this evaluation that the end results expected from the project by CSIR and the Motataisi Foundation did not converge. To the CSIR, the project was a continuation of the pilot it was carrying out across South Africa, with a particular emphasis on the testing of the kiosk's specifications vis-à-vis robustness, weather impacts, navigation etc. within the Lesotho context. While securing sustainability was one of the project's deliverables, the success or failure to

Table 3.19 Research results on the Digital Doorways implementation in South Africa[224]

Cwili site	Once installed, the kiosk was used immediately.
	The kiosk was used almost continuously from as early as 04.15 hrs. to around midnight and even later.
	Group size varied: normally from 4 to 12.
	There was intense vocal activity, music and constant jostling for position.
	Peer learning was evidenced, as township children taught each other basic computer functions, including the ability to drag icons, re-arrange windows, open applications and access the internet (which was available for a limited period).
	The relevant touch pad computer skills were rapidly acquired by the 7–16 age groups.
	The majority of users during daylight hours were school children. Young adults (20–30 years) tended to use the computer very early in the morning and in the evening.
Mamelodi site	On average, between 15 and 30 users accessed the kiosk per day.
	Users were predominantly young adults and boys seemed the most interested.
	The terminal was housed inside a small room, with a single entrance from the street, adjacent to the municipal offices.
	Typically, there were one to three users at any one time, although on occasion there were as many as eight users at the same time.

achieve this had no significant impact on the CSIR, given that the Lesotho implementation was part of a far larger research project.

On the other hand, the Motataisi Foundation's end objective was to permanently establish the Doorway in the Ta Tsolo community, and thereafter branch this out in other communities within Lesotho. Although CSIR left the kiosk in the Ta Tsolo community, the fact that this was no longer supported eventually resulted in the demise of the kiosk. The impact on the community, thus, was the temporary rising of expectations of how such technology actually improved the quality of life for children and youths in peri urban areas, which expectations could no longer be met. The 'demise' of the kiosk left a significant void in the Ta Tsolo community, when the project was terminated once the grant was exhausted. The South Africa Media Lines NGO described the Digital Doorway project was like 'placing a sweet in a child's mouth and then removing it'.

Sustainability: The Digital Doorway project as piloted across South Africa did not have a viable financial model, due to the extensive overheads required for maintenance and support. CSIR, in fact, informed the evaluation that the programme was being wound down – with communities and/or schools being given the opportunity to retain the kiosk and thereafter assuming responsibility for its support.

It is pertinent to underline that CSIR, with the assistance of the Motataisi Foundation, draw up a sustainability action plan. Indeed, it is the only sustainability plan that this evaluation has actually come across. The sustainability action plan was well thought out and presented. The Motataisi Foundation was identified as the 'local champion' for the implementation of this sustainability plan. Although interest was expressed by the Ministry for Education, donor organisations and private sector entities, this did not translate in the financial support necessary to keep the Ta Tsolo implementation alive – let alone to branch it out into other communities.

e   Commonwealth Multipurpose Telecentre initiative[225]

The Commonwealth Technology Organisation (CTO), together with the Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, presented a project proposal for the setting up of a telecentre to a community that does not have access to ICT facility. CTO, the project sponsor, had considerable experience in implementing such an initiative following its work in both Sri Lanka

and Sierra Leone. CTO, together with local partners, established three community-based telecentres in Sri Lanka following the tsunami on the 26th of December 2004 and these were still operational at the time the request for proposals was submitted. In addition, CTO, together with ITU and local stakeholders, installed five telecentres in Sierra Leone to bring about ICT training among populated rural communities. The objectives set for the project were:

- establishing a set of criteria for a suitable location selection within Trinidad and Tobago, and obtaining a secure and suitable premises together for the telecentre;

- conducting a detailed requirements assessment survey for the establishment of the centre involving other key stakeholders, as necessary;

- establishing a project implementation team among the key stakeholders, in order for the project to proceed, from donors, government, local institutions, academia, the private sector and the general public;

- carrying out a sensitisation workshop for stakeholders and refining the requirements specification;

- carrying out a need analysis and user requirement study at the local community;

- working with partners to develop a detailed business plan for the centre, identifying the contribution of each partner, resources and equipment required, and sustainability of the centre based on likely income and expenditure; this would include the development of a timeline for the centre implementation subject to its long-term viability;

- carrying out resource mobilisation, including equipping the centre and the training of key staff.

- developing a community-wide training programme, one person per household, to undergo basic ICT training; establishing a database of local community households; and providing internet services; and

- expanding the centre's services in terms of internet connectivity by extending the reach via a long-range Wi-Fi serving schools, health clinics, the police, other businesses and individuals in the vicinity of the centre.

The deliverables identified for the project were:

- producing a country report, including the location, partners, facilities etc.;

- producing an implementation business plan document, including identification of staffing, equipment and facilities to be provided etc. for the telecentre;

- executing the centre's business plan, together with local stakeholders, in establishing the facility;

- ensuring that the centre's leadership executes the community-wide ICT training and facility programme, as developed by the implementation team; and

- presenting a progress report after 6 months on the centre's operations and monitoring targets for the next 12 months.

The present evaluation assesses this project as follows:

Relevance: Community Multipurpose Telecentre facilities are implemented to assist local communities in learning, access to technology and access to work etc. Such centres are strategically located in rural and less-developed areas, which are under-served locations that lack basic ICT infrastructure, social services and online connectivity.

Additionally, in such localities, there are fewer physical government ministries and agencies within which to facilitate transactions, as well as limited access to adequate education and training facilities. The telecentre, therefore, acts as the 'broker' and/or 'human interface' between the people living in such localities and the internet, e-government etc.

The Community Multipurpose Telecentre model piloted in Penal, Trinidad and Tobago, in February 2014 was designed to provide the following free internet, ICT and ICT-enabled training, voice and video conferencing, and other ICT-dependent services – including:

- Cyber cafe facilities

- ICT training and conference room facilities

- E-learning, for example, through free online Microsoft learning resources

- E-government services (online and face-to-face via http://ttconnect.gov.tt)

- Access to free printing/faxing

- Access to the Wi-Fi lounge/patio with free internet access

Effectiveness: The Community Multipurpose Telecentre model piloted by means of a grant under the CCP has now been developed into an internet access and e-government intermediary delivery channel, which is branded as the 'Star.tt' initiative. A fifth centre was due to become operational in 2015.

In the design of the pilot centre, consultations were carried out in the local community to understand peoples' needs, upon which the services provided by the centre would be based. Research suggests that the existing centres enjoy a steady flow of more than 300 people on a monthly basis. Preliminary statistical reports indicated that the ages of visitors cover a broad spectrum of demographics, ranging from under 12 to over 65 years of age and that 47 per cent of visitors use Star.tt to conduct research for school-based assessments.[226]

Efficiency: The grant financed under the CCP was directed towards the capital investment required to set up the pilot centre. The Ministry of Science and Technology provided the premises and assumed responsibility for ongoing operational costs, including staff costs etc.

Impact: The pilot was successful. A total of 44 such centres were targeted for implementation by 2016. Additionally Star.tt was nominated for the World Summit on the Information Society Prize 2015 under Action line C3 – Access to information and knowledge.

Sustainability: The grant under the CCP was limited to the pilot project only. Following the assessment of the project, the government concluded that the Community Multipurpose Telecentres would expand Trinidad's internet connection capability, thereby resulting in: every citizen having the ability to have access to conduct business for a range of government services; fostering social cohesion and interaction to underserved groups such as the physically challenged, the elderly and at-risk youth; and opening doors to future entrepreneurs, innovators and leaders. The Trinidad and Tobago government, therefore, integrated Star.tt centres as a key intermediary channel within the national ICT plan as a vehicle to bridge the digital divide. Financing for the Star.tt centres is now mainstreamed within the national ICT budget.

Table 3.20 presents a high-level assessment of projects and initiatives financed under the CCP, with regard to their respective contributions to the five focus mandates of the CCP and the key evaluation criteria.

Table 3.20: Summary of evaluation of projects financed under the Commonwealth Connects Programme

Project name	Focus area	Evaluation criteria				
		Relevance	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Impact	Sustainability
Commonwealth Multipurpose Telecentre initiative	Regional networks, local content and knowledge	High	High	High	High	High
Digital Doorways	Modernising education and skills development	High	High	High	High	Negative
Commonwealth Cybercrime Initiative	Building policy and regulatory capacity	High	High	High	High	High
Scoping mission with regard to Swaziland Commission for Communications	Building policy and regulatory capacity	High	High	High	High	High
C2P	Regional networks, local content and knowledge	Negative	Negative	Negative	Negative	Negative
M-Governance Strategy and Toolkit	Building policy and regulatory capacity	High	High	High	High	High
Digital Connection Project	Modernising Education and skills development	High	Not known	Low	Not known	Negative
COLEN	Modernising education and skills development	High	High	High	Not known	Negative
COMARCI	Building policy and regulatory capacity	High	High	High	Not known	Negative
E-waste	Building policy and regulatory capacity	Negative	Negative	Low	Only recently initiated	
Small Business Training for Women in Cameroon Using Radio	Entrepreneurship or wealth creation and poverty reduction	Low	Not known	Not known	Not known	Negative
'Hole in the Wall'	Modernising education and skills development	High	High	Not known	Positive	Negative
ICT Factbook	Regional networks, local content and knowledge	High	High	Not known	Positive	Negative
RIVERS	Entrepreneurship or wealth creation and poverty reduction	High	High	Not known	Positive	Not known
Commonwealth Computer Navigator Certificate (CCNC)	Modernising education and skills development	High	High	Not known	Positive	Limited
JOAM Training of Trainers Workshop in support of Women Farm Entrepreneurs	Entrepreneurship or wealth creation and poverty reduction	High	High	Not known	Limited	Unknown
Rebuilding after the Tsunami: Using ICTS for Change	Regional networks, local content and knowledge	High	High	Not known	Limited	Unknown
Computers for Communities	Entrepreneurship or wealth creation and poverty reduction	Aborted				
Government of Belize – National ICT Strategy	Building policy and regulatory capacity	High	High	High	Partial	Partial
Virtual Career Guidance Centre	Entrepreneurship or wealth creation and poverty reduction	High	Not known	Not known	Not known	Partial

Project name	Focus area	Evaluation criteria				
Developing and maintaining a CC Champions Network Group	Internal core business function of the Steering Committee	High	Not known	Low	Duration of the CCP	Dissolved following winding down of the CCP
Establishing and maintaining an inventory of ICT wealth	Regional networks, local content and knowledge	High	Not known	Low	Duration of the CCP	Dissolved following winding down of the CCP
Conducting a needs assessment	Regional networks, local content and knowledge	High	High	High	Duration of the CCP	Duration of the CCP
Developing multifaceted partnerships	Internal core business function of the Steering Committee	High	Low	High	Low	Duration of the CCP
Creating a project management structure	Internal core business function of the Steering Committee	High	Negative	Negative	None	None
Promoting local access and connectivity – subsequently in 2011 contract renewed as the CIGF	Regional networks, local content and knowledge	High	High	High	Duration of the CCP	Dissolved following winding down of the CCP

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4. Conclusion

4.1 Lessons learned and conclusions

4.1.1 The vision resulting in the setting up of the Commonwealth Connects Programme and the Commonwealth's comparative advantage

The Commonwealth was correct at the time it took the decision to establish the issue of the digital divide as one of high importance, towards which it had to direct significant and sustained focus. The idea that the Commonwealth would establish a programme to act as a platform to ensure all of its member states shared knowledge, ICT assets, experiences etc. in order to negate the possibility of any of those members falling behind in the digital transformation made, and continues to make, eminent sense.

The comparative advantages identified by the Expert Group on Information Technology in 2000 were, and continue to be, real.

4.1.2 Clarity of mandate of the Commonwealth Connects Programme

Neither the *Commonwealth, ICTs and Development* report presented to the Malta 2005 CHOGM nor the *Malta Commonwealth Declaration on Networking for Development* made at that CHOGM explicitly stated or defined the mandate of the CCP. This important lacuna was not addressed during the design or at the launch of the programme by means of a framework that set out the vision, the strategic goals, general goals and objectives, high-level activities, and the outcomes and outputs that would define the strategic direction and orientation of the programme over the immediate, medium and long term.

