

GLOBAL INTERNET POLICY INITIATIVE

A project of
Internews Network
and the
Center for Democracy and Technology



2005-2006
Activities

Promoting the growth of a decentralized, accessible, user-controlled, and market-driven Internet



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The Global Internet Policy Initiative (GIPI): Charting a Course for Digital Communications Policy in Developing Countries Worldwide

Executive Summary

The Global Internet Policy Initiative (GIPI) fosters the growth of an open, widely available, and affordable Internet by providing in-depth digital communications policy analysis, training and assistance to Internet advocates in developing countries. GIPI is a joint program of Internews Network and the Center for Democracy and Technology (CDT). Since 2001, it has supported local policy advocates in 20 countries with expert advice on the enabling environment for Internet expansion. GIPI is guided by the proposition that broad access to an open Internet can deepen democracy, promote free expression, nurture the growth of citizen-driven media, support economic and human development, and strengthen civil society.

In the six years since GIPI's inception, the Internet has become a truly global medium. The ongoing transition to broadband, the convergence of the Internet with other communications and information media, and the emergence of the Internet as a tool for global commerce pose many new policy challenges and opportunities. At the same time, the value of the medium as a tool for free expression and democracy has only increased. The Internet offers innovative technologies -- wikis, weblogs, podcasts and the like -- that facilitate communication and community and give citizens greater power to speak and for millions of others to listen and to respond. However, full realization of the Internet's potential depends on a public policy framework that values openness and decentralized control.

CDT and Internews intend to expand on GIPI's successful model by leveraging the knowledge and experience of the current members of the GIPI network and using the powerful collaborative tools available on the Internet to build a global community of policy advocates and experts committed to promoting the Internet's unique openness. In the next three years, we intend to:

- expand the GIPI network of local Internet policy advocates in developing and transitional countries,
- provide ongoing support for locally initiated projects,
- strengthen the channels of communication and collaboration among GIPI members through the robust use of new technologies,
- broaden our international "brain trust" of pro bono legal and technical support for GIPI members, and
- convene the GIPI membership in strategically important locations (such as the Internet Governance Forum) at least twice annually for training, information sharing and network building.

Background

The Internet and related communications technologies are central to social development, commerce, free expression, and democratic participation. Even in countries where Internet penetration is low, the importance of the Internet to all aspects of life is growing every day. In recognition of this, for the past six years, GIPI activities in more than 20 developing and transitional countries have promoted the adoption of legal and regulatory frameworks that support the growth of a user-controlled Internet – an Internet that can drive economic growth and advance free expression and human development. GIPI Country Coordinators have worked to convene stakeholders, promote dialogue and build informed consensus. They provide objective, internationally-informed expertise on policy issues, comment on draft legislation, and assist policymakers and civil society in achieving a better understanding of the legal environment needed for the Internet to develop as a positive force for society.

For example, in India, GIPI worked to remove legal restrictions on wireless technologies and Internet telephony creating an enabling environment for wider access to ICT. In Vietnam, GIPI contributed to the development of an e-transactions law that gave legal recognition to online financial transactions, enhancing trust in e-commerce and encouraging the growth of the Internet. In several countries, GIPI advocacy was critical in reducing or eliminating burdensome licensing requirements on ISPs.

Developing countries face many hurdles in their efforts to capitalize on the benefits of the Internet, but one of the most critical is their own policy environment. The Internet is not independent of national legal and regulatory frameworks. To the contrary, policies supporting competition, innovation, and trust can promote development of the Internet, while burdensome government regulation can quash its growth and the lack of clear laws can permit government officials to arbitrarily interfere with new channels of communication. Outdated licensing requirements, inadequate attention to security and privacy, and the lack of a modern intellectual property framework can impede entrepreneurship and creativity.

The Internet has proven its power. Even in some of the most repressive regimes, it is the only independent source of information not subject to systematic censorship. However, more and more countries have moved from a posture of “benign neglect” toward the Internet to one of intervention and control. Even when a country’s policy intentions are laudable, the lack of knowledge can yield counterproductive strategies. The situation is doubly difficult for many countries: while still struggling to create competitive markets for basic telecommunications services, they are facing the policy challenges of convergence and the broadband Internet.

Simply put, as the Internet continues to evolve, there is a critical need to train and support Internet policy advocates who can provide objective, expert assistance to government officials, emerging Internet companies, and non-governmental organizations, crafting policy frameworks conducive to further Internet development.

The GIPI Approach

GIPI works at the local level, country-by-country. The majority of GIPI members are based in developing and transitional countries. Some are entirely independent NGOs; others are part of the Internews network. Indeed, the project’s goal is to create sustainable local NGOs. In each case, there is at least one full-time policy coordinator (not an expatriate). With a mix of expertise in law, technology and public policy, these Country Coordinators combine the roles of convener, advocate and think tank, working for practical, real-world solutions that enhance free expression, privacy, open access and democracy in the rapidly evolving digital age.

While the specific issues and methods vary in response to local conditions, a frequent initial aim is to create a roundtable or dialogue involving all stakeholders – communications service providers, ISPs, creators and publishers of content, NGOs, universities, government officials, and foreign investors.

Informed by international norms and backed up by CDT’s policy expertise (and the expertise of GIPI’s expanding base of global experts), these broad-based working groups seek to develop consensus around policy reforms that will promote development of an open, innovative, market-based Internet. In addition to their convening role, GIPI members engage in public policy advocacy. They organize public forums, educate policymakers, and produce reports and online information resources.

For example, GIPI members have successfully opposed legislation in several countries that would have heavily regulated web sites and restricted free expression online. In other countries, GIPI’s approach has led to the reform of telecommunications laws, promoting competition and thereby making it easier to open independent avenues for communication and access to information.

GIPI's successes also include development of e-government projects, localization of Internet standards and content, and establishment of long-distance learning programs. These projects complement GIPI's policy work by demonstrating the concrete benefits of ICTs to government, business and society.

GIPI promotes the following principles:

Transparency

Regulatory and legislative processes should be transparent and open. Businesses and individuals should have ready access to all laws, regulations and judicial rulings, including draft laws and regulations, and access to government decision-making processes.

Support for Entrepreneurship

Legal systems should support innovation, allowing small businesses and other start-ups to achieve legal status, attract investment and pursue operations without delay. Laws should reduce the risk of arbitrary government action, promote competition, and provide certainty while allowing flexibility.

Telecommunications Liberalization

- Privatization and competition: Privatization and competition can drive down prices, promote investment and spur the deployment of affordable services.
- Non-discrimination: Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and competitors should have access to the services and facilities of incumbent operators on a non-discriminatory basis.
- Independent and effective regulators.
- Price reforms and universal service.

Licensing

Licensing requirements should not restrict market entry. Licensing of ISPs is not needed: The marketplace and ordinary business law are sufficient to protect consumers.

Technical Standards

Conformance to international standards, based on openness, broad participation and interoperability, will promote innovation, growth and expanded access.

Training and Public Access

The government has an essential role in training technicians knowledgeable in telephony, networking, and programming, as well as ensuring that the broader population understands the Internet and has access through, for example, public access points.

Local Language Content

Industry, government and NGOs should support the creation of Web site content, browsers and other software in local languages.

Intellectual Property

Adequate protection must be established for intellectual property, to provide a sound basis for e-commerce, investment and innovation.

Consumer Confidence

Privacy and consumer protection promote the trust necessary for e-commerce to flourish.

Future Vision for GIPI

The four priorities facing GIPI are:

1. *Identifying and providing seed funding and training for promising new GIPI members.* We want to expand the GIPI network by creating or supporting additional local organizations involved in Internet policy reform. New GIPI members might include developing country NGOs that are already involved in ICT activities and want to expand into policy reform. Africa and Central/South America are likely targets for GIPI expansion. Looking forward, we hope to see a variety of new GIPI projects and GIPI members in an increasing number of countries – a strong network sharing local experiences and global expertise.
2. *Sustaining the effectiveness of current GIPI members* through ongoing provision of legal and policy expertise. CDT and Internews Network will continue to provide GIPI members ongoing advice on legal, technological, and strategic advocacy issues, through in-person consultations and online communications. To deepen our support of local advocates, we would like to broaden our international “brain trust” of pro bono legal and technical support for GIPI members.
3. *Expanding our networking and training.* We want to strengthen the capacity of GIPI members through networking and training meetings. These could be combined with a significant event such as an iLaw Seminar, the Internet Governance Forum, or the Computers, Freedom and Privacy (CFP) conference. These get-togethers would also include meetings with leaders from the ICT industry and policy spheres. For example, we brought members of the GIPI network to Washington in May 2006 for the CFP conference and meetings with Washington policymakers, providing the kind of valuable insights that can come only from personal interaction.
4. *Significantly upgrading our collaborative tools* and expanding the GIPI policy web site, www.internetpolicy.net, hosted at CDT, to take advantage of new social networking tools and technologies and to build a dynamic resource for the GIPI community that will enhance communication and shared learning and encourage collaboration with others working on similar problems in developing countries. Through these and other means, GIPI will help local members connect with their counterparts and with experts from more developed countries.

GIPI Afghanistan

Despite a poor economy and limited infrastructure due to more than two decades of war, Afghanistan is making efforts to support ICT growth, particularly in telecommunications. Although the government passed a new telecom law in late 2005, no policies exist for the Internet, and usage remains very low.

BUILDING ICTS

Two decades of conflict destroyed the country's telecommunications sector, which was government-run. The Internet was banned under the Taliban. After the fall of the Taliban in 2001, the Afghan government quickly embraced private investment from GSM providers, but has moved more slowly in planning for other aspects of ICT growth.

Compared to other developing countries, the Afghan government is using ICTs extensively. Almost all ministries have computing resources available, through donor funding. In fact, e-mail is the most reliable form of communications apart from two-way radios or satellite phones. There are more than 100 cyber cafes in Kabul; some operate around the clock. The largest number of users are educated Afghans and journalists.

Since the establishment of the new government, almost 3 million people have returned to Afghanistan. Media of all kinds are growing. However, infrastructure and human resources remain a challenge. The digital divide is prevalent: while some people can afford to pay for technologies, the majority of the country does not have access.



McIntosh Technical Services

The installation of broadband Internet at the King's Palace in Afghanistan by a Canadian company, McIntosh Technical Services.

GIPI-AF PRINCIPAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Creation of the National ISP Association

After months of advocacy and coordination, the Global Internet Policy Initiative – Afghanistan successfully initiated the establishment of the first

National ISP Association of Afghanistan (NISPAA). The association now counts seven members, including the country's largest ISPs. GIPI-AF is an honorary and founding member of NISPAA.

ABOUT GIPI AFGHANISTAN

GIPI in Afghanistan (www.gipi.net.af) is a joint project of Internews Europe (Paris, France), the Institute for Information Law (University of Amsterdam, Netherlands), Political Intelligence (Brussels, Belgium), and the Afghan Computer Science Association (Kabul, Afghanistan). 90% of the project is financed by the Asia IT&C program of Europe Aid (European Commission) under the name of Promoting Internet Policy and Regulatory Reform in Afghanistan.

Promoting Legalization of “Voice over IP”

In addition to presenting case studies to the government for “Voice over IP” legalization, GIPI-AF organized a seminar designed to bring GSM providers, ISPs and government officials to the table for a candid discussion on the issue. Following the seminar, the Minister of Communications instructed the country’s Telecom Regulatory Authority (TRA) to move the legalization process forward.

Engaging Civil Society in ICT Development

GIPI-AF successfully lobbied the UNDP to organize a side conference on the role of civil society and ICTs during the country’s first national ICT conference, which was otherwise dominated by speeches from government officials and the private sector.

Advising on a National ICT Council

GIPI-AF provided guidance on the structure and objectives of a planned national ICT council. The council will advise the government on planning and promoting ICT growth.

GIPI ACTIVITIES

GIPI-AF is currently:

- Researching and writing an assessment of the state of telecommunications and Internet development in Afghanistan; the report will provide a comprehensive picture of the ICT sector in the country.
- Preparing case studies to use in lobbying the Ministry of Finance to provide tax relief for computer hardware and software; currently, custom taxes on these items are very high.
- Organizing workshops on Internet basics and raising awareness about e-governance for members of the Afghan Parliament.
- Working with the Telecomm Regulatory Board as it begins to draft Internet regulations.
- Strengthening the capacity of associations, like the National ISP Association of Afghanistan.
- In conjunction with the Ministry of Education, identifying ways to bring ICTs into Afghanistan’s classrooms.
- Following-up on the progress of voice over IP legalization and civil society inclusion in ICT development.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The Afghanistan National Development Strategy, a government-wide plan to promote growth, generate wealth and reduce poverty, includes scarce mention about ICT development. GIPI-AF is in a unique position to lobby government bodies and experts to give more prominent attention to ICTs. The Internet should play a growing role in the information landscape in Afghanistan as well as in the economic development of the country. Raising awareness about the role of the Internet in improving democratic governance and the lives of Afghanistan’s people is one of GIPI Afghanistan’s key goals.