This resulted in a lack of clarity in the mandate of the programme, which visibly restricted the operation and evolution of the programme.

A recommendation for a mandate to be endorsed by the CHOGM should only be considered 'in principle' if this is not supported by a robust strategic plan, a business and financial plan, a strong performance management framework, an implementation plan and a strong sustainability framework, if so necessary. The mandate should be subsequently triggered by the Board of Governors on the submission and approval of a strategic and operational framework covering the immediate, medium and long term.

4.1.3 Monitoring the implementation of the Commonwealth Connects Programme mandate

A relationship between a mandate such as the CCP (which is institutionally set apart from the Secretariat) and the Secretariat as the entity responsible for the monitoring of that mandate should, undoubtedly, exist. This relationship was primarily set through representatives of the Office of the Commonwealth Secretary-General sitting on the SC of the CCP. A number of the issues identified and discussed in this evaluation would have not occurred or would have been 'alerted' earlier if there had been a tighter relationship between the mandate implementer and the mandate oversight authority.

This evaluation is not directed towards the oversight and scrutiny of CHOGM mandates by the Secretariat – and the CCP mandate is only one of a number that are being implemented by the Secretariat. This, evaluation, however, clearly shows that there were serious deficiencies with regard to the programme management oversight of the CCP mandate. The continuous debate on what the CCP's mandate stood for, the lack of a chair for more than 12 months, the lack of a financial sustainability plan for the programme itself, and the absence of sustainability mechanisms for the individual projects financed under the programme all debilitated the effectiveness of the CCP.

The situation regarding the management of the issues discussed in this report stem directly from an absence of a strong programme management and oversight framework, one that was continuously monitored by the Secretariat and which would have allowed for immediate identification of issues as they arose and for a follow-up mechanism to assure timely resolution.

The evaluation concludes that the establishment of a tight relationship between the implementation of a CHOGM mandate such as the CCP and the

Secretariat is necessary. This report recommends that the Secretariat should assess the oversight mechanisms it has in place with regard to the management of CHOGM mandates to strengthen these as appropriate.

4.1.4 The institutional model of the Commonwealth Connects Programme

ICT for development is a critical policy issue and one that transcends many sectors. While the reasons behind establishing the locum of responsibility for the digital domain in a semi-independent special operating vehicle outside of the Secretariat is understood, this institutional model has not delivered. It has not worked for a number of reasons.

First, the continued sustainability of what is a critical policy issue was dependent on its ability to compete for contributions from member states and other pan-institutions. As contributions dried up, the CCP collapsed and, at the present, ICT for development is completely off the Secretariat's radar – as evidenced from the lack of reference to ICT for development in the current Strategic Plan.

Second, ICT for development is a mainstreamed policy issue and not an ad hoc one. ICT is central to economic, social and sustainable development. ICT for development is a key differentiator in sectors such as health, education, poverty, agriculture etc. to mention a few. The mainstreaming of ICT for development within the Secretariat would have, undoubtedly, resulted in more joined-up policy and programme design in this regard.

This failed to occur because the issue of ICT for development was placed in a vertical special operating agency with specific streams. These primarily, with limited exceptions, looked at the 'technological' aspects of ICT for development. Thus, the institutional model for the CCP not only failed to result in the mainstreaming of joined-up policies and programmes which would have integrated ICT for development as a policy instrument, but also squandered the financial contributions committed by member states on projects – most of which did not survive the demise of the programme.

A policy issue of significant importance such as ICT for development should be embedded and mainstreamed within the Secretariat.

4.1.5 Commonwealth Connects Programme's capacity to deliver

The decision to maintain administrative costs to a minimum by assigning GIDD as the Secretariat of the CCP, while in principle made sense from a cost point of view, was short sighted. An initiative such as the CCP requires a small but sustained critical mass to secure traction on matters such as: project co-ordination and monitoring; promoting the programme to member states, multilateral agencies, potential sponsors and partners; preparing discussion papers; formulating and implement funding and communication strategies; developing and nurturing networks; devising good practice guidelines; organising related events; planning SC meetings and appropriate follow-up; and maintaining a web portal, publications etc.

Once the decision was made to implement the CCP as a special operating vehicle, then the necessary full-time support capacity should have been assigned to it. The allocation of part-time resources, even at no cost, was a false economy. This ultimately compromised the CCP, as the momentum required to place it on a long-term sustainable basis was never achieved.

The decision to identify an existing Commonwealth agency, with COMNET-IT being selected (it could equally have been CTO) to provide the CCP with the necessary critical capacity – given that the institutional model for the CCP was that of an entity operating outside of the Secretariat – made sense. Indeed, this decision should have been taken at the outset. The fact that it was not resulted in lost time with regard to placing the CCP on a long-term sustainable basis.

4.1.6 Financing the Commonwealth Connects Programme

In the discussion on the financing of the CCP following the 2011 CHOGM, the Office of the Commonwealth Secretary-General was correct in stating that the special fund and SC were institutionally set up as a special operating vehicle and hence there could be no expectation of the Secretariat providing a financing stream. The Office of the Commonwealth Secretary-General, however, was incorrect in bringing its influence to bear on the SC to stop it from approaching member states to contribute to the programme,

as such an approach 'could cause confusion and erode the Secretariat's ability to attract further funds'.

The SC under the Malta Declaration and its CHOGM mandate had the authority to approach member states for such contributions. By refuting any financing from the Secretariat (correctly) and by restraining approaches to member states for contributions (incorrectly), the Office of the Commonwealth Secretary-General in essence doomed the CCP to closure on the exhaustion of its Special Fund.

It is, nevertheless, difficult to understand the hesitancy adopted by the SC of the CCP with regard to adopting structured mechanisms at the very start of its lifecycle to raise financing to secure its long-term sustainability. Twice – in June 2006 (2nd Meeting of the SC) and in November 2007 (9th Meeting of the SC) – the SC 'fudged' on adopting strategies presented by its Secretariat.

Given the institutional financing of the programme, there is no doubt that one of the approaches the SC should have embarked upon was the design and implementation of a long-term fundraising strategy. The fact that it did not undermined the future sustainability of the CCP.

4.1.7 The Steering Committee of the Commonwealth Connects Programme

The constitution of Steering Committee created serious flaws that compromised the smooth operation of the programme.

First, the decision taken by the Office of the Commonwealth Secretary-General to rotate the chair of the CCP had an untoward negative consequence. For over a year, between 2007 and 2009, the CCP was without a chair. The reasons behind this and why there was such a long absence is not exactly clear to the evaluation. What is clear, however, is the absence of the leader at such a critical juncture of the CCP's lifecycle and for such a long time disrupted and, for a long time, crippled the CCP.

Second, evaluation of the lists of those members who attended the SC's meetings shows that there was no continuity. In too many instances, attendance was less than optimal. Too often, one or more delegated persons represented the person nominated to attend. Indeed, there are few instances when the same persons were actually present at consecutive meetings of the SC. The result was discontinuity, as issues that would have been resolved at one meeting had to be continued to another.

It is difficult to understand why different chairs of the CCP did not introduce basic committee management rules.

Third, the involvement of the Commonwealth implementation agencies was to generate joined-up partnerships in taking forward the mandate of the CCP. However, apart from one instance, this did not happen. The agencies worked individually and separately. Moreover, the perception was created with particular regard to COMNET-IT and CTO (which unlike the CF and the COL obtain their financing directly from the Secretariat) that the Special Fund constituted a 'honey-pot' to finance projects that could not otherwise be carried out within the revenue base.

4.1.8 Implementing the mandate

The identification of the 62 projects presented in Annex D of the 2005 CHOGM report presented a major issue for the newly set up CCP and impacted the pace, performance and effectiveness of the CCP during its first years of operation. Projects were not identified through a call for applications issued by the CCP and, hence, they neither presented a fair representation of the demand from Commonwealth governments, nor did they necessarily fit the five focus areas established in the mandate of the CCP. The projects were identified by the CAPDD through workshops and presented to the 2005 CHOGM.

Faced between ignoring the projects in Annex D and embarking on a structured approached, the SC sought a compromise. Concerned with the fact that expectations were now raised, the SC sought to select three projects from the list as 'pilot projects'. The end result, however, was that by the end of the first year of operations, the SC had only three pilot projects to show, despite considerable efforts.

Of strategic importance, however, is that this edged the SC towards becoming a project-implementing agency – one where the CCP's mandate became primarily that of identifying and financing projects. Even though there were lengthy discussions on what should constitute the CCP's

mandate, which finally led the SC to establish that the CCP should be a broker and catalyst, the fact is that it never assumed this role.

This was a strategic mistake for many reasons, ranging from the fact that the CCP entered a space which was already assumed by numerous supra-national agencies, including Commonwealth agencies, working in ICT4D, to the issue of the long-term sustainability of the CCP becoming dependent on its ability to raise financing. The CCP would have been far more relevant and sustainable if the SC had established its mandate to be that of a co-ordinating vehicle, where it harmonised the activities of the different Commonwealth organisations and also those of the regional supra-institutions such as the EU and the AU, the World Bank and its agencies, OECD, ITU, etc., along with NGOs and governments.

There is no doubt that if the SC had adopted this strategic orientation for the CCP, the programme would have had a greater chance to achieve success. The Commonwealth Cybercrime Initiative (CCI), presented as a case study in this evaluation, shows what the CCP could have achieved if it had truly adopted the broker or catalyst role.

Nonetheless, within the strategic orientation as a project-implementing vehicle adopted by the SC for the CCP, lessons emerge. First, the grant value of £15,000 was insignificant and limited the scale, scope and impact of the projects financed. The rationale that a low financial grant would act as 'seed' money, which would allow the project to be initiated and sustainability to be achieved through other financing, did not work out. Nearly all of the projects financed died a natural death once the grant was exhausted. The end result was that expectations were raised among the communities that benefitted from the project, which could no longer be met once the grant was exhausted.

The call for applications served to raise expectations regarding the funding of projects, giving the impression that the CCP was more about funding than brokerage. The call for applications depleted the fund significantly, leaving little for the ongoing nurturing of CCP, which was needed to provide the necessary facilitation in order to get projects underway.

Best practice underlines that a programme such as the CCP should be subject to a programme and project management framework. There is,

however, no evidence that a formalised project management framework governed the CCP. At a minimum, a simple template that sought to present formalised reporting with regard to the following should have been in place:

- 'traffic light' reporting status;
- % completion of project by core activity;
- deadlines;
- monthly deliverables per month;
- budget burn rate;
- an issues register, setting out the top five issues;
- a risks register, setting out top five risks/mitigation strategies; and
- comments.

4.2 Next steps

Sustainable development constitutes a multifaceted approach, covering environmental, economic and social concerns, given that quality of life is dependent on all these factors considered together. In essence, therefore, sustainable development assigns major importance to the integrity of nature, as well as to the eradication of poverty, the engendering of economic growth, the removal of social injustice and other factors that work against the human welfare of current and future generations.[227]

A key policy instrument in the attainment of sustainable development is joined-up ICT policy design. Experience from developed countries has shown that ICT contributes significantly to economic development and, in process, to complementary factors such as human capital. The effective deployment of ICTs in development and poverty reduction efforts has the potential to enable the more effective use of existing resources, as well as to facilitate a more scaled-up and responsive approach to crafting solutions to meet key development challenges.[228]

The Commonwealth's Strategic Plan for 2013/14 to 2016/17 speaks about six strategic outcomes: Democracy; Public Institutions; Social Development; Youth; Development: pan-Commonwealth; and Development: small states and vulnerable states. ICT for development is not

only absent as a strategic outcome, but it is also absent as an intermediate outcome within any of the identified six strategic outcomes.

This is a strategic error. While many countries have begun to develop and implement national ICT or e-strategies (i.e. more than 90 developing countries, with over 35 of them in Africa alone) to promote the development of ICT infrastructure and put in place the conditions and capacities to foster its use and stimulate local content development, services and support priority initiative,[229] very few countries have effectively mainstreamed ICT as joined-up ICT policy design within sustainable development strategies.

Increasingly, there is growing agreement that this is a priority and that there is a need to mainstream ICTs in sustainable development strategies as a tool (rather than being an end in itself). ICT strategies must remain subordinate to broader sustainable development strategies, which again should be part of an overall macroeconomic framework supportive of development with equity. The need to embed ICT interventions into a broader development policy framework is critical – since by themselves ICTs can widen inequality and strengthen the already privileged and powerful as easily as they can do the opposite.[230]

Yet, few recent sustainable development or poverty reduction strategies include ICT as a strategic component. This means that sustainable development or poverty reduction strategies are being discussed independently of ICTs. This can be seen as an indication of a government's (lack of) awareness of how ICT can contribute towards addressing the issues at stake within specific poverty reduction strategies. It is the basis for broad and integrated ICT policies, which not only come from particular fields or applications, but which relate to wider, national concerns. In the interests of effective sustainable development and poverty reduction, the use of ICT and subsequent policy design should become an integrated part of the design and implementation of any sustainable and development poverty reduction strategies.[231]

ICTs impact sustainable development and poverty reduction by positively transforming sectors that are critical to sustainable development and poverty reduction – such as the health, agriculture and education sectors. For instance, ICTs can increase the volume and flow of medical information, which

can reduce mortality levels in the young. ICTs can be used to influence learning and the delivery of health services.

ICTs affect sustainability, development and poverty through their impact on the productivity and income generation they enable in sectors where the poor are likely to be most actively engaged. For instance, productivity increases in micro-enterprises can have a poverty-reducing effect to the extent that a micro-enterprise gains, say, access to market information (faster and more cheaply), access to information on input prices and output markets, and to the extent that ICTs strengthen forward linkages to the market and backward linkages to the domestic suppliers of inputs.[232] Rural-based ICTs have the potential to impact on agriculture through increased revenues and diversification of agricultural production, made possible by delivering SMS-based price and crop information.

ICT as a sector of the economy has gained in importance. The ICT services sector ranges from software to hardware, from digital gaming to i-gaming, from back-office services to highly intensive ICT knowledge-based sectors such as the financial services sector – all resulting in the creation of high value-added jobs. In the framework of a sustainable development and poverty reduction strategy, therefore, ICT as a sector can become relevant if, for example: it is integrated into an inclusive overall education system that also provides opportunities for underprivileged people and regions; it engenders a software sector that also serves the needs of the national economy and helps to reduce the cost of ICT applications though increased dependence on local development; and it stimulates the development of ICT-enabled public services, which can be extended to reach the poor.

Traditionally, e-government[233] was seen to be a new means of reforming the way government and its institutions behave. In e-government transformation assignments, this strategy argues that within the context of nation development, this is a narrow view of e-government. E-government can only be successful if citizens have access to the technology, can afford the technology, and are able to use the technology. E-government is not only about the type, breadth and sophistication of the technology introduced to allow electronic

interaction across all sectors of the polity. E-government is, and should be, far more than that.[234]

In most developing countries, the government is the largest 'business' and 'economic' player in society. Policy decisions taken by a government have a 'ripple effect' on a country's growth and development. Specifically with regard to e-government, a decision by a government to adopt a strategy to implement e-government should be seen beyond the confines of a reform of the way public institutions deliver services and are held accountable. E-government provides the platform and impetus to secure further economic and social development, by positioning it as a key propellant to achieve an information society and an information economy.[235]

This report argues that in small and developing states, an e-government strategy designed to leverage e-government for national capacity building, poverty reduction, literacy improvement, engendering greater trust in governing institutions, expanding healthcare and education outreach services is are significant reasons of why a broader and more holistic e-government programme approach should be adopted.

It is pertinent to underline that the potential of e-government as a development tool hinges upon three prerequisites: (i) a minimum threshold level of technological infrastructure; (ii) human capital; and (iii) e-connectivity for all. E-government readiness strategies and programmes will be effective and 'include all' people only if, at the very minimum, all citizens have a level of functional literacy and education, which includes knowledge of computer and internet use; where all citizens are connected to a computer; and where all citizens have access to the Internet.[236]

Despite the developmental potential of e-government, few developing countries have implemented pro-poor e-government strategies, depending largely on the government's willingness to develop and design content relevant and usable for them. ICTs and e-government applications play a critical role in strengthening the linkages between policy-makers and the poor and between the poor and the service providers, as well as between the policy-makers and the service providers. Thus, for example, ICT can be an important tool in reducing maternity deaths and infant death. In rural areas, pregnant mothers have limited access

to health monitoring and care. The application of m-government through the use of SMS to relay daily important information to mothers living in rural villages with regard their health before and after birth, and in taking care of the infant, can have a pervasive impact in this regard.[237]

E-government is a vehicle for national economic and social development, particularly in small and developing nations, where government plays a far more active and pervasive role in the economy and society than in more advanced countries.[238]

Examples of countries that have adopted and leveraged successful ICT for sustainable development strategies exist. Mauritius, for example, had approximately 10,500 people employed in the IT and information technology enabled services (ITES) sector in 2009, compared to only 2,000 in 2003. Mauritius used the competitive advantage of its historical and cultural ties with India to establish Ebene Cybercity, an IT park. The country has also successfully attracted a number of leading global suppliers (for example, Accenture, Ceridian and Hinduja Global Solutions) and offshore companies (for example, Orange, DHL and Huawei). Some of the local suppliers, such as Rogers, Infinity BPO and Euro CRM, have also built a credible presence. While Mauritius has a good mix of voice and non-voice ITES services, it has begun transitioning to higher value-added activities such as advisory, design and legal services.[239]

With an area of 316km^2 and a population of 0.45 million, and much smaller than Mauritius, Malta has been ranked first by the European Commission since 2009 with regard to the sophistication, complexity and take-up of e-government among the European Union 28 member states. Malta has successfully attracted specialised software firms such as Crimsonwing, Uniblue, GFI, Anvil, 2i and RS2, in addition to leading IT players such as Oracle, Microsoft, Hewlett-Packard and SAP. Malta has also become an attractive destination for remote gaming: it now hosts an estimated 10 per cent of all remote gaming companies in the world, including Betfair, Expekt, Unibet, Interwetten and CBM Bookmakers. Additionally, Malta has moved along the value chain with regard to business process outsourcing (BPO) activities, which have matured from low-value horizontal services which include

HSBC's UK Call Centre, to sophisticated vertical business process activities in the financial services sector and knowledge process outsourcing.

The above underlines the importance of joined-up ICT policy design for sustainable development within and across policy sectors in order to obtain economic and social transformation. The vision presented in 2005 to leverage ICT to bridge the digital divide continues to hold true today – if not more so given the increased iniquitousness of ICT. The comparative advantages that the Secretariat brings to this area also continue to hold true.

The current gap, therefore, which the Commonwealth has today with regard to joined-up ICT policy design for sustainable development should be addressed. Three potential options are considered of how the Commonwealth should seek to address the gap of leveraging ICT for sustainable development:

a. Re-constitute the Commonwealth Connects Programme as the Commonwealth ICT for Sustainable Development Programme

b. Establish ICT for sustainable development as a strategic outcome within the Commonwealth Secretariat Strategic Plan

c. Assign the mandate to the CTO

The evaluation rejects both options (a) and (c) for the reasons stated in Section 4.1 (d) above titled 'The institutional model of the CCP'. The option that is considered to be the best way forward is to establish the domain of ICT for sustainable development within the Secretariat.

It is pertinent to underline that different divisions within the Secretariat and other donor agencies intervene in a myriad of ways at both the national and local levels, but rarely are these interventions co-ordinated effectively. In the context of sustainable development, policy silos and fragmented short-term policy interventions are luxuries that developing and small state economies cannot afford.

Carefully holistic and balanced strategies and policy design for sustainable development are needed, so that the Secretariat and other donor agencies use their limited resources to help meet shared sustainable development priorities at the local level and set national and local economies on the path to economic and social development. The Secretariat and other donor agencies can make a great deal of difference in building national economically viable and sustainable communities. The Secretariat and other donor agencies cannot, however, make this difference if policies are fragmented, services are duplicated, gaps missed, and departments within the Secretariat and Commonwealth and other donor agencies do not communicate with one another about what they are trying to achieve.

Such divisions come at a cost. Harnessing economic and social development opportunities in the journey to achieve a knowledge economy requires simultaneous investment in infrastructure, skills, research and innovation within an integrated approach. It is rare in work underway in developing and small states to find holistic policy interventions for sustainable development that tackle diverse aspects of a problem simultaneously. Synergies between different actions such ICT and health policy, ICT and education policy, ICT and poverty policy, ICT and the rural economy, to mention a few, go unexplored, and resources go unexploited.

Integrating this domain within the Secretariat would allow far greater opportunities in the design of joined-up policy that incorporates ICT for sustainable development across the work that is carried out by the organisation. Integrating the domain of ICT for sustainable development joined-up policy design within the Secretariat would allow for the improved building of networks and more effective communications – resulting in a platform that formally brings together Commonwealth departments and agencies, donor organisations, NGOs and the civil society. This would allow for work to be carried out with sustainable development to mainstream ICT for development, and enable for the crafting of a proper implementation framework for how they are to be achieved, containing detailed agreements on joint actions, budgets, timescales etc.

In positioning the domain of joined-up ICT policy design for development, the question arises whether this should be established as a strategic outcome or whether it should be embedded within an existing strategic outcome. With regard to the latter, joined-up ICT policy design for development could be embedded in the strategic outcome of either Public Institutions, Social Development or Development: small states and vulnerable states.

The option of reconstituting the CCP as the Commonwealth ICT for Sustainable Development Programme, even if reconstructed to account for lessons learned, is not considered because it is very likely that it would be tainted by the track record of the CCP. Moreover, it would reinforce joined-up ICT policy design for development as a 'vertical' policy sector when, as shown above, the objective should be to integrate and mainstream ICT for development within all policy programmes within the Secretariat. This is also the reason why the option for assigning such a mandate to CTO is not considered.

A decision to move forward as proposed demands that the strategic orientation and mandate with regard to joined-up ICT policy design for development is clearly spelt out, that such a decision is based on the articulation of a robust strategy, business and financial plan, and implementation plan; and that there is strong and visible linkage with the Commonwealth's Strategic Plan with regard to clearly identified strategic outcomes, intermediate outcomes, short-term outcomes etc.

Endnotes

227. Spiteri Gingell, D (2014), 'e-Government for Inclusive and Sustainable Development', 11th Commonwealth African Heads of Public Service Forum, August 2014.

228. Gerster, R, and S Zimmerman (2005), Up-Scaling Pro-poor ICT Policies and Practices, Swiss Agency for Development and Corporation, ICT for Development, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Berne

229. In the case of Africa, see for example UNECA's benchmarking of status of NICI strategies under http://www.uneca.org/aisi/.

230. Gerster, R, and S Zimmerman (2005), Up-Scaling Pro-poor ICT Policies and Practices, Swiss Agency for Development and Corporation, ICT for Development, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Berne

231. Ibid.

232. Pigato, M (2001), Information and Communication Technology, Poverty and Development in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, World Bank, Washington DC.

233. Includes m-Government and mobile computing and at times is used interchangeably.

234. Spiteri Gingell, D (2013), 'e-Government Strategy for the Swaziland: 2013–2017', Commonwealth Secretariat, London, p8.

235. Ibid.

236. Ibid.

237. Ibid.

238. Ibid.

239. Ibid.

Annex I: Terms of Reference

1. Background

The Commonwealth Secretariat's Strategic Planning and Evaluation Division (SPED), in collaboration with the Governance and Natural Resources Division (GNRD), is undertaking an evaluation of the Commonwealth Connects (CC) Programme. The CC Programme is a vehicle for technology and knowledge transfer in areas such as e-government, Telecommunications Regulation and related activities that have a bearing on national, social, and economic development with a view to bridging the digital divide throughout the Commonwealth. Underlying the CC Programme, therefore, is a vision of how information and communication technology (ICT) can help countries at all stages of development use scarce resources to bring about sustainable improvements in the quality of life of their citizens. In addition to ICT skills, the ideal candidate/ consultancy will be able to provide evaluation skills including the ability to recognise and assess economic and social change.