At a Glance*

Population: 31 million

GNI per capita: USD \$190

Internet Users
(per 1,000 people): 1

Tele-density
(per 100 inhabitants): 6.27 lines

Main (Fixed) Lines: 250,000

Mobile Cellular
Subscribers: 1.7 million

E-Government Readiness
Index (scale 0-1): N/A

Contact

GIPI Afghanistan
Mohammad Jan Khan Watt
13th Floor,
Ministry of Communications
ACSA Offices
Kabul Afghanistan

Phone: (+ 93) 799 000 505
www.gipi.net.af

Javid Hamdard
Country Coordinator
javidhamdard@gipi.net.af

*Sources: “2006 Information & Communications for Development (IC4D)”, The World Bank Group; CIA World Factbook; and Telecom Assessment Report (December 2006).

GIPI Algeria

Just a few years ago, Algerians who wanted a telephone line installed faced a seven-year wait from the state-owned monopoly, and even after they received service, the quality was poor and prices were high. In 2000, less than 6% of the population had telephones and only a tiny fraction had Internet access.

ASSISTING TELECOM, INTERNET IN ALGERIA

Recently, the Algerian government initiated a comprehensive liberalization of the telecommunications marketplace to address the critical infrastructure challenge.

At the beginning of 2005, Internews launched a GIPI project, “Assisting the Internet in Algeria,” to assist in reforming Algeria’s Internet-related policies. The project was completed in March 2006. The project helped the Algerian government and private sector stakeholders address the policy reforms needed to expand Internet access and use. Internews staff worked with government officials to identify and reduce regulatory barriers to Internet development. At the same time, Internews collaborated with business, media and civil society organizations, advising them on technical issues and assisting them in advocating effectively for expanded Internet access.

GIPI ACTIVITIES

Interconnection is the Key to Internet Access

One of the first tasks that GIPI Algeria took on was an Internet assessment, which identified interconnection as a key to increased Internet access and lower prices for Internet use. The project worked with stakeholders to prioritize policy concerns. These discussions, accompanied by a press briefing and roundtable discussion, led

to acceptance by the Government of Algeria (GoA) and stakeholders of the need to focus on regulatory policies affecting (a) interconnection and (b) low computer skills and penetration. In March 2006, the GoA moved to liberalize VoIP, which was also suggested in the assessment.

The project developed a Study Tour to the U.S. and two in-country workshops to better inform regulators how interconnection policy could be reformed within the Algerian legal and policy framework. Representatives from the Ministry of Post and Technologies for Information and Communication (MPTIC), the President of the Association of Algerian ISPs, and a senior newspaper journalist of *El Watan* took part in the study tour. Workshops included one on interconnection and another at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

Building on these and other intensive trainings, a number of stakeholder meetings led to an interconnection



KAMEL MERARDA

ARPT-FCC Plague presented to the President.

agreement between *Algerie Telecom* and the second operator, resulting in the second operator being able to launch service in March 2006.

A Shared Mission for All Stakeholders

The project worked to create consensus through regular dialogue and information exchange among the ICT community, civil society organizations, and the MPTIC. This process, led by the private sector and convened by the project, included press briefings, consultations, roundtable discussions and periodic meetings with government officials. It resulted in the mutual development of a *Framework of Principles for Internet Development in Algeria*.

ABOUT GIPI ALGERIA

The *Internet Policy Reform in Algeria Project* (S-NEAPI-05GR-I26) was funded by the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) and implemented through the USAID-funded dot-GOV Program, led by Internews Network.

Building a Roadmap for MPTIC

The project worked to provide the MPTIC with a roadmap for addressing additional policy issues relevant to Internet use and access, including e-commerce and universal service. A report on reform of the ICT sector, with particular reference to development affecting the Internet, was written in consultation with the Ministry as both a review of progress made to date and an identification of remaining areas for public and private activities designed to increase Internet access and use.

A Local and Sustainable Internet Advisory Council (IAC)

The newly formed IAC is comprised of representatives of ICT business associations and civil society organizations. The aim of the council is to provide a consultative framework through which members can advocate for Internet development, policy changes and implementation of internationally accepted Internet-related standards.

Creating the Internet Merit Badge for Scouts

The Project worked to address the low rate of Internet usage among Algerian youth by initiating the process for the creation of an Internet merit badge for scouts. As part of collaborations with MPTIC, GIPI proposed the creation of what is believed to be the first Internet merit badge by any national scouting organization. The Algerian scout organization, under sponsorship of the IAC, developed a program of requirements

for the merit badge, an implementation plan and a related funding proposal with assistance from GIPI. Initial preparatory work on the merit badge manual and a training program took place at the close of the project. Funding is being sought for a full program.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Funding for GIPI in Algeria ended in March 2006. Although currently there is no GIPI activity in the country, a lot of work remains to be done. "The Algerian telecommunications reform program introduced remarkably successful competition on a progressive, sensibly paced timetable," said Project Director Bill Garrison. "That reform has expanded consumer options, especially in the form of expanding cellular services, widely available cybercafés and increasing options for broadband access, and has set the stage for substantial growth in Internet use." There is a need for continued technical assistance to maintain the momentum.



At a Glance*

Population: 32 million

GNI per capita: USD \$2,280

Internet Users
(per 1,000 people): 46

Tele-density
(per 1000 inhabitants): 99 lines

Mobile Cellular
Subscribers
(per 1000 inhabitants): 151

E-Government Readiness
Index (scale 0-1): .25

Contact

Internews Network
1640 Rhode Island Ave. St. 7
Washington DC, 20036
USA
+1.202.833.5740 ext. 204

Inna Rotenberg
Senior Program Associate GIPI/ICT
Policy Development
irotenberg@internews.org

*Sources: "2006 Information & Communications for Development (IC4D)", The World Bank Group; CIA World Factbook.



Scouts in a Batna section, Algeria.

GIPI Armenia

The Internet has given Armenia, which is a landlocked developing country, a window onto the rest of the world. Unlike television or radio, the Internet is a two-way communications medium. It has improved Armenians' access to worldwide information and provided the population with new business opportunities as well as entertainment.

BABY STEPS TO BETTER INTERNET ACCESS

In an interview with Internews Report, David Sandukhchyan, GIPI Armenia Country Coordinator, discussed his vision for the future of ICT in Armenia: "The Internet provides a unique opportunity for the realization of the fundamental human rights of freedom of speech, expression and communication ... I am hoping that public policy will address IT education, computer literacy and Internet connectivity. I hope that the Internet will become an important element of Armenian day-to-day life and work." However, while GIPI has contributed to positive policy changes, challenges still remain: Sandukhchyan states that his greatest frustration is the lack of willingness among authorities to promote the information society. At the end of the day, Sandukhchyan says, "When I see that more people are thinking the way we do, it means that we have made some real changes."

Like other countries in the region, Armenia has a strong commitment to integrating itself into the European economy. Armenia looks to European standards as a target for the country's ICT development. Although there has been significant progress in the software industry, as well as ICT applications (e-commerce and e-government), a low

level of Internet penetration hinders the population from gaining real benefits from these achievements. Computer literacy in rural areas also remains an issue.

During the last three years, NGO efforts supported by international donors have produced improvements in access to the Internet and other telecommunication services. This is mainly due to the adoption of a new legal and regulatory framework. The number of Internet users has been significantly increased, GPRS services by a new mobile operator (Vivacell) were introduced, and access through WiFi connectivity has had significant growth.

Obstacles to ICT development:

The major barriers to Internet growth in Armenia include:

- The high cost and low quality



David Sandukhchyan, right, directs the newly established Internews Center for Information Law and Policy in Armenia and is Country Coordinator of the Global Internet Policy Initiative in Armenia.

of Internet services due to the monopoly held by Armentel on international Internet access, which is due to run until 2013;

- A poor telecommunications infrastructure as a result of Armentel's ineffective management and its insufficient investment in the development of broadband connectivity;
- Administrative barriers and the high cost of commercial use of radio frequencies in the WiFi and WiMax bands.

ABOUT GIPI ARMENIA

Since 2001 GIPI Armenia has worked to improve Internet market conditions for local Internet Service Providers (ISPs), creating a more affordable and more accessible Internet for end users. GIPI has made a significant contribution to the development of e-commerce and e-governance policy. Most recently, David Sandukhchyan, the Country Coordinator, established the Internews Center for Information Law and Policy (CILP). CILP's main focus for the next two years will be developing not-for-profit networks and public access points for the Internet.

GIPI ESTABLISHES A CENTER FOR INFORMATION LAW AND POLICY

In 2005, the GIPI project in Armenia embarked on an initiative to combine Internet policy work with related media law efforts, which led to the establishment of the Center for Information Law and Policy (CILP). CILP promotes public policy aimed at improving access to information and communications technologies (ICTs), thus advancing the development of an open information society.

The main areas of CILP activities include:

- Telecommunication legislation and policy;
- Broadcasting, media and freedom of information legislation;
- Intellectual property rights for the information society;
- Other areas of information and communications policy and legislation.

GIPI ACTIVITIES

Assessing Armenia's Freedom of Communication on the Internet

CILP's activities in 2005-2006 focused on cooperation with the Council of Europe's (CoE) Group of Specialists on Human Rights in the Information Society. CILP carried out a comparative analysis of Armenian information legislation and policy. This was a part of an assessment of Armenia's implementation of the CoE Declaration on Freedom of Communication in Internet. The results of the analysis have been submitted to the Secretariat of the CoE Media and Communication Division as an official communication from the country representative.

During the next phase of its cooperation with the CoE, CILP developed and submitted to the Secretariat of the CoE Steering Committee draft guidelines on the behavior and responsibilities of key stakeholders of the information society and draft recommendations of the Council of Europe's Rec(99)15 on media coverage of elections. The documents have been adopted as initial drafts for further discussion by the Group of Specialists.

Promoting e-Governance

CILP staff made substantial contributions to the political documents related to promotion of electronic

governance in Armenia, including the Electronic Governance Strategy and the Concept for the Introduction of an Electronic Document Circulation System in the Republic of Armenia. CILP experts developed a substantial part of the draft legal acts related to electronic documents, e-governance services and regulation of e-signatures.

Working with Stakeholders

CILP representatives participated in meetings of the IT Development Supporting Council and coordinated the activities of the Council's legal working group. On request of the Council, CILP experts commented on the Radio Frequencies Assignment Rules, the Rules on Licensing of Electronic Communication Networks and Services and the Draft Program on the Transition to Digital Television in Armenia.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The priorities of the activities of GIPI in Armenia in 2005-2006 are:

- The promotion of further harmonization of Armenian information law and policy with European standards, as well as contributions to the development of the Council of Europe's policy in the area of the information society and media.
- Support of both governmental and non-governmental initiatives aimed at the development of a legal framework of electronic governance, as well as support of relevant governmental and non-governmental initiatives.
- Support of the process of further improvement of telecommunications legislation, including advocacy of Internet users' rights and interests.
- Promotion of open source software policy in Armenia and popularization of open source products. GIPI held a number of roundtables with IT companies, public institutions, and relevant non-for-profit organizations in regards to key issues of open source policy.



At a Glance*

Population: 3 Million

GNI per capita: USD \$1,120

Internet users
(per 1,000 people): 65

Personal Computers
(per 1,000 people): 20

Broadband subscribers (per 1,000
people): 0.0

E-Government Readiness index
(scale 0 – 1): 0.25

Contact

3 Arshakuniats Avenue
3rd Floor
Yerevan
Republic of Armenia, 375023

+ 374 10 58-36-20

www.gipi.am

David Sandukchyan
Country Coordinator
david@internews.am

*Sources: "2006 Information & Communications for Development (IC4D)", The World Bank Group; CIA World Factbook.

GIPI Azerbaijan

Intensive development of the energy sector in Azerbaijan has become an active catalyst for rapid growth in other spheres, especially Information and Communications Technologies (ICT). Although ICT is the second most dynamically developing industry, Internet growth still faces restrictions.

AZERBAIJAN: ICT CORRIDOR FOR THE CAUCASUS

Historically, Azerbaijan has been the corridor between East-West and North-South. Today it is the telecom hub for the Caucasus Region and the center of all international fiber highways.¹ Although the ICT sector makes up only about 2.7 percent of the country's GDP in comparison to 5-7 percent in EU countries, it is seen as vehicle to further economic and social development. Since 2003, the country's ICT sector has grown at the same rate as its oil industry, with an annual increase of approximately thirty-two percent. In the past ten years, cumulative investment in telecommunications has reached over USD \$538 million. In 2005 alone, investment hit USD \$142 million. Growth in the ICT sector is seen as a positive alternative to the country's economic dependence on the oil sector.

As one of its main priorities, the government, in collaboration with international organizations, has implemented a number of large-scale strategic ICT programs. The goal of state policy is for the local ICT industry to become the leading regional exporter of hardware, software, and services.

Despite being at the center of regional fiber optic cables, Azerbaijan still struggles with the Soviet heritage of a weak infrastructure, particularly in fixed phone lines, though it is making progress in catching up with its neighbors. Geographically, Azerbaijan is at a disadvantage relative to countries like

Georgia that have borders with Turkey and the Black Sea. While Georgia can connect directly to EU networks, Azerbaijan's fiber optics cables go through Russia. As a result, the greatest obstacle to access to ICTs is the high price of backbone connectivity. Backbone operators pay high prices to Russia Telecom to rent bandwidth from the European border to the Caucasus.