The CC Programme aims to facilitate new linkages between entities with highly developed ICT expertise and those which could benefit from building their ICT capacity. Since its inception in 2006, CC has carried out its mandate by:

- Providing strategic leadership and co-ordination,
- Fostering multistakeholder partnerships and co-operation,
- Promoting the development of national ICT strategies,
- Sharing ICT resources for capacity building, and
- Supporting pan-Commonwealth ICT-based initiatives.

At its 30th Meeting on 27 January 2014, the CC Steering Committee decided that the programme would be wound down in its current form and its work would be taken forward in new ways, building on the strong foundation that has been established and adapting to the new environment.

2. Purpose of Evaluation

The overall purpose of this evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness and impact of the CC Programme over the years, and to provide recommendations on its future direction.

Specifically, the evaluation will:

1. Review the relevance of CC Programme with regard to a) the strategic priorities of the Commonwealth Secretariat and b) the national development priorities of member states in facilitating ICT partnerships.

2. Assess the overall effectiveness and impact of the projects under CC Programme and consider whether the objectives for these projects are consistent with the remit of the programme.

3. Review the governance mechanism of the CC Programme and assess its effectiveness in managing the programme.

4. Assess the efficiency of the implementation arrangements and Secretariat's support to the programme.

5. Assess the likely long-term sustainability of benefits arising from the programme.

6. Assess the 'comparative advantage' of the Secretariat and the 'added value' it brings to the programme.

7. Identify lessons learned that could be utilised for future programmes with similar governance and organisational models, and reflect on the future direction of the CC Programme.

Scope and Focus

The evaluation will review the CC Programme since its inception in 2006 and, based on the findings, will recommend how the programme can be most effectively utilised in future.

3. Suggested Methodology

The evaluation will include the following key steps for collecting information, its analysis and feedback during the study:

- Conduct a thorough review of all pertinent records and data related to the CC Programme co-ordinated by the Secretariat and delivered by Commonwealth agencies.

- Interview relevant Secretariat staff engaged in the organisation and delivery of CC Programme.

- Interviews of selected stakeholders, which will typically include CC Steering Committee members, relevant Commonwealth organisations and partner agencies, and project beneficiaries through electronic survey and field visits.

4. Deliverables

During the course of this evaluation, the following deliverables will be produced:

1. A draft evaluation report

2. A seminar/ presentation on the evaluation findings and recommendations

3. Final evaluation report, incorporating feedback and comments received

5. Duration and Timeframe

The evaluation is planned to commence in January 2015. It is estimated that up to 45 person days will be appropriate to complete this evaluation between January 2015 and May 2015.

1. Interfaces

2. This work will be carried out under the guidance of the Head of Evaluation of SPED. The Copyright of the Report shall belong to the Secretariat.

3. Location

The assignment will be carried out in London, United Kingdom, primarily at the Headquarters of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Annex II: Persons Interviewed

Mr Anthony Ming, ICT Adviser, Public Sector Governance Unit, Commonwealth Secretariat

Mr CS Dlamini, Coordinator, Swaziland Employers and Chamber of Commerce

Mr Crosbey RS Mwanza, Founder and Director, South Africa Media Lines, Lesotho

Mr David Tait, Legal Researcher, Rule of Law Division, Commonwealth Secretariat

Mr Henry Alamango, former Chief Executive Officer of COMNET-IT

Mr Gideo Mahlalela, Chairman, Swaziland Communications Commission

Mr Ian Furlonge, Senior Specialist, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of Trinidad and Tobago

Ms Ingrid Seerattan, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of Trinidad and Tobaga

Mr Joseph Tabone, former Executive Chair of COMNET-IT and representative of the Government of Malta on the Commonwealth Connects Programme Steering Committee

Ms Jacqueline Syms, Chairwoman, National Information and Communication Technology Company Ltd, Government of Trinidad and Tobago

Mr Jarvis Matiya, Legal Adviser and Head of Justice Section, Rule of Law Division, Commonwealth Secretariat

Mr Lasantha De Alwis, Director, Head of Operations, Department/ Corporate Secretary, Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation

Mr Lerato Tanka, Green Tree Initiative, Lesotho

Ms Libuseng Pea, Green Tree Initiative, Lesotho

Ms Maabia Pea, Green Tree Initiative, Lesotho

Mr Mandla DS Motsa, Director of Communications, Ministry of information, Communications and Technology, Government of Swaziland

Dr Nabeel Goheer, Director, Strategic Planning and Evaluation Division, Commonwealth Secretariat

Ms Nicki Koorbanally, General Manager, Licensing and Ventures, CSIR, South Africa

Ms Potlako Ntsekhe, Founder, Motataisi Foundation, Lesotho

Mr Thomas Redmond, Digital Networks Officer, Communications Division, Commonwealth Secretariat

Dr Ruperth T Griffith, Minister of Science and Technology, Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the last Chair of the Commonwealth Connects Programme Steering Committee

Dr Shaliza Mohammed, Senior Specialist, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of Trinidad and Tobaga

Ms Shelley-Ann Clarke Hinds, Executive Manager, External Relations Unit, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of Trinidad and Tobago

Mr Sikelela F Dlamini, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of information, Communications and Technology, Government of Swaziland

Mr Sicelo Simelane, Company Secretary, Swaziland Communications Commission

Mr Simon Gimson, Director and Head, Office of the Secretary-General, Commonwealth Secretariat

Mr Steven Malby, Adviser and Head, Law Development, Rule of Law Division, Commonwealth Secretariat

Mr Themba Dlamini, Director, Swaziland Federation of Employers and Chamber of Commerce

Dr Vashti Maharaj, Head of Legal Services, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of Trinidad and Tobago

Mr Vijay Krishnarayan, Director, Commonwealth Foundation

Mr Yogesh Bhatt, Adviser and Head, Evaluation Section, Strategic Planning and Evaluation Division, Commonwealth Secretariat

Mr Zongezile Dlangamandla, Senior Curriculum Specialist, Ministry of Education, Government of Lesotho

Meetings were also held with the following:

- e-Waste Task Force, Ministry of information, Communications and Technology, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of Trinidad and Tobago

- Cyber Security Unit, Ministry of Justice, Government of Trinidad and Tobago

- Parents and children in the Ha Tsolo Community in Lesotho

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- Minutes of the 7th Meeting, 21 March 2007, and documentation package circulated.

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Annex IV: Questionnaires

Questionnaire sent to points of contact

The Commonwealth Secretariat is currently undertaking an evaluation of the Commonwealth Connects (CC) Programme.

The evaluation will review the CC Programme since its inception in 2006 and, based on the findings, will recommend how the programme can be most effectively utilised in future.

The evaluation team is approaching the members of the CC Programme's 'Points of Contact Network' to obtain their views on the performance of the programme. An introduction letter by the Commonwealth Secretariat is presented with the survey instrument.

You are kindly requested to complete the survey instrument by 26th May 2015. Once completed, please return the survey instrument to:

David Spiteri Gingell

david.gingell.dsg@gmail.com

Survey instrument

1. How effective were the Regional and Virtual meetings in assisting you to familiarise with the objective of the CC Programme:

Exceptionally Effective	Very Effective	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Effective

2. What understanding did you garner of the CC Programme:

3. Do you agree that the CC Programme **Network of Points of Contact** acted as a vehicle for the promotion of values and projects of the Commonwealth in matters relating to ICT for Development (ICT4D):

Yes	No

   3.1 Can you elaborate on your answer:

4. Did you assist the CC Programme by referring to it for knowledge sharing information with regard to the identification of ICT priorities and ICT developments in you countries:

At least once a week	At least once every two weeks	At least once a month	At least once a quarter or more	Not at all

5. (a) Did the CC Programme's **ICT Assets Inventory** and **Points of Contact network** act as valuable resources to you for access to relevant policy, strategy, guidelines, documentation; possible assistance; capacity, governance, programme, etc. development underway elsewhere in the Commonwealth:

All of the times	Most of the times	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

(b) If YES, how frequently did you refer to the CC Programme knowledge and information base with regards to the identification of ICT priorities and ICT developments in your country?

At least once a week	At least once every two weeks	At least once a month	At least once a quarter or more	Not at all

6. Do you agree with the statement that the **Points of Contact Network** was one of the cornerstones of the CC Programme:

Yes	No

6.1 Can you elaborate on your answer:

7. In your opinion was the CC Programme

Exceptionally successful	Very successful	Successful	Limited in success	Unsuccessful

8. In your opinion what could have been done differently with regard to the CC Programme:

9. Do you have other comments to add:

Questionnaire sent to project owners

The Commonwealth Secretariat is currently undertaking an evaluation of the Commonwealth Connects (CC) Programme.

The evaluation will review the CC Programme since its inception in 2006 and, based on the findings, will recommend how the programme can be most effectively utilised in future.

The evaluation team is approaching all member states within the Commonwealth who benefited from the CC Programme. Your name was presented as that of the contact person with regard to a project that benefited from the Programme. An introduction letter by the Commonwealth Secretariat is presented with the survey instrument.

You are kindly requested to complete the survey instrument by 26th May 2015. Once completed, please return the survey instrument to:

David Spiteri Gingell

david.gingell.dsg@gmail.com

Survey instrument

1.   Was the project consistent to the Values of the CC Programme as established in its Charter?

Yes	No

2.   Can you elaborate on your answer:

3.   Did the project address a genuine project/knowledge-sharing national or intra-Commonwealth need?

Yes	No

4.   Was the project financing from the CC Programme sufficient for the successful implementation and future sustainability of the project?

Yes	No

   a.   Can you elaborate on your answer::

5.   What measures did you take to ensure that the CC Programme financing for the project was effectively and economically utilised:

6.   How often did you report to the Secretariat of the CC Programme with regard to the implementation of the project:

Never	Weekly	Bi-weekly	Monthly	Every quarter or more

7.   How did you report to the Secretariat of the CC Programme:

Structured report   Yes/No
E-mail   Yes/No
Virtual meeting   Yes/No
Other

8.   In setting up and implementing the project, did donor agencies, civil society, private sector, research institutions, education institutions and other entities play a role:

More than 75%	Between 75% and 50%	Between 50% and 25%	Less than 25% but still involved	None

        a.   Did these parties (donor agencies, civil society, private sector, research institutions, education institutions and other entities) contribute:

        Human resources at no cost   Yes/No

        Financial resources   Yes/No

                        If yes, how much   _____

        Facility, ICT, etc. at no cost   Yes/No

        Other   _____

9.   Were outcomes and outputs identified for the project before its launch:

        Qualitative   _____

        Quantitative   _____

        None   _____

10. Is the outcome/output of the project still resulting in benefits today:

Yes	No

a. If yes, can you please explain the benefits being accrued:

b. If No, can you please explain why:

10.1 What lessons have you learned from this programme?

10.2 Do you believe that the CC Programme has a future role:

Yes	No

10.3 If yes, can you elaborate on your answer:

Annex V

Annex D to the Commonwealth Action Plan for the Digital Divide report, presented at the 2005 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

The table below identifies and describes programme and project ideas submitted by members of the Commonwealth, Commonwealth institutions, and regional networks in response to the request for proposals prior to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Malta in 2005.