GIPI ACCOMPLISHMENTS

GIPI.AZ has been working to improve the ICT regulatory framework in Azerbaijan. GIPI.AZ's advocacy efforts helped pave the way for the development of an e-Government framework with the goal of a more transparent government. GIPI's efforts also contributed to better access to information for rural areas with a new pledge from the Government to fulfill universal access obligations.

The National Law on Free Access to Public Information

The national law on Free Access to Public Information was adopted in 2005. As a member of the legal working group, GIPI.AZ advocated that provisions of the new law conform to internationally recognized norms on access to official information, making government information available to the public through the Internet. As a result of GIPI's effort, the final adopted version of the law includes provisions ensuring free access to public information and requiring state bodies to have their own interactive websites. This law strengthens the public's ability to interact with the government, enabling people to influence

government policy and to monitor the activities of government bodies. It is the legal framework for the development of e-government in Azerbaijan.

The National Law about Telecommunication

As a member of a working group, lead by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT), GIPI.AZ had considerable input in drafting the National Law about Telecommunication, adopted at the end of 2005. As a result of GIPI's advocacy, the new law includes provisions that recognize and ensure equal rights for all participants in the telecom market, protect the privacy of customer information, and set conditions for cooperation of operators. This law, which replaces an outdated telecom framework, is aimed at preventing monopolistic and unfair practices in the telecom market. The law requires the government to establish an independent regulatory body that will issue telecom-related licenses and certificates as well as allocate spectrum. More importantly, provisions of the law recognize the government's guarantee to deliver universal services to most residents. GIPI.AZ continues to play an important role as the MCIT working group moves onto the next step of drafting rules for the regulatory body, which will have a key role in promoting free-market competition in the delivery of information and communications technology services.

ABOUT GIPI AZERBAIJAN

GIPI began its activities in Azerbaijan in March 2001 with Country Coordinator Yashar Hajiyev and Legal Expert Ekif Aliyev. GIPI was actively involved with local and international experts in projects to improve ICT regulations in Azerbaijan. GIPI.AZ has been successful in establishing a number of partnerships with local ICT stakeholders such as ISPs, MCIT, and the Ministries of Justice and Economic Development, the President's Department of Information Resources, the Parliament, the Open Society Institute, the UNDP Mission, Eurasia Foundation, USAID Missions, and TACIS. Among a number of working groups, GIPI has had significant influence on draft laws on e-signatures, e-commerce, e-documents, the strategy on cyber-crime, and others.

Internet More Affordable for Regions

AzTelecom, the incumbent operator, controls the majority of intercity telecom lines. This results in high prices for delivering Internet services from Baku to regions outside the city. The high rates have dramatically hampered Internet penetration to the regions. However, as a result of a multilateral campaign led by GIPI.AZ, with stakeholders including Internet Service Provider (ISP) associations, AzInternet Society, and other related NGOs, MCIT cancelled the payment for intercity lines used for Internet connection. This resulted in a 30% decrease in Internet tariffs in the regions and attracted investment from more ISPs.

Amendments to the Law About Rules of Internet Use

GIPI.AZ and Azerbaijan Internet Service initiated the process of reviewing the outdated law on Rules for Internet Use. The stakeholders, including MCIT, GIPI.AZ, AIS, universities, and ISPs, worked on amendments that took effect in March 2006. The new document sets out the rights and responsibilities of Internet users and ISPs and outlines recommendations on Internet use in diverse spheres of the economy, government, and public. Part of the law states that a telecom operator is not obliged to keep track of information transmitted over its networks without a court decision. This provision is a significant victory for privacy. The law also allows for competition, giving private foreign companies the right to offer Internet services in Armenia.

Electronic Azerbaijan

As a member of an inter-ministry working group led by MCIT, GIPI.AZ contributed to the draft of the 2005-2008 State Program for ICT Development in Azerbaijan, known as Electronic Azerbaijan. The Plan was ratified in 2005. GIPI.AZ worked on a chapter that outlined steps that the government must take to reform the regulatory infrastructure of the ICT sector by 2008. As a result of the introduction of elements of e-Government, state agencies and ministries (Ministry of Taxes, Ministry of Social Defense, National Bank, etc) are taking steps to become more transparent and less corrupt.

CURRENT GIPI ACTIVITIES

Support the Ongoing Internet Legislation Project

Funded by the Open Society Institute

(OSI), the project's goal is to bring national ICT legislation into compliance with European legal standards to accelerate Azerbaijan's integration into European structures. The project will perform a comparative analysis of the key legislation and prepare recommendations for reform of the national legal framework in regards to: the effectiveness of the use of ICT applications by state authorities to facilitate interaction with the population, privacy protection, and the process of liberalization and privatization of incumbent telecom operators.

Porta Optica Study

The main goal of this project, funded by the European Commission (EC), is to stimulate and consolidate initiatives to ensure successful deployment of the dark fiber-based research network in Eastern Europe – Ukraine, Moldova, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. Expanding academic optical networks is key to building the infrastructure for research and education in the EU, as well as integration into the European Research Area.²

Internet Application and Infrastructure Development for Research and Education

This joint project of the UNDP, the Ministry of Education, the MCIT, and the Azerbaijan Research and Educational Network Association (AzRENA) is aimed at creating an enabling environment for the steady development of national academic research, educational and community information networks in Azerbaijan. GIPI.AZ is playing a key role in the area of building local policy capacity for affordable access to information infrastructure and protection of free expression and civil liberties on the Internet.

GIPI RESEARCH

Monitoring Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan – Telecommunications and the Information Society

This project, funded by the EC, aims to compile a coherent overview of the development of the Information Society, telecom infrastructure, and regulatory environment. The results will help the Commission in investment and foreign aid decisions regarding future work and cooperation.

Southern NIS News Delivery Feasibility Study

This project, funded by the U.S. Department of State, is a feasibility study for the delivery of alternative TV programming to the public of the eight southern NIS countries by satellite (3 in South Caucasus and five in Central Asia). GIPI.AZ is carrying out the study in Azerbaijan.

¹ A fiberoptic communication cable has been built along the main railway within the framework of the strategic International North-South and Europe/Caucasus/Asia Transport Corridor (TRACECA). A 1161 km fiber optic cable has been extended to Azerbaijan, in line with the International Trans-Asia-Europe (TAE) Project. 24% of the population use mobile phones, and 94% are covered by mobile services. There is no telecom monopoly, since the country has 3 private GSM operators, 4 CDMA mob operators, and 5 fixed telephone operators.

² In telecommunications, dark fiber or unlit fiber is the name given to fiber optic cables that have been laid but are not yet being used.



At a Glance*

Population: 8 Million

GNI per capita: USD \$950

Internet users
(per 1,000 people): 54

Personal Computers
(per 1,000 people): 33

Broadband subscribers
(per 1,000 people): 0.0

E-Government Readiness index
(scale 0 – 1): 0.20

Contact
6 Efendiyev Str.
Baku, Azerbaijan

+99.412.49.72.102 · www.gipi.az

Yashar Hajiyev, Country Coordinator
yashar@internews.az

*Sources: "2006 Information & Communications for Development (IC4D)", The World Bank Group; CIA World Factbook.

GIPI Bulgaria

Reform of Bulgaria's legal framework for the ICT sector was highly influenced by the country's movement to EU membership. Internet Society-Bulgaria (ISOC-Bulgaria), the local GIPI partner, and civil society have been involved in developing most aspects of the new regulatory framework. Although there is still much to do in the years to come, Bulgaria's liberal IT market can be used as an example for other countries from the region applying to join the EU.

CONNECTED, YET FACING A DIGITAL DIVIDE

While Bulgaria continues to see growth in areas such as access to computers and e-access tools, ICT penetration lags and large portions of Bulgarian society are effectively shut out of Internet access.

According to the e-Bulgaria 2006 Report, Bulgarian households will enter the E.U. well connected by telecommunications infrastructure.¹ It was projected that a third of the population would have access to the Internet by the end of 2006. Nevertheless, as the report noted, "A key challenge for Bulgarian policy makers remains the digital divide among socially disadvantaged groups." The report states that Internet penetration among minority groups is three to five times lower

than among ethnic Bulgarians. Additionally, while the Government has been working on deploying ICTs to the central administration and its regional units, there have been few positive results in providing integrated e-Government services. The e-Bulgaria Report urged the government to do more to modernize the country's infrastructure and to deliver on its commitment of making ICT penetration and usage a national priority.

GIPI ACTIVITIES

Legal Framework

- ISOC-Bulgaria, in partnership with civil society leaders and other Internet advocates, had a major influence on the new Law on Electronic Commerce, passed by the Parliament

in June 2006. Positive changes in the law include limits on the extent to which Internet Service Providers (ISPs) can be held liable for information on the Internet.

- According to the new law, ISPs do not bear responsibility for the content of the information they transfer and for the activity of the recipient of their services if they:
 1. do not initiate the data transfer;
 2. do not choose the recipient; and
 3. do not choose or change the information being transferred.
- An ISP is also not responsible for hosting information, if it is not

ABOUT ISOC BULGARIA

Internet Society (ISOC) Bulgaria is a public interest, non-governmental organization, incorporated in Bulgaria in 1995. ISOC-Bulgaria is a recognized chapter of the international Internet Society, headquartered in Reston, Virginia, USA and Geneva, Switzerland.

ISOC-Bulgaria is a primary source of reliable information on the development of information technologies in Bulgaria. Experts from ISOC-Bulgaria actively participate in the work of various government administrations and organizations, including the National Assembly, Ministries and agencies within the Bulgarian Council of Ministers.

Its main aims are to support free and open development of the Internet in Bulgaria and freedom of speech, access to information, and basic human rights in the Information Society.

ISOC-Bulgaria has about 600 members, among them the President of Bulgaria Georgi Parvanov, the Prime Minister Sergey Stanishev, the former President and the former Prime Minister, many distinguished IT professors, scientists, and experts. Among other projects and partners, ISOC-Bulgaria is working with the United Nations Development Program and the European Union's 6th Framework Program.

- aware that the information is illegal and it does not know of any facts or circumstances that will make the user's activity or information obviously illegal. A clause in the law states that if an ISP has been properly notified by a proper state body about illegal content or the illegal behavior of its users, then the ISP has to take measures to stop access to this illegal information (while preserving it for future actions of the police or the authorities). All of these provisions reflect positive changes from the original draft.
- In 2006 the Council of Ministers adopted an updated version of the Strategy for Implementing ICT in Schools. The government allocated Euro 12.5 M in 2006 and Euro 38 M in 2007 for creating computer labs, training teachers, Internet connectivity in schools, and development of content for educational purposes. ISOC was involved in the stakeholder process advising the Government.

Ongoing Issues 2006 – 2007

In mid-2006 a new law was proposed to the Parliament to replace the existing Telecommunications Act. The new law, "Electronic Services Act," is based on a 2002 EU directive.

ISOC-Bulgaria has played a key role in keeping the Domain Name System (DNS) and IP addressing issues beyond the control of the National Regulatory Authority. It also has been successful in making sure that ISPs are not subject to licensing or registration.

CURRENT GIPI ACTIVITIES

Free and Open Source Software (FOSS)

ISOC-Bulgaria participates in three EU-funded projects on FOSS - <http://selfplatform.org/>, <http://tossad.org/>, and <http://flossworld.org/>. It has also successfully implemented FOSS on the municipal level (<http://www.foss.bg/>) in several Bulgarian cities, as well as in municipalities in Macedonia, Kosovo and Istanbul (Turkey) with a grant funded by the UNDP.

Creative Commons

ISOC-Bulgaria has been actively supporting the Creative Commons concept (<http://cc.isoc.bg>). Creative Commons is a non-profit organization that provides flexible copyright licenses for authors and artists. In 2005, upon the invitation of ISOC-Bulgaria and with the help of the UNDP office in Sofia, professor Lawrence Lessig, founder and chairman of Creative Commons, visited Bulgaria and gave three lectures in Sofia. Creative Commons was launched in the Bulgarian language, and many authors have chosen to use it for their work.

Internet Governance

ISOC-Bulgaria has started a project on Internet governance. It is among the most active players in this new territory. More information is at <http://www.isoc.bg/ig>. ISOC-Bulgaria representatives have been actively involved in international events on Internet governance.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

ISOC-Bulgaria and Veni Markovski are working on many issues with respect to the GIPI mission in Bulgaria. The following activities are anticipated for 2007:

- To organize other non-governmental organizations to collaborate with GIPI;
- To plan an education program for judges, prosecutors, and law-enforcement agencies on combating cyber-crime while preserving freedom of access to information and freedom of speech;
- To build regional alliances on projects of common interest, especially in the context of the preparation of other countries in the region for EU membership.



At a Glance*

Population: 8 Million

GNI per capita: USD \$2,740

Internet users
(per 1,000 people): 291

Personal Computers
(per 1,000 people): 51

Broadband subscribers
(per 1,000 people): 5.6

E-Government Readiness index
(scale 0 – 1): 0.51

Contact

31 Tsar Ivan Shishman St. Sofia
1000

+ 35924018009

www.isoc.bg

Veni Markovski
President and Chairman of the
Board
isoc-bulg@isoc.bg
veni@veni.com

*Sources: "2006 Information & Communications for Development (IC4D)", The World Bank Group; CIA World Factbook.

¹The Annual e-Bulgaria report has been released since 2002 by the Applied Research and Communications (ARC) Fund, a Sofia-based think-tank specializing in ICT and innovation policy studies (www.arcfund.net).

GIPI Kazakhstan

By far the most developed information market in Central Asia, Kazakhstan has an active Internet community and a high level of interest in e-government. However, the country's ICT-related legislation and regulation is too often created without reference to international standards, and work continues to be needed to achieve a legal environment that will promote open Internet growth.

KAZAKHSTAN ROLLING OUT E-GOVERNMENT

While Kazakhstan continues to experience rapid economic growth, mainly due to oil revenues, politically it is a challenging country for the NGO community. It is difficult to influence legal reforms. GIPI has worked with stakeholders to encourage the Government to liberalize the telecom sector and expand access to information for everyone. However, GIPI's main activities in 2005-2006 focused on monitoring Government acts in the ICT sector.

In 2004, Kazakhstan adopted an official state program on e-government to be implemented in 2005-2007. This program lists about 85 different services to be provided on government web sites. Kazakhstan was one of the first in the region to roll out an e-procurement and e-taxation system. At the same time, the program is not without its problems. Most importantly, a majority of these services do very little in terms of establishing interactive communications

with users.

The legal framework in Kazakhstan presents another challenge. Access to information through the Internet is especially important since the majority of media are tightly controlled by the President. The latest worrisome development is government efforts to regulate and control the Internet.

GIPI ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Evaluating Government Web Sites

GIPI Kazakhstan conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the risks and barriers in implementation of e-government in Kazakhstan, holding in-depth interviews with heads of the IT departments of practically all branches of the executive power (ministries, departments, agencies). Research was also conducted by experts selected from among government officials and businessmen involved with e-government projects.

In mid-2005, GIPI launched an unprecedented research project to monitor 33 web sites of government agencies such as the National Bank, the Supreme Court,

the Constitutional Council, the Prosecutor General, the President's Office, and the Parliament, analyzing these sites in terms of content, technical performance, and usability. The results of this study were published and presented to the general public in April 2006, following consultations with key stakeholders in the two largest cities of Kazakhstan – Almaty and Karaganda – as well as the capital, Astana. One common problem that GIPI found throughout all the sites it analyzed is the lack of personnel specifically tasked with updating web content. The report also pointed out the lack of useful content and the absence of interactive elements – only three of 27 web sites that belong to various executive agencies can be called interactive.

Since this was the first report in Kazakhstan to rate government web sites, it received wide coverage in the press, including articles in several key newspapers and TV reports on a number of national and municipal channels. An extensive interview with the GIPI Coordinator was published in one of the prominent ana

ABOUT GIPI KAZAKHSTAN

To develop the Internet in Kazakhstan, proper legislative and regulatory policies are necessary to create an enabling environment that promotes the freedom of information, development of Internet business, and access to the Internet for all. Kazakhstan substantially falls behind other post-Soviet states in this respect. Kazakhstan does not have a comprehensive set of laws on ICTs. Policy is mainly realized at the level of sub-legal acts. New legislation should outline state support for the Information Society and define the roles of the state, business and civil society organizations, and individuals, as well as set out the parameters for the National Information Infrastructure (NII). Reform of information legislation should be conducted openly with the direct participation of non-governmental organizations, service providers, other participants in the information technologies market, users, scientific institutions, and other stakeholders. The laws of Kazakhstan should correspond to international standards, adapted to national conditions. The objective of the GIPI project is to pursue a balance of the interests of the state and society, the advancement of the information society, provision of free access to Internet, and the constitutional rights of citizens to the free receipt and dissemination of information.

lytical journals, *Expert Kazakhstan*.

To follow up on its research activities, GIPI organized a workshop in June 2006 to introduce the concept of e-Government at the level of the municipal and regional authorities, the akimats. This was the first such attempt to present the idea of e-Government to officials at this level. To do so, GIPI invited a recognized expert, Ivar Tallo, Director of the e-Governance Academy in Tallinn, to address 36 representatives of 12 akimats and other relevant agencies and organizations from across the country. Tallo specifically commented on the role of the private sector in e-Government, the need for transparent and adequate legislation, and the value of a joint effort to introduce effective management structures together with progressive communications technologies.

Further e-Government Research and Advocacy

In 2005, GIPI published a 136-page compilation of reports and presentations from a roundtable, titled "Ways of Overcoming the Digital Divide in the Context of Creating E-Government in Kazakhstan." The roundtable was organized by GIPI, Soros-Kazakhstan Foundation and the Association of IT Companies of Kazakhstan. The publication was presented to journalists at a press conference held in the Kazakhstani Press Club. GIPI used this occasion to advocate the creation of a coalition for public input on e-Government issues.

GIPI, together with the Information Resource Center at the U.S. Embassy in Kazakhstan, also conducted a workshop on e-government in the US. The conference attracted representatives of non-governmental organizations, computer companies, librarians, and journalists.

Another major GIPI publication on e-Government was produced in the fall 2006. The 78-page study, "Electronic Services: International Experience. Introducing E-Government in Kazakhstan," reviews the e-government experience in the United States, France and Great Britain, and goes on to comment on the situation in Kazakhstan. It points out the overall low quality of government services, the lack of qualified personnel, and the inadequate level of information technology available to state agencies. It calls on each government agency to develop its own internal policies to evaluate the content

and effectiveness of e-services provided on its web site.

Regulations and Advocacy for Domain Names

In June 2005, the Information and Communication Agency of Kazakhstan published "The Regulations for the Allocation of Domain Space in the Kazakhstan Segment of the Internet." This document gives the government control over website registration while obliging websites to be hosted only inside Kazakhstan's borders. A legal review of the regulations, commissioned by the OSCE, warned that this kind of state control opens the way for central filtering, blocking, and fragmentation of the Internet.

GIPI drafted a commentary on the regulations, publishing it in an on-line newspaper Navigator (www.navi.kz) as well as on the Internews Kazakhstan website. This commentary inspired a congressional inquiry addressed to the chairman of the Information and Communications Agency.

The issue of Internet regulation came up again in October 2005 at a Central Asia regional conference, "Pluralism in Mass Media and Internet," organized by the OSCE in Almaty. At the conference, GIPI delivered a presentation on the development of the Internet in Kazakhstan, touching on the issues of government regulation of the telecommunications sector and key issues of the information policy. The presentation made special mention of the Regulations for the Allocation of Domain Space. It stressed the need to balance national security interests against the negative effects of excessive regulations of the media and the Internet, and called for all stakeholders, especially the local Internet Association, to be involved in the policy development process.

Several days after the conference, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Miklos Haraszti, sent an official request to the Kazakhstan government to withdraw the regulation on the registration of domain names for websites. "Implementing this provision would put the allocation of domain names on the World Wide Web in Kazakhstan entirely under government control, which contradicts freedom of expression and free flow principles," Haraszti said. Currently, discussion of the guidelines for registration of domain names continues.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Currently, there are several priority areas in Kazakhstan:

1. Development and liberalization of the telecom market.
2. Formation of e-government recommendations based on lessons learned from around the world.
3. Liberalization of the Internet despite government efforts to control the World Wide Web.
4. Developing a specific action plan for addressing the digital divide in Kazakhstan.



At a Glance*

Population: 15 Million

GNI per capita: USD \$2,260

Internet users
(per 1,000 people): 20

Personal Computers
(per 1,000 people): unknown

Broadband subscribers
(per 1,000 people): 0.0

E-Government Readiness index
(scale 0 – 1): 0.32

Contact

58 Nauryzbai Batyr Street, 1st Fl.
Almaty, 480091 Kazakhstan
+7(3272)50-89-50 · www.internews.kz

Sofiya Issenova, Country Coordinator
sofia@internews.kz

*Sources: "2006 Information & Communications for Development (IC4D)", The World Bank Group; CIA World Factbook.

GIPI Kyrgyzstan

Following the political upheaval of the Tulip Revolution, the new government of Kyrgyzstan has expressed a commitment to a number of reforms in the regulation of media and other spheres. However, given the continuing political volatility, it is essential for civil society to continue to work together to ensure that much-needed democratic reforms are not forgotten.

CIIP.KG MAKING AN IMPACT IN ICT DEVELOPMENT

The local GIPI chapter, known as the Civil Initiative on Internet Policy (CIIP.KG), has had a significant impact in the field of ICT policy, helping to frame legislative reforms and promoting the interests of NGOs.

- CIIP.KG initiated the elaboration of the “National Strategy for ICT Development in Kyrgyz Republic” that was approved by presidential decree in 2002. This Strategy is a key political document, which outlines government activity in ICT. As part of the strategy’s implementation, CIIP.KG was involved in drafting model laws

on electronic digital signature and on electronic documents circulation. It also prepared a proposal for amendments to the draft Kyrgyz law on electric and postal communications, having examined its compliance with the international principals and obligations of WTO, ITU, EC. Currently, the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic is considering the above mentioned draft laws.

- CIIP.KG initiated establishment of the Association of Communication Operators (www.connect.kg) to protect the interests of Internet providers in the Kyrgyz Republic. The association is a registered

organization that provides ISPs with information and legal and technical support on telecommunications issues, protects their rights under the law, and represents their interests before the government authorities. The work of the CIIP.KG with the Association led to the creation of a national Internet peering exchange, which became operational in October 2002.

- When the new national constitution was adopted, CIIP.KG contributed to a provision establishing a new right of citizen access to government

ABOUT CIIP.KG KYRGYZSTAN

The public foundation Civil Initiative on Internet Policy is a non-profit, non-governmental organization (NGO) established in 2001 by representatives of key ICT stakeholders, legal experts in the ICT sector, and technical experts. The core of the CIIP.KG program is to facilitate ICT and Internet policy formulation by promoting transparent Internet regulation and to facilitate participation of civil society in the policy-making process. CIIP.KG has partners and advocates among entrepreneurs, governmental and public organizations, scientific and educational institutions, and international organizations. A number of international donors support CIIP.KG. CIIP.KG simultaneously runs several projects, found on the web at: www.eipn.org, www.ecenters.kg, www.Internetpolicy.kg.

Mission

CIIP’s mission is to promote reform of the legal and regulatory frameworks for ICT in Kyrgyzstan. This reform aims to enable transparent and predictable regulation for ICT sector, competition, liberalization and free access of citizens to telecommunication services and information resources.

Vision

Our vision is that available competition in the ICT market and accessible Internet will drive economic growth and stimulate freedom of expression. Equal access of citizens to the Internet and to state information resources will ensure transparency of government that is the basis for the civil society development.

- information. The staff of the foundation drafted a presidential decree, titled “On the procedure for dissemination of public information in the Internet.”
- At the beginning of 2004, CIIP.KG was assigned by the ICT Council under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic to develop the National Concept on legal regulation of ICT issues.
- CIIP.KG has been actively involved in the organization of international conferences aimed at facilitating a constructive dialogue among different ICT stakeholders and government agencies both in Kyrgyzstan and in the region.

GIPI ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Promoting Internet Access in Rural Villages

CIIP.KG reached agreement with the Government of Kyrgyzstan and private providers on creating technical capabilities for the establishment and development of broadband data transfer systems (particularly WiMax) to provide villages with access to the Internet. The decision is backed by a government pledge to make amendments to the procedure on radio frequencies, in particular using the 5.5-5.76 GHz range for broadband data transfer systems, especially WiMax.

WiFi Licensing Requirements Abolished

WiFi in Kyrgyzstan is no longer subject to licensing. After more than a year of efforts and intensive work by CIIP.KG, the resolution to abolish licensing for WiFi was adopted in April 2006 by the National Commission on Radio frequencies (NCR). CIIP.KG worked with the National Communication Agency (NCA) to lobby for the elimination of the WiFi license. WiFi can now operate, as long as it is not using remote antennas. CIIP.KG’s current challenge is to secure permission for WiFi applications using remote antennas.

Lobbying Against Internet Censorship

CIIP.KG has been successful in its efforts to suspend a draft law on “information security.” The draft law imposed obligations on communications providers to monitor and filter

the Internet when requested by the government. If passed, this law would impose substantial restrictions on access to information via the Internet.

Other Activities

- The government supported a CIIP.KG initiative to reduce the types of communication activities subject to licensing. For example, the Government will no longer impose licensing on Internet access centers and Internet cafes.
- CIIP.KG held a workshop for high-ranking government officers and the Prime Minister on e-Government.