Proj. No.	Title	Description	Budget Requested
1	Internet Governance – A Regional Approach	This project involves the development of a regional approach to internet governance that is in the best interests of the Caribbean region. Transparent and democratic regional governance of the internet will facilitate the development of a culture of cyber-security in the Caribbean and encourage growth in internet-based services. The initiative will allow governments in the Caribbean region to manage country-level root servers, domain names and Internet Protocol (IP) address assignment in a cost-effective manner with minimal resources, via a proposed regional authority.	£250,000
2	Regional ICT Measurement Programme	The project proposes the development and implementation of a pan-Caribbean ICT measurement programme that is culturally sensitive and locally relevant, and which allows progress to be measured, evaluated, benchmarked and reported. The implementation of a pan-Caribbean ICT measurement programme will allow for more informed policy decisions across the region and will ensure the continuation of communication at regional level.	£155,000
3	Regional Clearing House for ICT Policies and Best Practices	This project involves the development, implementation, management and maintenance of a regional web portal for sharing of ICT policies, best practices, case studies etc. for the Caribbean. The implementation of a regional web portal should enable stakeholders to develop a more in-depth understanding of the perspectives held by governments, the private sector and civil society, thus preparing them for more informed involvement in national, regional and international policy deliberations. It would also facilitate those involved in developing knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to meet the challenges and opportunities of the information age by infusing best practices using the web portal as an enabler.	£80,000
4	Developing Integrated Strategies in Gender Equality and Poverty Reduction in ICT for Development	The objective of this project is to contribute to the development of a greater integration of gender analysis of ICT, poverty reduction and overall development strategies, including a stronger gender perspective in the design and implementation of national ICT public policies and programmes of Commonwealth countries. This will be achieved by collaborating with ICT4D initiatives in Commonwealth countries to develop and carry out a research framework that will yield pragmatic results on the importance and relevance of gender issues in ICT policies. The project will also include a Gender and ICT Policy Dialogue with national policy-makers and actors to discuss the results of the research and develop recommendations on how ICT policies can address gender issues and concerns.	£27,200
5	Promoting African Women's Participation in E-Governance	The project seeks to develop innovative practices on gender and e-governance at regional and national level. It will build on current efforts in women's active engagement in policy formulation and implementation. The project will address the lack of participation of rural women in e-governance initiatives in Africa and the need to promote women's empowerment in leadership and governance. The project will also address the low levels of gender-disaggregated data and access to gendered information by policy-makers.	£252,700
6	Workshop for Broadcasting Regulators	The objective is to expose regulators and potential regulators to best practice in regulation, and to launch the CBA's new Guidelines for Broadcasting Regulators, due out in December. The workshop would be placed on the day before the CBA's pan-Commonwealth Conference, to maximise attendance at the workshop.	£19,250

#	Project	Description	Budget
7	The NEPAD E-Governance Programme	The NEPAD e-governance programme intends to put in place ICT infrastructure, applications and services in order to support the NEPAD principle of good governance. This will translate in enhancing democracy, human rights, and efficient and effective delivery of basic services for the well-being of African citizens. The programme will facilitate economic growth and enhance African economies competitiveness.	£3,256,000
8	Building the Capacity of Women in the Use of ICTs for Development	The project is a response to the current global and government initiatives on ICT for development. It seeks to assess and respond to the key issues that are deterring various actors in participating and integrating ICT within their activities.	£268,800
9	Alternate Dispute Resolution Service (ADRS)	This project proposes to set up an alternate dispute resolution service to facilitate the development of the ICT sector in Commonwealth countries. The growth of the entire ICT sector has been stifled by the recurring disputes between the various stakeholders of the sector. While developed countries have gradually shifted on to alternate dispute resolution mechanisms recognising the many shortcomings of court-based dispute resolution, developing countries are yet to develop internal capacities and strengths to take that path.	£350,000
10	Promoting E-Governance for the Commonwealth	This programme of work aims to raise awareness of the potential of ICTs to enhance the delivery of government services; empower the democratic right of citizens to interact with their governments; and reinforce good governance practices. The objective is to support the responsible parties, in government institutions, to develop a long-term strategy for developing and implementing e-government capabilities.	£1,700,000
11	Knowledge Transfer on ICTs for Disaster Mitigation and Relief	The recent tsunami disaster proved the critical role that ICTs can play to warn against disasters and, should it occur, in post-event management of relief and reconstruction. The project is designed to increase knowledge on how to harness the power of ICTs in mitigating the effects of disasters and helping the relief efforts subsequent to a disaster.	£200,000
12	Internet Governance	This programme of work aims to raise awareness of public policy issues associated with the usage of the internet. Its objective is to facilitate exchange of information between key stakeholders at national, regional and international levels. The ultimate goal is to build knowledge networks and information repositories to enable the development of informed national or regional internet governance policies.	£1,700,000
13	National ICT Planning (NICTP)	National ICT Planning is the starting point for all actions taken on the digital divide. It starts with an accurate and comprehensive evaluation of the ground situation carried out in Phase 1 of the 'as-is' audit. The findings will form the basis of a gap analysis to find the individual needs of each country. An evaluation of potential partnerships and funding sources will also be carried out in parallel. Based on the findings, a high-level plan will be prepared to serve as the master plan to infuse ICTs in to all spheres of life of the particular country.	£1,000,000
14	Developing and Implementing National and Sectoral E-Strategies and Plans	The main objective of the project is to support African countries to develop their own national and sectoral e-strategies and plans, based on their national development goals as stated in the WSIS Action Plan. These plans would assist in integrating the globalisation process using ICTs. These would also help solve countries' most pressing problems, including those in health, education, economic development and fight against poverty.	Proposal missing
15	Updating of Management of Financial and Personnel Records and Information Systems Modules (Management of Public Sector Records Programme)	This project is based on the Trust's international experience in building capacity of governments to develop policy and procedures for management of personnel and financial records and information systems. It seeks to expand and share the Trust's expertise, models and experience for use in public sector agencies in developing countries.	£30,000
16	Digital Transfer of Analogue Audio-Visual Information	This project seeks to develop capacity and skills for the review and transfer of information held in the public sector from analogue to digital format. This will ensure the effective preservation of audio-visual materials and lead to speedier exchange of these materials.	Budget not specified
17	E-Learning Project – Caribbean Cultural Heritage	This project aims to develop a set of interactive lessons using material in the national heritage collections to engage students at CXC level with cultural heritage issues related to five syllabuses in History and Social Studies. The project will utilise web-based delivery of information/ supplementary material in order to reach a wider target audience than is currently reached through traditional face-to-face methods. It will also include a discovery series covering a number of specific themes.	£115,000
18	Primary Schools Computer Literacy	The project is designed to obtain computers and internet access in primary schools in Belize. It is designed to engage individuals with varying technical skills in soliciting used computers from a variety of organisations. These computers will be refurbished and installed in schools. Teachers will be trained in the use of computers and its different applications.	£55,300
19	Smart School (Pilot Projects)	This Grenada Ministry of Education initiative involves a four-phase deployment of a 'Smart School' pilot and virtual classroom. This will assist in the introduction of ICTs in the schools' syllabus in Grenada.	£337,100

#	Project	Description	Budget
20	Stories from the Community	The project seeks to put video and image recording facilities into the hands of individuals and community groups to produce content specifically for Gayelle: the Channel. It involves three-month training in the production of selected video content – camera work, lighting, audio, concept and scripting, production management, digital post-production and distribution, equipment maintenance. All these areas of study, which will be covered by veterans in the field, together with the equipment provided by the programme will be made available to suitable graduates and/or people with production aptitude/ background. The resulting content will be transmitted on air and on cable by Gayelle: the Channel.	£18,900
21	Pan in Education	Using ICT to create a novel way of teaching music with the steelpan as the primary instrument. It involves the creation of six-minute arrangements of songs composed by Mark Loquan scored and categorised according to levels of difficulty. Designed for teaching and improving music literacy skills. The project has been completed and is ready for implementation. Assistance is needed in developing a marketing programme to support distribution of the project locally, regionally and internationally.	£26,900
22	ITALIC	Driven largely by the necessity of having ICT skills when workers enter the labour force, this project is designed to provide training for teachers in the use of ICTs in the classroom. It also envisages teachers having their own computer and each classroom being equipped with at least one computer.	Budget not specified
23	Caribbean Digital Heritage Collection	Development of a regional effort to develop, preserve and display the heritage (audio, video, still images etc.) of the Caribbean utilising students, NGOs, volunteers etc. This digital collection of cultural heritage is an innovative approach to capturing and retaining important historical information and artefacts, while developing new ICT skills in children and adults. There will also be a definite link between this programme and education, and promotion of small and medium-size enterprises (including the sector of creative industries).	£55,000
24	Going Digital for Engineers	Many broadcasting organisations in the developing Commonwealth are faced with modernising their equipment, without proper knowledge of the options. The objective is teaching a structured course in transferring to digital, and how to maximise its potential for connectivity through broadcasting. It would be a two-week course for 10 broadcasting engineers in key organisations, with quality local trainers, held in an organisation with modern equipment such as NEMISA in Johannesburg. This course – which has been taught with great success for the last three years – is designed to transform analogue engineers into people capable of organising a transfer to digital in the years ahead.	£20,000
25	Expanding HIV/AIDS Prevention Education through Broadcast Media	The project is aimed at young TV producers as potential role models, leaders and knowledge brokers within their own society. Increasingly, they are handling programmes on HIV/AIDS, and to effectively fulfil their responsibilities they must receive the appropriate knowledge and information about the pandemic and the people affected. By strengthening their production skills, young TV producers can pursue sufficiently researched documentaries that advocate policy, initiate public debate, and mobilise social action to support efforts in prevention education.	£71,000
26	Setting up a Broadcasting-linked Website	Many broadcasting organisations in the developing Commonwealth have the potential to provide accurate local information through a website, but do not have the know-how to do this effectively and economically. The objective is to teach how to set up a cost-effective website, using information gathered for broadcast, and so maximise the potential for connectivity through broadcasting. This is a one-week course, taught in four locations.	£15,840
27	Commonwealth Capacity Building Programme on Internet Governance and E-Policy	The aim of the project is to build a critical mass of expertise and knowledge in Internet Governance and E-Policy in Commonwealth countries. The capacity-building activities will include training, research, access to existing networks of practitioners and experts in the field, and the building of epistemic communities.	£348,200
28	Small Business Training for Women in Cameroon Using Radio Programmes	The goal of the initiative is to elaborate a multimedia resource kit that can be used for radio-based learning, for women, to help them move from survivalist mode and engage professionally in micro-enterprise. After the identification of the real needs of the women, content for radio programmes will be prepared to address these needs and stored in a multimedia resource kit, delivered on the web for free access by many radio stations. At least 20 stations will be reinforced in material and personnel training to be able to use the multimedia resource kit for broadcasting.	£107,500
29	Capacity Building for Policy-Makers	This project builds on the Economic Commission for Africa's (ECA) experience in assisting member states to develop national information and communication infrastructure policies and plans and its capacity-building activities at its Information Technology Centre for Africa (ITCA). It seeks to expand the capacity-building activities undertaken with African parliamentarians and African ambassadors stationed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to encompass other policy-makers and stakeholders. The capacity-building exercise would enable African policy-makers and other stakeholders to be aware of the ICT policy issues at all levels: national, sub-regional, regional and international levels.	Proposal missing