GIPI CURRENT ACTIVITIES

GIPI Kyrgyzstan is working on improving licensing policy aimed at:

- Reduction of the types of telecommunications activities subject to mandatory licensing, from 60 to 15-20.
- Transferring permits for public access points, Internet cafes, Internet providers and other telecommunications activities not related to entrepreneurship to a notification basis.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

1. Development of ICT stakeholders: Promoting the recognition of ICT stakeholders as the driving force for building democracy, transparency and proper regulation in the ICT sphere.
2. Protecting Interests of citizens in ICT implementation: Advancing legal reforms for free access to information, privacy protection, development of e-commerce, and copyright protection; as well as providing incentives to improve the security of information resources.
3. Consultancy and expertise: Development of CIIP.KG’s consultancy potential in the field of ICT legal regulation; ongoing monitoring of ICT legislation development; continual cooperation with international experts in telecommunications regulation, e-governance, and e-commerce.



At a Glance*

Population: 5 Million

GNI per capita: USD \$400

Internet users
(per 1,000 people): 110

Personal Computers
(per 1,000 people): 16

Broadband subscribers (per 1,000
people): 0.0

E-Government Readiness index
(scale 0 – 1): 0.39

Contact

40 Mira Ave., Suite 5, Bishkek
720044, Kyrgyz Republic

+996 (312) 66-00-80
+996 (312) 66-45-65
+996 (312) 66-75-08 (fax)
www.Internetpolicy.kg

Lira Samykbaeva
Country Coordinator
lira@gipi.kg

*Sources: “2006 Information & Communications for Development (IC4D)”, The World Bank Group; CIA World Factbook.

GIPI Macedonia

Macedonia strives to move toward European standards of ICT regulation and to promote growth of the Internet. A new national strategy lays out a roadmap, but it is important that a full range of stakeholders be engaged in the realization of the plan, to ensure that all parts of society have access to the benefits of modern communications technology.

TAKING STEPS TOWARD AN INFORMATION SOCIETY

Macedonia has to a great extent been excluded from the global process of information society building as a result of long-term political and economic instability. Formulating and, even more importantly, consistently implementing far-reaching, yet manageable national policies and strategies for an information society may significantly ease the process through the adoption of European standards in the information society area. Almost all relevant stakeholders, from political actors to business and civic sector representatives, have repeatedly expressed the need for building an information society, both as an element of economic development, and as a vehicle for increased inclusion of various communities and groups. This national-



E-rider training. Skopje Macedonia

level agreement has led to the completion of several important legislative and policy efforts, most importantly the Law on Electronic Communications, the Freedom of Information Act, the Law on Personal Data protection and the National Strategy on Information Society Development. The implementation of these laws remains the biggest challenge for ICT development in Macedonia.

METAMORPHOSIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

National Information Society Strategy

In September 2005, the government of Macedonia successfully completed a National Information Society Strategy, in line with its commitments under the Stability Pact eSEE initiative. The Strategy laid out priorities and a road map for harmonizing Macedonia with European Union legislation, policies and standards, thus building a truly inclusive information society. Metamorphosis substantially contributed to the strategy by bringing in NGO and citizen perspectives.

New Law on Electronic Communications

The Law on Electronic Communications was adopted in February, 2005, paving the

way for the liberalization of the telecommunication market in Macedonia and providing a more conducive legal environment for ICT development. With the goal of clarifying the liberalization process, identifying major challenges and explaining the role of key institutions in this process, Metamorphosis organized a workshop for journalists entitled “Liberalization of the Telecommunications Market and Increasing Internet Penetration in Macedonia.”

Free and Open Source Software

Metamorphosis supports the localization and distribution of free and open source software (FOSS). The teams supported by the foundation have developed a localized version of OpenOffice.org 2.0 as well as some of the most popular applications (such as Gimp and GAIM). This software is available both for free download as well as in an “Open CD” format.

METAMORPHOSIS CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Metamorphosis is working on supporting and monitoring the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan for Information Society Development. In this regard our work is focused on:

- Changing the legal framework

ABOUT METAMORPHOSIS

Metamorphosis is an independent, nonpartisan and nonprofit foundation based in Skopje, Macedonia. Its main goals are development of democracy and prosperity by promoting growth of the knowledge-based economy and the information society. Although it has not been financially supported by Internews Network, Metamorphosis is working to accomplish the goals set forth in GIPI’s Tallinn Declaration.

in order to enable the development of ICT as a service to citizens throughout society.

- Supporting the development of local content and high quality online services for citizens and businesses;
- Advocacy and lobbying in order to achieve the goals set by the European Commission i2010 Strategy;
- Raising awareness about privacy and security issues (from technical, social, and legal perspectives);
- Building case studies and promoting principles and standards for security in e-commerce.

CURRENT PROJECTS

Information Security Initiative

Although the National Strategy for Information Development in Macedonia addresses information security challenges and needs, many decision makers, stakeholders, and businessmen, as well as the general public, are not informed about the standards for information security. Those standards are important in order to foster the usage of online services and also support the development of e-commerce in Macedonia. This project will create an opportunity to influence the stakeholders and steer the policy towards preserving freedom of expression and privacy. Metamorphosis' involvement and the involvement of other NGOs will add the citizens perspective to security issues.

Creative Commons

Metamorphosis is working on the localization and implementation of the Creative Commons licenses as a viable alternative to the restrictive implementations of the intellectual property laws prevalent in Macedonia, and as sustainable and legal alternatives to piracy as the means for sharing, distributing, and reuse of content.

Internet Law

The need for a specific project dealing with the Internet law arises from the lack of knowledge and awareness in Macedonia. There has been no attempt to meticulously construct a legal regime to provide solutions, or at least guidelines, for the difficulties and legal issues that affect persons and institutions when

they go online. The project will focus on introducing this issue to the regular education program, through a joint effort with the Faculty of Law, Skopje, and raising awareness among legal professionals (lawyers, judiciary, and civil servants) as well as the general public via debates, lectures, and publications.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

There is a wide consensus and clear understanding that ICTs can be a vital tool for the development of Macedonia's economy, provide opportunities for delivering better services to citizens and businesses, and enhance entrepreneurship, empowerment and security. Metamorphosis, together with other civil society entities and in partnership with the private sector and the government, has a crucial role to play in realizing the social, economic, and educational potential of the people of Macedonia.



At a Glance*

Population: 2 Million

GNI per capita: USD \$2,350

Internet users
(per 1,000 people): 97

Personal Computers
(per 1,000 people): 68

Broadband subscribers
(per 1,000 people): 1.5

E-Government Readiness index
(scale 0 – 1): 0.12

Contact

Metamorphosis Foundation
Naum Naumovski Borche 88a
1000 Skopje
Macedonia

+389 2 3109 325, 3130 737
www.metamorphosis.org.mk

Bardhyl Jashari
Director
bjasari@soros.org.mk

*Sources: "2006 Information & Communications for Development (IC4D)", The World Bank Group; CIA World Factbook.

GIPI Russia

In the context of espionage scandals, colored revolutions and the “war on terror,” the Russian government is increasingly focused on “information security,” a term which is interpreted broadly and often ambiguously, often to the detriment of civil liberties. The Internet is a powerful economic and informational force in Russia, although competing interests often prevent stakeholders from collaborating, even in their own best interests.

GIPI WORKS ON INFORMATION SECURITY

GIPI Russia continues to work on issues of information security, as well as to explore opportunities to promote free and open source software (FOSS). The focus on openness and sharing with respect to software provides a useful segue to the benefits of openness in more general contexts, useful in a society in which the balance of forces is moving in the opposite direction.

GIPI Russia is participating in a new project, aimed at creating social stability on the basis of self-governance of regional initiatives, as well as building economically and socially productive relations between governments at all levels.

GIPI CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Medal and Diploma Awarded for “Book of the Year”

The Commission on Professional Awards in the Sphere of Information Security awarded GIPI Russia its “Book of the Year” Medal and Diploma for the monograph “The Development of Legislation to Ensure Information

Security.” This is the first time that the award was given to an NGO that is not connected with the closed professional community of specialists in information security.

The Follow-On to WSIS

As part of the follow-on to WSIS, GIPI Russia representatives participated in the official Russian Internet Governance Working Group that developed suggestions for the agenda of the Internet Governance Forum, held in Athens in Oct, 2006.

Protecting Personal Data

After participating in hearings on the topic with several Duma committees, GIPI Russia was asked to assist the State Duma working group that is drafting legislation on information, information technologies and information security. Within the working group’s purview is the emotionally charged issue of personal data protection.

Cyber-Terrorism Workshop

GIPI Russia worked with several partners to coordinate a NATO-sponsored Advanced Research Workshop for over 200 participants in

“Unconventional Information Warfare and the War on Terror” in November 2005. The event focused on promoting international standards in the fight against cyber-terrorism and other information security issues.

GIPI FUTURE ACTIVITIES

A number of recent events in Russia have demonstrated the importance of independent information. In an environment in which openness and the ability to raise and discuss issues are under pressure, the ability to convene groups openly and maintain a dialogue regarding policy choices with respect to distribution of and access to information is increasingly valuable. GIPI is recognized in the information policy community as the one organization that has such convening power, and it is viewed by the state as a neutral body. Its ability to continue in this role, in spite of broad action against foreign-supported NGOs, allows the policy dialogue to continue openly among reform-minded organizations.

GIPI Russia continues to work on issues of information security, as well as to explore opportunities to promote free

ABOUT GIPI RUSSIA

The Citizens’ Initiative for Internet Policy (CIIP) is a registered Russian noncommercial organization that works to promote the adoption and implementation of policies that will increase access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) in Russia. CIIP is a part of the Global Internet Policy Initiative (GIPI) project and works in close collaboration with GIPI projects in countries around the world. The work of GIPI Russia is supported by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the US Department of State.

and open source software (FOSS).

GIPI Russia was invited to participate in a new project, aimed at creating social stability on the basis of self-governance.

GIPI Russia will continue to collaborate with the Russian Academy of Sciences' Council on the Economic Aspects of Intellectual Property. GIPI's participation focuses on the legislative and social aspects of intellectual property in the scientific arena.

GIPI will continue its work in the area of defense of children on the Internet in several ways. These include interaction with the appropriate State Duma Committee, which continues to work on a draft law, and collaboration with Microsoft's Social Project Division on its regional training programs for teachers and parents.



At a Glance*

Population: 143 Million

GNI per capita: USD \$3,410

Internet users
(per 1,000 people): 91

Personal Computers
(per 1,000 people): 113

Broadband subscribers
(per 1,000 people): 0.9

E-Government Readiness index
(scale 0 – 1): 0.39

Contact

GIPI Russia
8a Nikitsky Bulvar
Tsentralnyi dom zhurnalista
119019 Moscow
Russian Federation

+7(095)956-2248

www.gipi.ru

Alexandra Belyaeva
Country Coordinator
belyaeva@internews.ru

*Sources: "2006 Information & Communications for Development (IC4D)", The World Bank Group; CIA World Factbook.

GIPI Serbia

After enduring a period of war, sanctions and political instability, Serbia is in the process of transition to a market-driven economy. Although the current pace of ICT development is rather slow, progress has been made. A rich information society is crucial for all aspects of Serbia's development.

SERBIA STRIVING FOR E.U. INTEGRATION

National Information Society Strategy

In September 2006, the Government of Serbia adopted a National Information Society Strategy, in line with its commitments under the Stability Pact eSEE initiative.¹ The Strategy laid out priorities and a road map for harmonizing Serbian law with European Union policies and standards. The Center for Internet Development (CID), the GIPI organization in Serbia, substantially contributed to the Strategy, especially by bringing in the NGO and citizen perspectives.

EU Accession

In April 2005, the feasibility study for EU accession of Serbia and Montenegro received a positive assessment. Thereupon, the government's Office for EU Integration invited CID to write a chapter on the information society for the accession strategy. CID's proposal was included in the final strategy document formally adopted by Serbian government at the beginning of June 2005.

¹The aim of eSEE Europe is to better integrate SEE countries into the global, knowledge-based economy by supporting the countries of the region in the development of the Information Society, including benchmarking, best practices and the transfer of knowledge. For more information please refer to <http://www.stabilitypact.org/e-see/>.

Capacity Building for Serbian Telecommunications Regulator

The Government of Serbia started the process of liberalizing the telecommunications market in Serbia in 2003 by adopting a new Law on Telecommunications. An independent regulatory body, the Serbian Telecommunications Agency (RATEL), was created to oversee the process and regulate the telecommunications market. CID established close cooperation with RATEL and in 2006 initiated with the agency a capacity building project focused on four key areas: reforming frequency spectrum policy, ensuring regulatory transparency, putting in place operator-operator and operator-consumer dispute resolution policies, and establishing a universal service fund.

CID ACTIVITIES

CID advocates policies aimed at ensuring the dynamic development of electronic communications networks and services based on open standards and a free competitive market. CID also promotes protection of basic democratic values, such as freedom of expression and individual privacy in the digital age.

CID's work is focused on:

- Monitoring ICT market, technology, and regulatory developments in Serbia and the region through the Internodium project (www.internodium.org).
- Analyzing and reforming the legal framework in order to enable the development of widely accessible and affordable ICTs for all citizens.
- Building capacity of state institutions and professional organizations for achieving goals set by the National Strategy for development of the Information Society.
- Raising awareness about key issues related to various applications of ICT and development of the information society (from technical, social, and legal perspectives).