No.	Project	Description	Annual commitment
30	COL Knowledge Finder	The COL knowledge finder is a virtual library of content on open and distance learning and development. The project proposes to expand the service to a wider audience of open and distance learning and development practitioners.	
31	Infrastructure and Capacity Building within Post-Secondary Institutions in Commonwealth Small States	This project will support small state national institutions to develop the technology infrastructure and to be trained in the use of the technology to develop content using learning objects and data repositories.	Budget not specified
32	Schoolnet: Supporting Capacity Building of Officials Working in the Area of ICT in Education	This project will build the capacity of policy-makers and practitioners to develop and implement policy on ICT in the school system. It will contribute to the modernising of the education system and ensure that students leaving the school sector of the education system will have the necessary technology application skills to support their further education efforts or their entry into the world of work.	Budget not specified
33	Commonwealth Learning Network (COLEN)	COLEN will act as an e-platform to deliver knowledge and information to Commonwealth countries from any place in the world using advanced but cost-efficient technologies including web conferencing, voice over IP telephony and video conferencing.	£105,100
34	Global Distance Education Network (GDENet)	The Global Distance Education Network (GDENet) is a knowledge guide to distance education designed to help distance education practitioners who are interested in using distance education for human development. The network consists of six internet sites located around the world.	Budget not specified
35	Supporting NEPAD E-Schools as Health Points	COL is working with the NEPAD E-Schools demonstration project to encourage the use of ICT for learning and teaching, thus modernising the education system. This project will support the training of students to enable them to find information from the internet and other appropriate content, make these available to the community and to develop a peer health initiative for proactive use of information and the technology to support health and lifestyle changes.	Budget not specified
36	Putting ICTs in the Hands of Women	By implementing a rights-based approach for livelihoods, Datamation Foundation has been successful in putting ICTs in the hands of the minority women of the predominantly Muslim ghetto – Seelampur-Zaffarabad area in North East Delhi, India. An ICT centre has been set up in the area, a tripartite alliance between Datamation Foundation, UNESCO and Babul Uloom Madrasa (a Muslim orthodox place of learning), designed to create a learning space for the women on their doorsteps. The primary project goals is the development of local content through a participative process for enhancing vocational skills, overcoming the language barrier, increasing the organisational capacity of the beneficiaries, and reinforcing collaborations at the local level. The project envisages assessing the social and economic impact of ICTs in improving the quality of lives of these young women, apart from empowering them economically.	£26,800
37	Community Access ICT for Sustainable Development and Disaster Reduction	The project seeks to develop existing use of mobile phones and the internet by poor urban and rural communities to increase their access to information and their disaster preparedness and warnings. By recognising the key role of small ICT entrepreneurs, such as mobile phone owners and internet/telephone booth operators, in providing access to the poor, the project will use existing good practices and develop new ideas through regional networks to help improve the two-way flow of information between the government and the electorate, improving public involvement, particularly at the local level. It thus encourages entrepreneurship for poverty reduction, local access and connectivity, and regional networking.	£376,300
38	Pro-Poor ICT Capacity Building Proxi-Centres for Out-of-School Youth and Women For Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development	This bottom-up and needs-expressed project aims to deploy a network of ICT proxi-centers in poor neighbourhoods in order to contribute to social appropriation of ICT services, move towards universal access, enrich the communities by improving the economic situation and quality of life of youth and women for their socioeconomic rehabilitation. At its pilot phase, the project will be deployed in Cameroon. Ultimately, the whole region will be covered in such a way to create a critical mass of ICT social users.	£188,100
39	ICT Training for Credit Union Capacity Building in the Eastern Caribbean States	This project aims to strengthen the capacity of the Credit Union Leagues in the Eastern Caribbean region so that they can better support their member credit unions, thus supporting co-operative entrepreneurship and development.	£174,700
40	Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3 Farmers)	The project relates to the use of technologies, and internet kiosks, to train farmers and associated people in agricultural communities and to provide them with access to information that will improve their ability to negotiate favourable process for their products.	Budget not specified
41	Computers for Communities	This is a regional initiative to refurbish used computers and peripherals donated by all Caribbean governments and corporate citizens at a limited number of refurbishment centres for use by schools and at-risk communities. The project will provide infrastructure to support schools, and the refurbished computers will in the process, provide training on computer repair and maintenance for young people, thereby creating employment opportunities. The refurbished computers will assist with expanding connectivity into communities.	£200,000

No.	Project	Description	Cost
42	Towards a Unified Broadband Strategy for the Caribbean	Development of the enabling policy framework and strategy to facilitate cost-effective end-to-end broadband connectivity throughout the Caribbean as a mechanism to support movement of regional content etc. The development of enabling policy will facilitate local connectivity and enable regional networking, by encouraging easy movement of large volumes of digital content throughout the region.	£140,000
43	Community Multimedia Centres (CMC) for Africa's Conflict-Prone Areas	The project builds on international experience in the development of community multimedia centres (CMC) to create a CMC model that can provide information access to communities in Africa's conflict-prone areas. The project seeks to establish a total of six CMCs, two CMCs in each of the following conflict-prone areas/countries: Northern Nigeria, Liberia and Ivory Coast. The core services of a CMC are community radio broadcasting, using development information from the internet where available, as well as, information and communication technology (ICT) training and applications.	£161,200
44	Wireless Broadband Internet (WISP) Deployment for Rural Connectivity and Sustainable Development	The goal is to initiate the correct deployment and implementation of ICT services in such a way that rather than adding to a community's burden, they enrich the community. The project will help improve the economic situation and quality of life of people in pilot rural communities, with the aim of replicating this throughout the region. The project engages with the community to plan the deployment of affordable wireless broadband internet (WISP) within a framework of management information for sustainable development.	£1,612,900
45	Extension of Self-help Community ICT Centres into Tsunami-affected Communities and Deepening of Existing Centres into Multimedia Entities	This project seeks to extend the self-help community ICT centres established in three districts of Tamil Nadu (under the title, 'Empowering Resource-Poor Women to Use ICTs'), to villages severely affected by the 26 December 2004 tsunami, while upgrading the activities of the original three to focus more on a multimedia approach. Post-tsunami communities targeted include groupings of fisher-folk in Chennai, Cuddalore and Nagapattinam.	£32,200
46	Localising Knowledge Societies: Building Information Literacy in Marginalised Communities	The project will develop and pilot a programmatic tool to build the capabilities of remote communities for information literacy. The tool will be developed through participatory learning processes in information literacy and skills in remote and marginalised communities among information and knowledge agents. The project will identify six locations in three Commonwealth countries of South Asia, with existing locally designed initiatives. In selected pilot locations, the project will support appropriate infrastructure development – computers, CD-based materials, internet connectivity – in collaboration with the local and national groups.	£53,700
47	Websites, Improved Email Services, and Telecommunications Training for NGOs Involved in Tsunami Reconstruction Work	This proposal seeks to develop and deploy improved websites, e-mail services and telecommunications for organisations involved in the tsunami reconstruction efforts in Sri Lanka and India. It calls for the development of bilingual, dynamic websites, multiple bilingual e-mail accounts that would allow organisations to send and receive e-mail through any desktop e-mail package in English and the South Asian language of their choice, and training on writing for the web, as well as using e-mail for mass communication.	£24,500
48	Promoting Local Access and Connectivity	The Promotion of Local Access and Connectivity project seeks to address the problem of lack of appropriate ICT resources and infrastructure as a platform deemed necessary for enhancing and promoting e-governance initiatives from the grassroots. This project will create a viable link between the urban and the rural areas; improve information dissemination and flow for informed decision-making; and create employment opportunities for school leavers.	£403,200
49	Rural Telecoop for the Commonwealth	Rural Telecoops will bring together the separate and distinct components needed to establish mini telecommunication networks designed to serve marginalised and/or rural communities. The project seeks to establish a sufficient number of Rural Telecoops in developing Commonwealth countries to contribute to each country achieving connectivity at a scale to e-enable the government and society.	£550,000
50	Rural ICT Development Programme	The main aim of the programme is to ensure that the rural communities in Tanzania get equal access to ICT, taking the districts as the base in launching the services to every village and its people as a long-term goal. The programme will be community centred, promoting initiatives that are accessible universally. A variety of ICTs will be deployed after plans have been prepared and demonstrated in a few districts.	£3,387,100
51	Extending the Reach... Linking Pacific Island Media with their Diaspora	This proposal is for the infrastructure, training, initial operating and support costs associated with taking indigenous Pacific Island media content and distributing it, using the internet, to their people beyond their borders. The project will provide skills training and facilities for Pacific Island electronic media (television and radio) to take their efforts to the next phase of global media development. The project will also allow local traders access to a broader, international market for their local goods and services. This project covers Commonwealth countries in the western South Pacific, including Samoa, Niue, Cook Islands, Tonga, Fiji and New Zealand. It is replicable to other countries.	£26,300 per country (one country selected)
52	Development of the Video/Film Capacity in Caribbean Small Island States	This project seeks to develop local technical capacity in the audio-visual industry in the Caribbean. It seeks to expand and share Media 21's expertise and experience, and develop innovative models for expansion of this skill set. This project intends to build capacity in time for the 2007 Cricket World Cup, to be held in the Caribbean in 2007.	£349,500

#	Project	Description	Budget
53	Preserving our Cultural Heritage – Digital Preservation of Local Cultural Icons in Trinidad and Tobago	This project seeks to record and preserve the knowledge and creativity of our local music icons in a digital format. It seeks to expand on Media 21's expertise and experience, and develop innovative models for preserving our cultural heritage.	£389,700
54	Poverty Reduction Outcomes through Education, Innovations and Networks	The main objective of COL-PROTEIN is to support projects that adopt open and distance learning and information and communication technologies (ICTs) to help build rural capacity in food security, environmental protection, rural development, nutritional education and micro-enterprise.	Budget not specified
55	Information and Communications for Advocacy for Gender Equality	This project focuses on building content and capacity with respect to information and communications for development, gender equality and other women's human rights in Africa. The overall objective of this programme is to enable the collection, analysis and dissemination of strategic information on African women's development, equality and human rights through content production and capacity building.	£327,800
56	Promoting African Women's Participation in E-Governance	The project seeks to develop innovative practices on gender and e-governance at regional and national levels. It will build on current efforts for fostering women's active engagement in policy formulation and implementation. The project will address the lack of participation of rural women in e-governance initiatives in Africa and the need to promote women's empowerment in leadership and governance. The project will also address the low levels of gender-disaggregated data and access to gendered information.	Duplicate of projects
57	Information and Communications for Advocacy for Gender Equality	This project focuses on building content and capacity with respect to information and communications for development, gender equality and other women's human rights in Africa.	Duplicate of projects
58	Support of the Enterprise Development Facility (EDF)	The goal of this project is to support the ongoing development of the Enterprise Development Facility (EDF) established by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The main objective for the creation of this facility was to support women entrepreneurs. The facility provides a platform for women to network and exchange information among women entrepreneurs, and between women entrepreneurs and other stakeholders working in enterprise development such as financial and training institutions, chambers of commerce and institutions specialising in production technologies, as well as those working in enterprise development outside Africa.	Proposal missing
59	Africa Recruit: Virtual Human Resource Forum (VHRF)	The project aims to develop, operate and maintain a Virtual Human Resource Forum (VHRF) for governmental human resource personnel in 50 African countries, and an expert panel of HR professionals in the western industrialised countries. AfricaRecruit will focus on governmental HR personnel because the public sector remains, to date, the most powerful of all sectors, for growth and development in the continent. The VHRF will be technology driven. The soft- and hardware for orchestrating and co-ordinating a global dialogue will be established at, and maintained by, the Offices of AfricaRecruit in the UK. Participation by the selected African HR personnel will be from local cyber-cafes, and the cost (user fees or charges) will be underwritten by AfricaRecruit, using the Commonwealth grant. The forum will be held monthly and each session will last for three hours.	£168,200
60	Africa Diaspora Investment Forum 2005	This proposal requests the partnership of the Commonwealth Secretariat for a roundtable on transportation and information and communication technologies in bridging the gap for diaspora Investments at Africa Diaspora Investment Forum 2005, taking place in London, United Kingdom, 12–17 September 2005. The forum will look at the goals and rationale of the diaspora as an alternate source of foreign direct investment, either as remittances (family/personal investment) or remitting for investment such as small and medium-size enterprises, real estate, stock/capital market and tourism.	£31,450
61	Knowledge Network for Developing Countries	The project aims to unlock skills and creativity in developing countries through an expert knowledge network. Developing countries will have at their disposal knowledge networking tools to which large multinational companies normally have access.	£268,800
62	Caribbean Media Network – Media for All	The Caribbean Media Network aims to provide a strategic platform for the development, promotion and distribution of Caribbean content and services. It will serve as an incubator and training ground for journalists, producers and community-based spokespersons.	Proposal missing

Annex VI: Terms of Reference for Projects and/or Initiatives Financed Under the Commonwealth Connects Programme

ICT Factbook[240]

The purpose of this project was the organisation of information on ICT with regard to member states, which information would be disseminated online and in hard copy for knowledge sharing across the Commonwealth. The project was pronged on two phases. The project deliverables of the first phase were:

- The identification of a CTO or CBA fundraising officer to identify roles and targets, reporting to CTO and with a commitment to consistent communication;

- Development of Fundraising Project Action Plan by CTO and CBA as approved by the CC Steering Committee (that may include SWOT analysis of CTO fundraising capabilities, realistic targets, resources, budgeting and costing);

- Setting up effective monitoring and evaluation practices for each phase of the project;

- Submission of detailed Fundraising Action Plan to CC at the end of Phase 1 deemed acceptable to CC and that includes details of e-marketing activities to be undertaken.

The project deliverables of the second phase were:

- The implementation of a communications, media and marketing strategy to potential funders (including private companies, foundations and trusts) that could be incorporated into existing CTO initiatives and may include:

  - The launch of the initiative through such mechanisms as an event or inclusion within an already scheduled CTO occasion,

  - Creation of a project webpage.

- Partnerships developed with potential funders including existing CTO partners as well as donor agencies such as DfID, CIDA, IDRC, SDC, IICD.

- Depending on the outcome of approaching donor agencies, exploring the possibility of partnering with a publisher as well as individual private sector organisations for sponsorship.

- The delivery of a Fundraising Status Report to the CC Steering Committee during Phase 2 detailing updates on the progress of funding bids and project management.

- The securing of project funding for the Commonwealth ICT Factbook and receipt of confirmation correspondence from the funder.

- Development of Final Report to the CC Steering Committee detailing overall project and funding outcomes as well, as a detailed analysis of project management.

RIVERS[241]

The objectives for this project were that of securing sustainable funding for the RIVERS Project. The project was pronged on two phases. The deliverables of the first phase where:

- The identification of a CTO or Uniworks fundraising officer to identify roles and targets, reporting to CTO and with a commitment to consistent communication;

- Development of Fundraising Project Action Plan as approved by the CC Steering Committee (that may include SWOT analysis of CTO or Uniworks fundraising capabilities, realistic targets, resources, budgeting and costing, recruitment and capacity building);

- Setting up effective monitoring and evaluation practices for each phase of the project;

- Submission of detailed Fundraising Action Plan to CC at the end of Phase 1 deemed acceptable to CC and that includes details of e-marketing activities to be undertaken.

The deliverables of the second phase were the following:

- The implementation of a communications, media and marketing strategy to potential funders (including private companies, foundations and trusts) that could be incorporated into existing CTO initiatives and may include:

  – The launch of the initiative through such mechanisms as an event or inclusion within an already scheduled CTO occasion,

  – Creation of a project webpage.

- The delivery of a Fundraising Status Report to the CC Steering Committee during Phase 2 detailing updates on the progress of funding applications and project management.

- Partnerships developed with potential funders (that may include the State Government of Chattisgarh, One World International Foundation, Government of India, Reuters Digital Vision Program at Stanford University, USA) and securing project funding and receipt of confirmation correspondence from the funder.

- Uniworks must provide needs analysis data that may derive from project development and fieldwork undertaken within beneficiary countries. This information must be available to the CC Steering Committee on request.

- Development of Final Report to the CC Steering Committee detailing overall project and funding outcomes, as well as a detailed analysis of project management.

Africa Recruit[242]

The project was directed towards assisting the Commonwealth Business Council and the Virtual Career Guidance Service to establish the Africa Recruit programme on an online platform. The project was pronged on two phases. The deliverables of the first phase were:

- The identification of a fundraising officer within CBC or Africa Recruit to identify roles and targets, reporting to CTO and with a commitment to consistent communication;

- Development of Fundraising Project Action Plan in collaboration with Africa Recruit as approved by the CC Steering Committee (that may include SWOT analysis of CBC/Africa Recruit's fundraising capabilities, realistic targets, resources, budgeting and costing, recruitment and capacity building);

- Setting up effective monitoring and evaluation practices for each phase of the project;

- Submission of a detailed Fundraising Action Plan to CC at the end of Phase 1 deemed acceptable to CC and that includes details of e-marketing activities to be undertaken.

The deliverables of the second phase were the following:

- The implementation of a communications, media and marketing strategy to potential funders (including private companies, foundations and trusts) that could be incorporated into existing CBC and Africa Recruit initiatives and may include:

  – The launch of the initiative through such mechanisms as an event or inclusion within an already scheduled CBC occasion.

  – Creation of a project webpage (that may incorporate a demonstration of the prototype version of the service).

- The delivery of a Fundraising Status Report to the CC Steering Committee during Phase 2 detailing updates on the progress of funding applications and project management.

- Partnerships developed with potential funders (that may include existing CBC funders, recruitment industry businesses and youth education funders) and the securing of project funding and receipt of confirmation correspondence from funder.

- Africa Recruit must provide needs analysis data that may derive from project development and fieldwork undertaken within beneficiary countries. This information must be available to the CC Steering Committee on request.

- Development of Final Report to the CC Steering Committee detailing overall project and funding outcomes, as well as a detailed analysis of project management.

Computers for Communities[243]

The project consisted of an initiative to refurbish used computers and peripherals donated by governments and corporate citizens at a limited number of refurbishments centres for use by schools and at risk communities. The project consisted of four phases:

a. Phase 1: Feasibility Study – a report on the viability of a Computer Refurbishment Programme in the socio-technical and economic context of Trinidad and Tobago. The study sought to investigate at a minimum, but is not restricted to:

  – The identification of potential partners;

  – Detailed stakeholder analysis;

  – The various models for computer refurbishment centres;

  – The factors that determine the self-sustainability of the computer refurbishment centres;

  – The factors that determine the demand for refurbished computers;

  – The pricing structure that incorporates all the activities and variables that affect the total cost for preparing a computer for redistribution;

  – The identification of potential computer sources;

  – The rules and regulations pertaining to the importation of used computers;

  – A detailed SWOT analysis for the implementation of a Computer Refurbishment Centre.

b. Phase 2: Stakeholder Consultation – a report that details findings from Stakeholder Consultation and Workshops and an Amended Project Proposal based on consultation feedback.

c. Phase 3: Implementation and Operation of a Pilot Centre – that accurately portrays and demonstrates the essence of the Computer Refurbishment Program. The pilot should seek to address an operating model for a Computer Refurbishment Centre in the context of Trinidad and Tobago. The operation of the pilot would include but shall not be limited to:

  – The location and establishment of refurbishment facility;

  – The recruitment of facility Human Resource – management and staff;

  – The establishment of supply chain;

  – The recommended minimum specifications acceptance standards;

  – The refurbishment of machines;

  – The recommended minimum standard computer for redistribution;

  – Testing guidelines;

  – Quality Assurance: appearance and checklist;

  – Packaging and distribution guidelines;

  – The establishment of an appropriate Inventory Management System;

  – The environmental approved method for the disposal of unusable material.

d. Phase 4: Development of a detailed action plan and roll-out strategy for Computer Refurbishment Centres – which must build on the results of Phases 1, 2 and 3. It must include the results of the stakeholder consultation. The Plan must be immediately

actionable and must be structured in such a format that all the required information and details for roll-out is in an appropriate format, including GANTT charts, specifications, budgets, risk plan, promotion and awareness etc. The following matters were to be taken into account in designing the implementation plan:

– The finalisation of a sustainable implementation strategy based on pilot operations for the acquisition, refurbishment and distribution of machines;

– The establishment of a partnership and/or governance framework with the appropriate agency to implement the programme;

– A Centre Operations Manual;

– Design and implement the promotion and awareness strategy;

– The Management and Security Requirements with recommended strategy;

– Design an Evaluation/Measurement Process and Implementation Strategy to assess social, economic and cultural impacts;

– Transition between pilot and full-scale operations.

JOAM[244]

The project was directed to assist the CBC and the Jamaican Organic Agricultural Movement (JOAM) in raising funds in order to organise a workshop directed to develop skills and business competence of small-scale organic women farmers within an informal network called the *Knowing and Growing Network*.

The Network comprised around 100 women who were participants in previous Jamaican Organic Agricultural Movement (JOAM) workshops held in Jamaica, Grenada and Guyana (2004–07). The Workshop sought to build on the momentum established in 2004 to provide customised and comprehensive training programmes to produce trainers

The project had two primary deliverables. The first deliverable was the creation of a Training Manual that would be produced in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme. The second phase consisted of the delivery of a train the trainers workshop. The workshop would target sharing and understanding on matters including, but not limited to:

• The links between organic farming;

• Organic farming principles and certification standards;

• Sustainable livelihoods;

• Disaster mitigation;

• Climate change issues;

• Environmental and biodiversity agreements to which Caribbean governments are signatory;

• Use of information technologies;

• Marketing opportunities and requirements, locally and within the context of the CARICOM Single Market Economy and the World Trade Organization (WTO);

• Application of training to develop materials and approaches adapted to their respective local situations;

• Anchoring of learning from field trips.

COLEN[245]

The purpose of the project was to part-fund the COLEN project. The COLEN project was an electronic network directed to facilitate the flow of learning content from abundant to disadvantaged sources. Network was to ride on connectivity made available by member institutions of the CTO.

The project was designed over three phase. The first phase related to the implementation of the learning content engine, including the:

• Undertaking of a basic needs analysis;

• Implementation of the software system for distribution of learning content, which would be delivered through terminals;

• Engaging Commonwealth agencies to provide distance learning through the COLEN service.

The second phase related to establishing centres in member states to receive learning content with more interactive and robust aids to conduct group/enterprise-wide training. The third phase related to establishing connectivity to expand the service.

COMARCI[246]

The Commonwealth African Rural Connectivity Initiative (COMARCI) comprised five main pillars:

- A knowledge resource platform, based on research and studies;

- Capacity building and training workshops, for best practice sharing;

- A Global Commonwealth Conference, aimed at mobilising investment, funding and technology partnerships;

- Implementation of replicable pilot projects, based on tested examples that work (e.g. 'Hole in the Wall');

- An undertaking by member states to fully implement rural connectivity in their respective countries in accordance with their own individual road maps, but with linkage to COMARCI in terms of joint training, best practices and knowledge sharing.

The project was seen to have the following deliverables:

- Undertaking of a mapping study and gap analysis of the state of rural connectivity in Commonwealth African nations;

- Within the study, the project would identify current e-government initiatives at the local level, especially for the delivery of public and other services to rural communities (such as administering services to tackle HIV/AIDS) and the ICT infrastructure being used to deliver such services;

- Identifying connectivity and ICT-provision gaps for medical centres, whether private or public, and examine possible solutions for filling these gaps;

- Within the study, the project would also aim to identify connectivity and ICT-provision gaps to educational institutions, from the level of junior secondary school through

tertiary institutions (both private and public), including technical and vocational schools, teacher training colleges, polytechnics etc.

- Identifying existing connectivity and ICT-provision gaps for rural-based industries, such as mining, forestry, agro-processing, energy and manufacturing firms, as well as those for artisanal, crafts and village-based industries;

- Inventorise the nature of connectivity infrastructure and providing visuals, photos and maps reflecting fixed telecoms infrastructure, mobile cell sites, internet, and whether by wireless, copper, fibre, satellite, microwaves, or IP-based and identity connectivity gaps;

- Presentation of up to 10 Specific Rural ICT Projects Proposals for submission to funding agencies, technology partners and/or private investors;

- Findings from the study will justify the presentation of possible solutions to a sample of the challenges identified as business opportunities for Commonwealth value-added entrepreneurship training, investment, PPPs, twinning-light partnerships, replicability for 'Hole in the Wall' type ventures or other practical solutions;

- Creation of a glossary and an inventory of country and subject-specific data on African rural communications uncovered through this research, to support the current CC exercise on mapping Commonwealth ICT assets, and for the relevant sections of the CC Portal;

- Creation of a discussion and learning platform for best practices in rural communications, using the CC Portal;

- Organising a number of regional African workshops to present interim findings and to enrich a final report and subsequently to disseminate to other Commonwealth countries which have rural connectivity as an issue;

- Organising a Rural Communications Investment Conference (in either London or a suitable African capital) to match needs/opportunities with funding/ investments/partnership/ technology transfer.