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The Center for Internet Development will continue to collaborate with the Serbian Government and its ministries in the process of building an effective legal and technical framework for e-Government.

ABOUT CENTER FOR INTERNET DEVELOPMENT

The Center for Internet Development (CID) was founded in 2001. It is the leading Serbian non-government and non-profit organization active in the area of Information Society policy. CID advocates policies aimed at ensuring dynamic development of electronic communication networks based on open standards and a free competitive market. CID also promotes protection of the basic democratic values, such as freedom of expression and individual privacy in the digital age.



At a Glance*

Population: 10 Million

GNI per capita: USD \$3,280

Internet users
(per 1,000 people): 104

Personal Computers
(per 1,000 people): 36

Broadband subscribers
(per 1,000 people): 0

E-Government Readiness index
(scale 0 – 1): .34

Contact
Center for Internet Development
Masarikova 5/VII
11000 Belgrade
Serbia

+381 11 3061 531, 3061 532
www.netcenter.org

Slobodan Markovic
President
smarkovic@netcenter.org

*Sources: "2006 Information & Communications for Development (IC4D)", The World Bank Group; CIA World Factbook.

GIPI Tajikistan

Despite continuing struggles to overcome the aftermath of the civil war, a very poor economy and infrastructure problems, Tajikistan is making major efforts to address the digital divide. International organizations are helping both NGO and government actors use ICTs to address significant human development challenges.

ICTS CAN MOVE MOUNTAINS

Once a Russian orientalist said, “If rivers unite people, mountains separate them.” The civil war endured by Tajikistan illustrated these words. With over 93% of its territory covered by high mountains, Tajikistan’s inhabited valleys are completely isolated from each other, creating a disconnected society. A lack of communications was one of the reasons for the civil war in the 1990s, and that war further widened the gaps between the people of the valleys. Even after a peace accord was signed in 1997, villagers would not dare visit other valleys for fear of their own safety.

In the summer of 2000, Asomiddin (“Aso”) Atoev, the current director of the Civil Initiative on Internet Policy (CIPI. TJ), went to Kulob, a city in the south of Tajikistan. He saw a group of young people visiting a public Internet and youth center in the middle of the night. From their traditional hats, Aso could tell that they were not from Kulob. Aso was overjoyed to learn that the teenagers were looking for young locals they gotten to know through e-mail.

“It was at that moment I realized the power of virtual highways – a computer network had the capacity to integrate

society, spanning geographic space,” Aso said, and the CIPI vision emerged. CIPI works to promote ICT as an enabler of socio-economic development in Tajikistan. If ICT is developed properly, with the right policies, it has the power to bring a range of benefits to the people of Tajikistan.

Learning from the past, the Government of Tajikistan (GoT) has been implementing a policy to construct highways to connect all its valleys to each other, and the country to the world. Just as physical highways integrate society, so do virtual highways, bringing not only access to information, but also uniting people on a global basis.

GIPI ACTIVITIES

Lobbying to Stop a Law that Limits Access

Recently, CIPI has spent the majority of its efforts responding to a draft law, developed by the Ministry of Communication (MoC), titled “Creating a Unique Communication Center and Access Points to Global Information Resources.” The law would require communications operators licensed by MoC to use this center to access global information resources. If passed, the law would weaken market



IT teachers using laptops in class

competition and undermine the ongoing telecommunications reforms, hindering social and economic development.

CIPI and the Association of ISPs jointly organized a number of meetings with ICT stakeholders to discuss the implications of this law. After a number of roundtables, stakeholders lobbied key actors of the GoT, including the Security Council, the Ministry of Communications, the President of Tajikistan, and the Parliament, to stop passage of the law.

As a result of CIPI’s efforts, the Ministry of Justice and the State Agency on Antimonopoly Policy did not support the draft law. By order of the President, a commission was created which included

ABOUT CIPI TAJIKISTAN

The Public Fund Civil Initiative on Internet Policy (CIPI) is a non-governmental and not-for-profit Tajik organization. CIPI was established as a separate legal entity in February 2003. CIPI started its activity as the Global Internet Policy Initiative project of Internews Tajikistan in 2001. It is continuing to implement GIPI’s goals within its framework in the country.

CIPI works to promote information and communication technologies as enablers of socio-economic development in Tajikistan through building consensus and partnership among lawmakers, decision-makers, representatives of the academic community, civil society and the private sector.

key stakeholders to further discuss the law. In May 2006, the commission handed down its final decision stating that the draft law contradicts the legislation of Tajikistan.

Building e-Communities

The e-Community Project began in April 2004 when CIPI representatives were part of a Tajikistani delegation participating in a seminar organized by the Estonian e-Governance Academy (www.ega.ee). As a follow-up, CIPI organized two seminars for representatives of local governments (*hukumats*) in Somoniyoyn and Hisor on ICT benefits for rural areas. Both *hukumats* decided to establish local ICT councils consisting of experts from the government, business, and civil sectors. This was followed by the creation of two pilot information resource centers. CIPI helped conduct citizen trainings at the centers, focusing on topics such as Free and Open Source Software and using ICT. In 2006, the Social Investment Fund for Tajikistan recommended that other local governments learn from the Somoniyoyn and Hisor experience in the deployment of ICT. In its ongoing training seminars for committees of the Parliament, CIPI plans to cover lessons learned from this project.

ICT Council Creation

Since its inception, CIPI has been involved in discussions regarding the creation, structure and authority of a national ICT Council. In February 2006, as part of the country's e-Strategy, a Presidential Decree established an ICT Council under the President of Tajikistan. The Council is to be the supreme coordinating body in information policy. The Council will consist of 25 members, representing public and private sectors, as well as civil society organizations. It will have regional representatives under the *hukumats* of Badakhshon, Khatlon, Sughd, and Dushanbe.

E-Governance: Continuing the Stakeholder Process

In April 2006, CIPI conducted a roundtable discussion aimed at raising the awareness of decision-makers and policy-makers about e-Government and its benefits.¹ This was an opportunity to

coordinate stakeholders' efforts toward effective e-Government implementation. CIPI translated the "e-Government Handbook for Developing Countries," developed jointly by InfoDev and CDT, into Russian (www.cipi.tj/icb/files/egov.pdf).²

The roundtable prepared decision-makers for the International Conference on Capacity and Implementation Mechanisms of e-Governance (www.e-governance.tj). The discussion covered e-Government and national priorities, legal aspects of e-Government, implementation phases, as well as advantages and limitations of e-Government. At the Conference, stakeholders shared experiences and worked on partnership development with entities throughout the Central Eurasian region. It provided a forum to explore opportunities and challenges of e-Government for government, business, and citizens. Thirteen experts from seven countries from the region participated. The forum included a video conference session with the Estonian e-Governance Academy.

ICT Summer School for Secondary School Teachers

CIPI was awarded a small grant from the World Bank to organize a Summer School on ICT in secondary education for 120 teachers of 55 secondary schools. The initiative aimed to improve the integration of ICT in education. Over 300 applications were received, and ultimately 142 teachers were trained. The 55 schools covered are part of the target group of the Internet Capacity Building Project (ICB), which aims to provide Internet connectivity and contribute to Internet educational development. CIPI organized a similar successful program in 2005, for 40 IT teachers. This year, CIPI organized a mobile computer class and trained a group of trainers within the framework of ICB project. The project is raising awareness among educators and policy-makers on the value of ICT.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The CIPI team is preparing:

- An e-Government training seminar for the Parliament;
- An ICB presentation to the Khatlon

regional government;

- A national conference on National Content as an Enabler of Information Society Development;
- A series of mobile training seminars to support establishment of the ICT Council's field offices;
- A national conference on ICT for Education Development.



At a Glance*

Population: 6.5 Million

GNI per capita: USD \$280

Internet users
(per 1,000 people): 12

Personal Computers
(per 1,000 people): 14

Broadband subscribers (per 1,000
people): 0.0

E-Government Readiness index
(scale 0 – 1): 0.3

Contact

AP. 5, 2
Huseinzoda St.
Dushanbe 734003
Tajikistan
+992.37 2232756
www.cipi.tj

Asomiddin Atoev
Director
asomiddin@cipi.tj

Parvina Ibodova
CIPI Chairman
parvin@cipi.tj

*Sources: "2006 Information & Communications for Development (IC4D)", The World Bank Group; CIA World Factbook.

¹The roundtable was funded by a sub-grant from Internews Network.

²The translation was funded by the Internet Capacity Building Project, funded by the NATO Security through Science Program, the UNDP and OSI. CIPI implemented the project jointly with the local academic community association TARENA.

GIPI Ukraine

Almost two years after the “Orange Revolution,” Ukraine is at a critical juncture. Now is the time to ensure that the momentum towards greater freedom of expression and more transparent and democratic regulatory standards for information technology and telecommunications are firmly established in legal structures and institutions rather than dependent on the will of individual politicians.

ICT KEY TO DEMOCRACY BUILDING

Development of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) sector in Ukraine can support political dialogue and debate, economic and social prosperity, and access to knowledge. Almost two years after the Orange Revolution, the Government has not fulfilled its promises. Inefficiency, a lack of vision, and corruption plague the Government. During a U.S.-Ukraine Policy Dialogue Session (September 2006), recommendations to the newly formed coalition presented by regional experts stressed the need for regulatory policies to fight corruption in the telecom sector. The Government was urged to sell UKRTelecom and to take further steps to de-monopolize the sector.

While Ukrainian ICT development is at a particularly impressive pace, many issues remain. Significant work remains to be done in the regulatory policy sphere to enable an environment where new technology is accessible to everyone and to ensure costs are minimized for the individual user and society as a whole. The National Commission on Regulation (NCCR) is a new agency. Formed in 2004, NCCR has the responsibility for regulating the telecommunications and Internet sectors. The GIPI.ua project has been working with both the NCCR and groups of ICT stakeholders to ensure that NCCR policies comply with EU standards and encourage a transparent, competitive, liberalized telecommunications market. A prospering Information Society is a

key tool to fight corruption, by giving people increased access to information. ICTs can enable Ukraine to use its resources efficiently and to strive for greater output resulting in sustainable growth.

GIPI ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Stakeholder Process

Working with stakeholders, including experts and business associations, is a key focus for GIPI.ua. GIPI.ua was an active organizer of the Parliamentary Hearing on Development of an Information Society. This was the first serious discussion of the issue in the Ukrainian Parliament. The result was the passing of the National Strategy on the Development of an Information Society.

ABOUT GIPI UKRAINE

GIPI goals in Ukraine are the following:

- to establish open and transparent policy in the spheres of information and the Internet;
- to develop legal reforms which promote development of the Information Society in Ukraine;
- to support de-monopolization of the telecommunication market;
- to develop suitable coalitions for effective influence on information and Internet policy development.

GIPI-Ukraine applies the following practices in its work:

- Public hearings and discussions with participation of the Ukrainian Parliament and other authorities.
- Legislation discussions at the Internet-forums.
- Roundtables, conferences, interactive discussions, seminars.
- PR campaigns to attract attention of the state and society to the most important problems in the ICT sphere

Adoption of New Telecom Legislation

The GIPI.ua team is providing technical assistance in conforming Ukrainian telecom legislation to EU and CE norms. With the cooperation of the International Renaissance Foundation (Soros), the most important European telecom legislation was translated into Ukrainian and distributed nationally to state bodies (Parliament, Government, and the Security Service of Ukraine) and libraries. As a result, Ukrainian policymakers and experts are able to refer to the European experience in telecom regulation.

Training Activity

GIPI.ua has a long history as an active and successful organizer of public events and trainings. In 2005, the GIPI team organized two trainings for NGO representatives and top management of online mass media on the use of modern IT tools and journalism in the digital era.

Collaboration with Officials

GIPI.ua actively collaborates with state bodies, especially the NCCR, the main telecom regulatory body. The long-term collaboration among GIPI.ua, the Ukraine office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and NCCR will have a positive impact on Ukraine's ICT regulation. GIPI.ua advises NCCR as it creates new telecom regulations with a focus on international standards.

GIPI CURRENT ACTIVITIES

GIPI.ua is working on a number of projects that affect key telecom and ICT issues in Ukraine:

- Assistance to the National Commission on Communication Regulation in the adoption of modern European telecom models and reorganization of the official website. As a result of joint efforts of OSCE and GIPI.ua, seven regulatory acts (<http://www.nkrz.gov.ua/laws/>) and the first part of the Polish telecom regulation on universal services and interconnection issues have been translated.
- In September 2006, GIPI organized a seminar on the usage of modern Internet technologies and new standards for the top

management of the biggest regional Ukrainian TV and radio companies. The seminar provided information on IP-based telecom channels for radio and television broadcasting and other new technologies and standards.