The project was pronged on three phases. The CCP financed the first phase – the objectives of which were:

- Complete literature review of Rural Communications initiatives, guidelines, toolkits and re-define/refine the parameters of the project and obtain buy-in from interested partner agencies, POCs, local research associates etc.

- Engage with POCs to identify status of connectivity in their particular countries with the support of the network of CTO members and feed in to;

    i. Pre-fundraising activities with donor agencies;

    ii. Planning private sector involvement in financing and other contributions and start engaging;

    iii. Finalise the scope of the project and project plan.

'Hole in the Wall'

The project aimed to develop high-quality digital content for an enhanced learning experience at primary and secondary levels of education. The content would be designed for use to specifically to suit the Uganda setting of the 'Hole in the Wall' Learning Stations.

The project would focus on specific areas of study in order to reduce the broader scope of subjects currently undertaken in Uganda. In this regard, the development of content for science-based subjects would contribute to the improvement in sciences in Uganda, as well as contribute to its future sustainability. The project was organised in a number of phases.

The first phase consisted of:

- Acquiring content wherever necessary so that it meets the highest standards of quality education and was prepared in a manner that students could easily assimilate;

- Collection of data related to content development in Uganda directed to assist in the identification of requirements necessary for developing the most appropriate content for Uganda, including the identification of the design methods, content type and delivery methods;

- Working with partnerships, including building partnerships with educational and government institutions including the National Institute of Open Schools (NIOS), India; National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT), India; Indira Ghandi National Open University (IGNOU) India; Centre for Science, Development and Media Studies (CSDMS), India; Ministry of Education and Sports, Uganda; Ministry of ICT, Uganda.

The second phase involved the development and customisation of the digital content, based on problem-based learning, learning-object concepts and games. The development of the content was to be based on a three-pronged methodology: (i) instructional design; (ii) content delivery; and (iii) evaluation. Content was to be developed in a manner that allowed for portability across different platforms. During this phase, teachers were to be inducted in ICT education as administrators, facilitators, technical support and evaluation.

The third phase consisted of the dissemination of the courseware through the 'Hole in the Wall' project and to all subscribed schools or individuals via a two pronged approach:

- CD-ROMS; content will be packaged on CD-ROMs and distributed to the different schools and centres with restricted or no internet connection;

- Web-Portal; a web-portal will be created to facilitate easy access to content.

National ICT Policy for the Government of Belize[247]

The goal of the scoping exercise was to establish the parameters for the design of a National ICT Policy for Belize, directed to assist the Government of Belize, among other matters, to bridge the digital divide. The objectives set for the study were that of:

- Carrying out a technical mission to 'kick-start' the National ICT Strategy development process in Belize;

- Preparing a Small State Network for Economic Development Funding Proposal;

- Creating appropriate working groups for the ICT Strategy;

- Designing and forming a project management programme;

- Preparing the government administration to enable earliest quick start through project and technical expertise;

- Assessing funding options for the development of the strategy (not its implementation, at this stage).

Developing and Maintaining a Commonwealth Connects Network Group[248]

The SC of the CCP in 2009 provided a grant to COMNET-IT to establish a functioning network of interlocutors. The principal role of these contacts was to identify or validate aspects of ICT development where they could seek assistance within the scope of the CCP. A secondary role was for them to contribute to the ICT Assets Inventory.

The objectives of this project were to continue to capitalise on the investment in relaunching the CCP during the period 2009–12 with the POCs by:

- Maintaining and updating the details of the POC network;

- Engaging all POCs in the objectives and values of the CCP and promoting opportunities for knowledge transfer;

- Maintaining the Commonwealth Connects Programme website;

- Keeping these contacts informed on CIGF and CCI developments;

- Keeping an open invitation to the POCs to provide information on ICT needs and challenges, which can then be conveyed to the Commonwealth Secretariat;

- Providing regular updates relating to the CCP, as well as information on capacity-building opportunities available to member states.

Encouraging the POCs to seek country endorsement of the planned SC report on the CCP and its recommendations regarding the future of the programme to CHOGM in 2013.

The deliverables set for the project were:

- Securing the availability of the CCP Network of POCs as a vehicle to promote the values (and projects) of the Commonwealth in matters relating to ICT4D;

- Securing additional content to ICT Assets Inventory;

- Ensuring that through the network, COMNET-IT would be well positioned to assist the Secretariat in the development of the 2013 CHOGM Report and its subsequent endorsement;

- Providing regular updates to the Commonwealth Connects SC on network developments;

- Migrating the POC network to the Secretariat's Connects platform.

Establishing and Maintaining an Inventory of ICT Wealth[249]

The setting up of an inventory setting out what member states have offered by way of policies, legislation, best practice, strategies, technical expertise, methodologies and business applications and software in the public domain. The inventory would be an online resource base comprising a repository of documents and links to existing online resources that are available and would thus serve as a catalogue of knowledge on CCP activity.

The terms of reference for this project were the:

- Review existing CC initiatives (COMARCI, ICT Factbook, COMNET – ICT Inventory) for currency and relevance of information.

- Creation of an inventory of ICT wealth though formal (requests and surveys) and informal (secondary sources, capacity building workshops, etc.) sources.

- Development of a sustainability strategy and process to maintain currency of information.

- Targeting of high-priority information needs, which would be analysed, synthesised and compiled in a structured format by category and donor country. Web links would be established where this is practicable.

- Leverage of information gathered by other organisations to populate the inventory e.g. ITU.

- Development of an online information repository.

- Assessment of the feasibility and examining mechanisms for promotion of the inventory use for community and network building.

The outcomes for the project were set as follows:

- Year 1 targets were the development of the online resources; development of the sustainability strategy and procedures; identification of primary and secondary resources; the analysis, synthesisation and compilation of the high-priority information needs.

- Year 2 targets were the further development of primary and secondary resources and review of existing data; the undertaking of the feasibility of community-building tools and activities and presentation of an action plan.

Development of Multi-faced Partnerships[250]

The project sought to design for CCP an effective engagement strategy to identify and build high-level network partnerships with international organisations, funding agencies, the private sector and civil society, which would in turn be tapped to fund individual projects. The terms of reference for the project were the:

- Development, on the basis of information gathered through the Champions Network and the Inventory of ICT Wealth, of a roadmap to assist the CC programme in engaging other organisations;

- Identification of organisations to develop partnerships;

- Development of an engagement strategy and areas of mutual interest;

- Organisation or participation in networking events that target a broad base of different stakeholder groups including the private sector, international organisations, development banks and funding agencies;

- Establishment of healthy and ongoing public-private partnerships for projects.

The outcomes for this project were identified as the:

- Participation of ABC countries in the Commonwealth Connects Programme;

- Engagement of development banks from the respective Commonwealth regions – Asia, Africa and the Caribbean;

- Engagement of funding agencies;

- Establishment of public-private partnerships;

- The carrying out of a Commonwealth Connects Partnership event in conjunction with CHOGM 2011.

Creating a Project Management Structure[251]

The project was directed towards introducing an effective monitoring, management, evaluation and co-ordination structure. The terms of reference for the project were to:

- Develop effective criteria for selecting projects or initiatives;

- Create an effective and transparent process for monitoring project progress;

- Develop a project reporting mechanism for CC SC reporting.

Promoting Local Access and Connectivity[252]

The purpose of this project was to ensure that the CCP was active in strategic networks and forums such as the Government Advisory Committee to ICANN, WIGF, CTO and industry associations or networks. Key activities included:

- Representation at regional and international meetings of entities relating to telecommunications and policy such as ICANN, WIGF, ITU;

- Representation at international meetings organised by UN and development agencies related to the Millennium Development Goals, especially where ICT for development was part of the agenda;

- Contribution to the Commonwealth Connects Partnership event in conjunction with CHOGM 2011.

Commonwealth Internet Governance Forum[253]

This project related to the creation of a Commonwealth Internet Government Forum (CIGF) to create awareness of the CC Programme and provide a unified and strong voice on ICT policies/issues at the international level.

The purpose of the project was to create a platform that would provide the Commonwealth with a unified and single voice to influence IGF policies at an international level and ensure that issues in the Commonwealth family are heard and taken seriously. The terms of reference for the project were:

- To promote awareness of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) among policy-makers and stakeholders from industry, civil society and academia in Commonwealth member countries;

- To establish IGF links around the Commonwealth with the particular aim of securing the engagement of those Commonwealth member countries which have not previously participated in the Internet Governance Forum;

- To foster links between Commonwealth national and regional IGFs and the identify areas of common concern such as affordable and secure access for all;

- To provide a forum for stakeholders from Commonwealth member countries to discuss and formulate Commonwealth-wide policies, best practice and position papers to be tabled at the IGF in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, on 16–18 November 2009;

- To inform national positions on public policy issues for the good governance of the internet and provide a forum for Commonwealth members to enable them to work towards formulating Commonwealth-wide policies or positions to be tabled at the IGF.

The CCP further extended its financing of the project in 2013 to enable the participation of 10 Commonwealth fellows to participate at the Annual Internet Governance Forum in 2013 in Indonesia.

The deliverables set for the project included:

- Presentation of a report of the activities of the CIGF for 2013;

- An accounting to the SC for the CCP on how funds were spent and benefits derived;

- A compilation of reports from the awarded Commonwealth Fellows on their participation at the IGF and the benefits derived from this experience;

- Maintaining and supporting the CIGF Website, blog and repositories;

- Securing a cohort of Commonwealth ambassadors in the beneficiaries of this initiative.

M-Government Toolkit for Small States[254]

The purpose of this project was to develop an m-governance strategy for a small island state. The state chosen was Vanuatu. The strategy would also be used as the basis to develop an application toolkit that would guide other governments in the development of their own comprehensive country-specific and appropriate m-governance strategies. The toolkit would be in the form of a digital application that can be used by multistakeholders in formulating m-governance strategy.

The terms of reference for the project were:

- A review of literature on e-government and m-government, specifically for small island states.

- A review of selected e/m-government frameworks/strategies for Vanuatu.

- The carrying out of a desk-based consultation with m-government experts and officials in charge of e-governance in key Commonwealth countries. This would enable the CTO team undertake a needs assessment, as well as learn which Commonwealth countries have m-governance strategies in place or are seeking to develop them in the near future. It will also enable the team to start building a list of possible m-governance case studies for a final report.

- The development of a case studies report, including regulatory standards.

- The development of an m-governance application toolkit for developing strategy that can be used by multistakeholders without the need for external help.

The deliverables of the project were:

- The presentation of an inception report, outlining CTO's refined final approach to the project, which would be developed after initial consultations with identified key stakeholders in Vanuatu and the CCP.

- The design and creation of an application toolkit built upon practical, effective examples on how to develop m-governance strategy based on the case studies. The end result would be an m-governance application toolkit that provides guidance to the Commonwealth on how to develop strategy and realise it.

- The articulation of key regulatory issues facing those countries seeking to leverage mobiles for development and provide guidance on the regulatory measures that can be taken to develop the enabling environment for m-government.

- The identification of lessons learned and what renders implementation realisable.

Digital Connections[255]

The aim of this project, which the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association planned to roll out across additional regions, was to build the new social media capacity and skills of broadcast content producers and journalists in the Caribbean, enabling them to integrate new digital and social media technology with broadcast output. The project objectives were to:

- Facilitate and support an integrated broadcast/new media strategy for public service information provision by broadcasters in the Caribbean;

- Engage public service broadcasters in the Caribbean with the Digital Connections initiative;

- Facilitate an initial scoping study into new media use in the Caribbean;

- Provide an opportunity for Caribbean broadcast journalists and media managers to meet and engage with relevant, international social media developers and entrepreneurs;

- Facilitate the development of broadcast-linked games and social media initiatives that focus on public service information provision, especially related to climate adaptation and disaster.

Endnotes

240. Terms of Reference, documentation to minutes of the Steering Committee of the Commonwealth Connects Programme
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