- According to the new agreement reached between the NCCR, OSCE and GIPI.ua, a roundtable on regulation and liberalization of telecom policy was planned for fall 2006. The event will include meetings with key ICT stakeholders and citizen and business participants. GIPI.ua and OSCE were planning to invite a number of foreign telecom regulation experts.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Parliamentary elections took place in March 2006. Six months later, Ukraine still had not formed a new Government and an acting Parliament. Presently, a new telecom lobby is forming. GIPI.ua is putting great efforts into collecting information on new stakeholders and officials and developing new partnerships. In addition, GIPI.ua continues to observe activities of the NCCR. In June 2006, a public council was created to supervise NCCR activities. However, many telecom market experts feel that the council does not represent stakeholders and does not have the influence to affect NCCR actions. It is for this reason that GIPI.ua is taking on the challenge of proposing standards for open cooperation of state authorities with public and private stakeholders. A new memorandum of cooperation, signed by the NCCR, OSCE, and Internews GIPI.ua, states that decisions made by NCCR will be more clear and transparent. To help accomplish this task, the OSCE Ukraine office received 30,000 Euro for additional office equipment for the NCCR and its members. OSCE Ukraine plans to publish NCCR meeting protocols on its official website.



At a Glance*

Population: 48 million

GNI per capita: USD \$1,260

Internet users
(per 1,000 people): 62

Personal Computers
(per 1,000 people): 20

Broadband subscribers
(per 1,000 people): 0.0

E-Government Readiness index
(scale 0 – 1): 0.56

Contact
GIPI Ukraine
15, Ryz'ka Street
Kiev
Ukraine

Phone: (+380 44) 458-44-40

www.gipi.internews.ua
www.internews.ua

Sergii Malykhin
Country Coordinator
malihins@internews.ua

*Sources: "2006 Information & Communications for Development (IC4D)", The World Bank Group; CIA World Factbook.

GIPI Vietnam

Vietnam is an emerging market for Internet and telecommunications services. The Government has emphasized the important role of ICTs in the country's socio-economic development. With the country seeking to join the WTO, Internet-related legislation and policies have received special attention from various stakeholders.

RAPID GROWTH PUSHING ICT DEVELOPMENT

Vietnam is one of the major emerging markets of the ASEAN region. ICTs continue to grow, albeit gradually, and are one of the underpinnings of the economic development taking place in the country. However, the government continues to exercise significant control over the Internet. Vietnam is one of the few countries that has tight licensing regulations in the Internet Service Provider (ISP) market, which is largely state owned and controlled. Open telecommunications markets and increased competition of ICT enterprises are essential for Vietnam to join the WTO. At this time, increased foreign investment and fast economic growth are the main elements supporting Internet development. Policy makers must work on reforms to motivate competition.

Although 100% of universities, professional secondary schools, and primary schools have Internet connections, and businesses in most cities have basic ICT capacity, the majority of the



Internet Cafe in Vietnam

ABOUT GIPI VIETNAM

GIPI in Vietnam (a project named “Promoting Internet and Policy and Regulatory Reform in Vietnam”) was initially funded by a grant from the Asia ICT Program of the European Commission. The project duration was twenty-four months, commencing in August 2002.

The project objective was to improve mutual understanding of European and Asian IT&C regulatory and legislative structures, their capabilities and their shortcomings for an open and democratic Internet in Vietnam.

The project was implemented by three partners: Internews Europe (Paris, France), the Program in Comparative Media Law and Policy (PCMLP) - Center for Socio-legal Studies at Oxford University (United Kingdom) and the Institute of Information and Technology of Vietnam (IOIT) (Hanoi, Vietnam).

population does not have access to the Internet, especially those in rural areas. Internet prices are high.

To create an enabling environment for Internet access, the Government must implement a pricing policy that will lead to a reduction of access fees, build a universal service fund, and enhance applications.

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

Internet Usage on the Rise

- From March 2003-2006, international bandwidth connecting Vietnam to the global Internet increased significantly, from 250 Mbps to 3700 Mbps.
- The number of Internet users has increased seven times from 1.7 million to 12.5 million.
- The .vn domain names have increased from 2,700 to 17,500.
- Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line (ADSL)¹ service is booming, with 220,000 subscribers as of April 2006, with a 300 percent increase per year. Nine ISPs, of which six belong to telcos, are operational.

Internet Legislation and Policy Undergoing Changes

Several key laws affecting ICT use in Vietnam are being drafted with active participation from various ICT stakeholders, including GIPI:

- The National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has approved the e-Transaction Law. The law, which is considered compliant with international standards, came into effect on March 1, 2006. The essential objective of the law is give legal effect to e-transactions.
- The way in which the Internet is managed has significantly changed. The law previously required all websites to be licensed. However, it has been changed to allow all citizens to build websites under the .vn domain name without notification. GIPI was instrumental in this change. The ICT Taskforce created by GIPI brought together stakeholders to advise the government. The ICT Draft Law is currently in the ratification process.

GIPI ACTIVITIES

GIPI has been involved in the following activities:

- Conducted two research projects on ICT development in Vietnam and collaboration of stakeholders related to ICT legislation.
- Organized fifteen task force meetings addressing a variety of issues.
- Maintained a network of 70 regular task force members.
- iv) Held nine national roundtables, conferences and trainings.
- Participated in 12 key ICT events with associations.
- Assisted Vietnamese government agencies in drafting Internet-related law and polices by providing experts and consultations.
- Conducted capacity building and expert exchange with other countries in the region.

CHALLENGES AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES

GIPI Vietnam plans to work on the following issues in the future in order to continue to create an enabling environment for improved Internet access:

- Increasing access to Internet content in Vietnam, including language localization.
- Simplification of regulation to facilitate Internet development.
- Improvement of enforcement of laws and regulations to promote socioeconomic development through better access to Internet services.
- Continue awareness-raising and skills improvement among target groups including women and marginalized populations.
- Facilitating the establishment and operation of an independent regulatory body.

¹Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line (ADSL) is a data communications technology that enables broadband transmission over copper telephone lines.



At a Glance*

Population: 82 mil

GNI per capita: USD \$550

Internet users
(per 1,000 people): 65

Personal Computers
(per 1,000 people): 11

Broadband subscribers (per 1,000
people): .6

E-Government Readiness index
(scale 0 – 1): .14

Contact

Nguyen Thu Hue
Country Coordinator

*Sources: "2006 Information & Communications for Development (IC4D)", The World Bank Group; CIA World Factbook.

Biographies

AFGHANISTAN



JAVID HAMDARD has been working as GIPI-Afghanistan Country Coordinator since 2005. Before returning to Afghanistan in early 2002, he was living in Quetta, Pakistan, where he owned a computer sales and service business to support his studies. After the fall of the Taliban, he returned to Afghanistan, where he worked as an ICT manager for key government agencies like the Afghan Assistance Coordination Authority and the Ministry of Finance. He was also an IT adviser to the president's office. During his service with these agencies he developed new ICT policies and guidelines. Mr. Hamdard is a co-founder of the National ISP Association of Afghanistan (NISPA), and he has actively campaigned for the legalization of VoIP (Internet telephony). He has a bachelor's in information technology from the University of Green Village in Karachi. He is a member of the National Journalists Union of Afghanistan, the Afghan Computer Science Association (ACSA), and the Afghan Youth Union (AFU). He is the author of two books, *Computer Essentials for All* and *The ABCs of the Internet*, published in Dari and Pashto.

ARMENIA



DAVID SANDUKHCHYAN started working with Internews in 2001, as the Country Coordinator for GIPI in Armenia. Sandukhchyan started his legal career in one of the most problematic areas of law at the time – intellectual property rights, specifically in the digital environment. He served as a telecommunications and information law expert in several international technical assistance projects implemented in Armenia by the World Bank, Tacis EU and USAID. In 2005 Sandukhchyan established the Internews Center for Information Law and Policy. David Sandukhchyan is a member of IT Development Supporting Council, an advisory body to the Armenian government on IT policy. He is also a member of the Council of Europe Group of Specialists on Human Rights in the Information Society. Mr. Sandukhchyan graduated from Moscow State University, Department of Physics (1991) and St. Petersburg Institute of Economy and Law (1998). He started

his professional career in 1992 in the Management College of Yerevan (Armenia) as a lecturer. In 1992 he joined the Armenian Red Cross and Red Crescent Society as a volunteer and in 1993 was hired for the position of Assistant Field Manager of the International Committee of the Red Cross, becoming a Field Manager in 1994. From 1995 to 1997 he worked as a liaison for the European Human Rights Foundation (Brussels) coordinating the EU Tacis Democracy Program in Armenia. During the course of 1997-1998 he worked as a Grant Program Coordinator in the Eurasia Foundation office in Armenia and in 1999 he was employed by Chemonics International Inc. in the position of attorney within the framework of the USAID funded Armenia Rule of Law Commercial Project.

AZERBAIJAN



YASHAR HAJIYEV has been the GIPI.Azerbaijan Country Coordinator since 2001. In this position, he has been involved in providing technical assistance to both Azerbaijan authorities and civil society groups on Internet policy and legislation and advocating a legal and regulatory framework supporting the development of information technologies and growth of the information society. Yashar helped establish an association of ISPs and worked to promote its participation in policy discussion, specifically reforming the pricing mechanisms affecting Internet access and resisting the government's attempts to create burdensome licensing requirements for ISPs. Yashar support the Azerbaijan Internet Society (ISOC) in policy work and encouraged the creation of the National Research & Education Networks (AzREN). He participated in the state working group to develop an ICT strategy for Azerbaijan, which was adopted in 2003. He regularly participates in public presentations on ICT

issues, such as the Pan European Regional Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Bucharest, Romania. From 1979 – 1997 he was a senior researcher in fiber-optic systems for data processing and transmitting at the Physics Institute of the Azerbaijan Academy of Science. Since 1997 he has been an Associate Professor at Azerbaijan Technical University, specializing in the use of microprocessing systems in telecommunications equipment and networks. From 1995 to April 2001 Yashar was a local expert on technology and equipment for Lloyd's Survey in Azerbaijan. He has a degree in Solid State Electronics from Moscow State University (1978), where he also did post-graduate work in solid-state radio-engineering. Yashar speaks Azeri (native) as well as fluent Russian and proficient English.

BULGARIA



VENI MARKOVSKI was born on April 3, 1968, in Skopje, Macedonia. He started working on the Internet in September 1990 as one of the first system operators of a Bulletin Board System in Sofia, Bulgaria. In 1993, he founded the second Internet Service Provider in Bulgaria - BOL.BG. In 1995 he founded the Internet Society - Bulgaria. Markovski chairs the Bulgarian President's IT Advisory Committee and is a member of the ICANN Board, selected by the Nominating Committee in 2003. He is also a member of the Board of Trustees of the Internet Society (from 2002 to 2008), and was previously on the Board of Directors of Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility (2003-2005). Currently, Markovski provides advice on international projects to the Chairman of the State Agency for IT and Communications. Markovski is the Project Manager of the UNDP project "Support to e-government initiatives based on Free/Open Source Software at the local (municipality) level in South-eastern Europe." He is also leading the team to organize the Bulgarian ENUM trial (launched on April 13, 2006).

KAZAKHSTAN



SOFIYA ISSENOVA has been the GIPI.KZ Country Coordinator since 2003. She has worked on issues of telecommunication market liberalization, access to information, and promotion of e-Government for local and state government. She was also involved in preparing an expert report for the OECD/Anti-Corruption Network for Transition Economies. Previously, Ms. Issenova worked as a researcher and consultant for the Institute of Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg, Center for OSCE Research, involved in a research project, "Security through Democratization: a Theoretically Based Analysis of Security-Related Democratization Efforts Made by the OSCE. Three Comparative Case Studies." Prior to joining GIPI, Ms. Issenova was part of a 2002 Fellowship Program of the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs, US Department of State, funded under the Freedom Support Act (FSA). She had also served as the Deputy Director and Legal Expert for Transparency Kazakhstan, working on building public awareness on anti-corruption issues, promotion of transparency and national integrity system building, surveys and research on corruption and good governance in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. Ms. Issenova holds degrees from the Eurasian Institute of Markets, specializing in Finance and Credit, the Institute of Economy and Law of the Kazakh State

National University, specializing in the State Law and Public Administration, and the Law Department of the Kazakh State National University.

KYRGYZSTAN



LIRA SAMYKBAEVA serves as the Country Coordinator of GIPI Kyrgyzstan, focusing on strategic vision and approaches to developing the Kyrgyz information infrastructure, the legislative base at both national and local levels, and recommendations on national ICT policy and e-development pilot projects. She has been part of the Civil Initiative on Internet Policy (CIIP.KG) since 2003, working on a project with a focus on reform of legal and regulatory frameworks in ICT Policy in Kyrgyzstan. She is currently the Project Coordinator for the USAID-funded e-Center Project, implemented by CIIP.KG and the Academy for Educational Development. In 2004, she was the Country Coordinator for the Open Net Initiative (ONI), the National Censorship Enumeration Project that documented and examined emerging practices of surveillance, censorship and circumvention and the impact of censorship on state sovereignty, security, human rights, international law and global governance. She served as the Country Coordinator and the Marketing and PR Specialist for the e-Development Foundation, KG Development Gateway Project. Ms. Samykbaeva has done extensive research on national Internet filtering within the ONI project, as well as on the national ICT infrastructure and e-Readiness Assessment in 2002. She has published "ICTs for Development of Civil Society," "The Youth as a Capacity of Information Society," Bishkek-Moscow Sub Regional Conference articles, and "Kyrgyzstan Development through Internet," Times of Central Asia. Ms. Samykbaeva holds a degree from the Kyrgyz State National University in Management and Accounting and a PhD from Bishkek State University of Economics and Business, concentrating on information and communication technologies for small and medium business development.

MACEDONIA



BARDHYL JASHARI is the Director of Metamorphosis Foundation and Information Program Coordinator for Foundation Open Society Institute-Macedonia. He has run national-scope projects for development of Information Society in Macedonia, involving tight cooperation with other international organizations, governmental bodies, business and the civic sector. He serves as a member of the National Task Force for Information Society Development and as a Commissioner for the Agency for Electronic Communications, the telecommunication regulator body in the Republic of Macedonia. He is also member of the MASIT (Macedonian Association of IT companies) IT expert Committee. Mr. Jashari currently attends postgraduate studies in Public Administration offered by Paris 12 University. He holds an Information System Designer Degree from University of Zagreb, Faculty of Organization and Informatics Varazdin (Croatia).

RUSSIA

ALEKSANDRA BELYAEVA has been the Director for the Citizens' Initiative for Internet Policy (GIPI.RU) (CIIP) since 2002 overseeing and managing all activities, including policy analysis and advocacy. CIIP aims to promote the development of ICT in Russia and CIS, advocate for Internet policies based on democratic principles and strengthen the legislative basis for the growth of Internet usage in the country. From 1977-2002, she served as the Head of Communication Research Center, Leading Researcher, and Head of the Laboratory of Psychological Problems of Communication in ICT Environment for the Institute of Psychology of USSR/Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow. She was the scientific supervisor of the first three PhD theses in the USSR and Russia (1989-1992) devoted to the investigation of psychology of communication in the international computer network. She is the author of more than 100 scientific publications. From March 2000 – October 2002, she served as a member of an Expert Council of the Committee on Information Policy, Russian Federation State Duma. From 1991-1999, she was the Director of the International Laboratory VEGA, working on a project to create telecommunications for humanities scholars with IREX and UC-San Diego. She developed a network for ethnological monitoring and early warning of conflicts (EAWARN) together with the Conflict Management Group, Cambridge, MA and the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology at the Russian Academy of Sciences. From 1989-1991 she was the Co-Director of the international project, VelHam, of the International Foundation For Survival and Development of Humanity and the Carnegie Corporation, which participated in the creation of a joint computer-mediated activity of researchers, teachers, and children in inter-cultural telecommunication in a Soviet-American context. She has participated in a number of organizing committees, as well as ICT Task Forces related to WSIS. Ms. Belyaeva has training and degrees from the Moscow State University in psycholinguistics and psychology of verbal communication, and a PhD degree in philological sciences from the Novosibirsk State University. She has done postgraduate study at the Institute of History, Philology and Philosophy, Siberian Branch of Academy of Sciences of the USSR Novosibirsk, and at the Irkutsk State University in philology.

SERBIA



SLOBODAN MARKOVIC has had over 12 years of practical experience in both technical and regulatory aspects of the Internet. He has extensive knowledge of technical fundamentals of electronic networks, protocols and standards. Mr. Markovic is familiar with legal and regulatory issues related to global electronic networks, such as telecommunications infrastructure regulation, freedom of expression, privacy, and consumer protection. In the early years of the Internet in Serbia Mr. Markovic launched the Internodium mailing list (www.internodium.org), which is dedicated to exploring how new communication technologies change our society and how politics affects development of new technologies. The list was initially focused on monitoring cases of Internet access blocking and content censorship imposed on citizens, student groups and independent media by Milosevic's regime. After the pro-democratic changes on the local political scene in 2000, the list's focus changed to monitoring and discussing developments at the intersection of technology, law, politics and

culture in Serbia and the countries of the former Yugoslavia. Over the years, Internodium has become an important communication platform of the local Internet community. The list has been regularly quoted in dozens of printed and electronic media in Serbia. In 2001, Mr. Markovic founded the Center for Internet Development (CID, www.netcentar.org). Mr. Markovic has had a leading role in the ongoing process of .yu Internet domain names registry reform. In this community-driven and consensus-based process, he has been intensely involved in drafting new rules for domain name registration and new internal structure of the registry organization. He was also responsible for ensuring transparency of the process by organizing and conducting public consultations. In 2005, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (www.icann.org), which manages the Internet's domain name system and IP address space allocation, appointed Mr. Markovic to the Council of the Country Code Names Supporting Organization as a representative of the European Internet community.

TAJIKISTAN



PARVINA IBODOVA is the Chairman of the Civil Internet Policy Initiative and GIPI Coordinator. She has been a lawyer for the Association of Internet Service Providers RT since 2004. Since 2001, she has been the Executive Director of the NGO League of Women. From 2001-2003 she was a lawyer for Internews' Tajikistan GIPI Project. Formerly she worked for the Ministry of Justice of Tajikistan. She has been involved in a number of trainings including the CSO Social Enterprise Workshop "Strategic Planning and Financial Sustainability" in Tallinn, Estonia (2004), Internet Law Program, in Tallinn, Estonia (2004), the Regional Conference on ICTs as a Development Instrument in Dushanbe (2003), ICT Forum on e-Strategies of Countries of Region in Baku, Azerbaijan (2003), and many more. Ms. Ibodova holds a law degree from the Tajik State National University. Parvina is currently pursuing a PhD degree at the Academy of Science of Tajikistan.



ASOMIDDIN ATOEV (Aso) is the Director of CIPI. He manages the Internet Capacity Building Project. Aso joined GIPI in October 2001 as the Country Coordinator for Tajikistan. He has continued his work in IT and further studies in mathematics at the Tajik State University and obtained an additional degree in Applied Mathematics (2004). Previously, Aso worked as an IT expert for a U.S. NGO, Central Asian Development Agency (CADA), to establish and run one of the first email public access centers (EPAC) in Dushanbe. He managed the Internet project funded by NATO Science Program, OSI and CADA from 1999 – 2001.

In addition to his recent degree in mathematics, Mr. Atoev holds an MS in Computer Science from the University Salford, UK. He has been involved in a number of ICT policy related regional and international trainings. He is an Open Society Institute International Policy (IPF) 2004-2005 fellow. His topic of research was on Intellectual Property Rights and Internet in Central Asia with the focus on copyright issues in software industry of the region. Both research and policy papers are presented in the website – <http://www.policy.hu/atoev>. Aso completed the DiploFoundation (<http://www.diplomacy.edu/>) online course for the Internet Governance Capacity Building Program (2006).

UKRAINE



SERGIY MALYKHIN started his professional career in a Ukrainian advertising company, Office-Service Group, as an account manager and chief of PC-operators department in 2002. In 2003 he began to work for the radio department of Internews Ukraine as a journalist and database manager. In 2005 Malykhin became a part of the GIPI.UA team as an information specialist. Malykhin has provided organization of GIPI events and information analysis in the sphere of Internet and ICT developments in Ukraine. He became GIPI Ukraine's project manager in 2006. He holds a degree from the Ukrainian National University of Food Technology specializing in management of foreign-economic activity.

VIETNAM



NGUYENTHU HUE is the Country Coordinator in Vietnam. She implemented the project “Reforming Internet in Vietnam,” funded by the European Commission. She has been coordinating and maintaining the ICT task force in Vietnam, providing recommendations on select relevant topics and organizing national consultations. Ms. Nguyen currently coordinates the U.S. Department of State-funded project Women and Internet in Vietnam, which is being executed by Internews Network. The project, which she conceptualized, aims to support female leaders in NGOs and journalism by encouraging efficient use of the Internet in their work. Ms. Nguyen has been an active lobbyist for the development of NGOs in Vietnam. She is founder and CEO of a Vietnamese NGO working on marine conservation and community development, strongly promoting ICT at the grassroots level for poverty alleviation and environment protection. Ms. Nguyen has a legal background and holds a Master's degree in International Business Administration.

ICT Study Tour 2006

The GIPI Study Tour, organized by Internews Network and the Center for Democracy and Technology (CDT), took place from 1 May to 10 May 2006 in Washington DC. GIPI Members from ten countries from Europe and Eurasia attend the Conference on Computers, Freedom, and Privacy (CFP) and engaged in a number of meetings to expand their knowledge of ICT policy issues and share their experiences with GIPI colleagues and U.S. experts from diverse fields.

Meetings with Experts and Stakeholders

The study tour was designed to provide GIPI Country Coordinators with the opportunity to engage in depth with experts from US government agencies, public interest organizations and the private sector. The tour covered a broad range of ICT policy issues. The goal of the meetings was to give participants the opportunity to discuss specific issues and to explore concrete policy solutions to the challenges they were facing back home. The meetings were an open platform to debate topics and to gain insight from leading experts. One of the most rewarding aspects of the study tour was the opportunity for GIPI members to share their experiences, points of view and achievements. Heated discussion took place at ad-hoc sessions as well as during organized meetings.

Conference on Computers, Freedom, and Privacy

All participants received full scholarships from Microsoft to attend the CFP Conference, held 02 May – 05 May, 2006. The sessions attended included a tutorial on telecommunications law, which outlined the fundamental principles and policy instruments of the Federal Communication Commission (FCC), and a session on international advocacy that debated the new platform being created by the United Nations for

the discussion of global Internet policy, the “Internet Governance Forum” (IGF). Bardhyl Jashari, Director of the Metamorphosis Foundation, a Macedonian NGO, George Sadowsky, GIPI Technical Advisor, and Paula Breuning, Staff Counsel at CDT, were part of a panel on the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). The panel discussed sources of the digital divide, the status of Internet deployment in developing countries, and challenges emerging in economic and democratic development.

Public Presentations and Meetings with Senior U.S. Government Representatives

In connection with the study tour, GIPI members gave presentations on Internet freedom and development in their respective countries at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) on World Press Freedom Day, 03 May 2006. Parvina Ibodova,



Study tour participants at the Ronald Reagan Building. Front row (L-R): Valitov, Ibodova, Belyaeva, Manolea, Issenova, Sadowsky. Back row: Samykbaeva, Jashari, Hajiyev, Malykhin, Doroshevich, Rotenberg

Chairman for CIPI Tajikistan and Bogdan Manolea, Executive Director of APTI Romania, stressed the conditions needed for successful development of the Internet. Mr. Manolea presented the progress of Romania, which transitioned from a state monopoly to an environment with 900 Internet Service Providers (ISPs). Ms. Ibodova explained that, although a poor country, Tajikistan has made great technical strides in comparison to others in Central Asian due to the commitment of Tajik President Imomali Rakhmonov. Other GIPI Country Coordinators participated in a question/answer session that followed the presentations.

Members attended half a day of training at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). They also met with senior officials at the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), both funders of GIPI. In a roundtable at USAID, GIPI members presented their work, challenges, and future opportunities. With David A. Gross, U.S. Coordinator for International Communications and Information Policy, GIPI members discussed the importance of the Internet for development. Ambassador Gross presented the U.S. perspective on the WSIS process and the role of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). Ambassador Gross encouraged developing country participation in the international ICT arena.

Training and Sharing Best Practices

At a presentation on e-Government solutions for policy-makers, by Ari Schwartz, deputy director of CDT, study tour participants debated the best ways to use ICT to reduce corruption and improve democratic transparency. GIPI members presented situations in their countries that have been improved through e-Government. Throughout the week, GIPIIniks discussed a number of topics with CDT staff, including Jim Dempsey, Policy Director, Leslie Harris, Executive Director, and John Morris, Director of CDT's Internet Standards, Technology, and Policy Project.

Other topics included intellectual property with Fred Von Lohmann of the Electronic Frontier Foundation; privacy law with Philippa Lawson of the Canadian Internet Policy & Public Interest Clinic; media law with Kurt Wimmer, an attorney at Covington and Burling, open source and open standards with Elliot Maxwell, an author and lecturer on e-Government topics; and cybersecurity with Larry Clinton of the Internet Security Alliance.

Participants returned to their

countries with new knowledge and new bonds with their fellow GIPI members. They will continue to work to establish the enabling environment for an open, affordable, and user-controlled Internet.

Study Tour Participants

Alexandra Belyaeva
GIPI.RU Country Coordinator

Yashar Hajiyev
GIPI.AZ Country Coordinator

Sofiya Issenova
GIPI.KZ Country Coordinator

Lira Samybaeva
GIPI.KG Country Coordinator

Bardhyl Jashari
Metamorphosis Foundation | MK
Director

Bogdan Manolea
APT | RO Executive Director

Parvina Ibodova
CIPI.TJ Chairman

Sergii Malykhin
GIPI.UA Country Coordinator

For More Information Please Contact:

Inna Rotenberg
Senior Program Associate GIPI
ICT Policy Development
Email: irotenberg@internews.org
Tel: +1 (202) 833.5740 x 204

Internews Network
1640 Rhode Island Avenue
Suite #7
Washington, DC 20036
+1 (202) 833.5740

www.internews.org

An effective Internet policy project must combine three components: Internet policy expertise, an on-the-ground capability, and an understanding of and commitment to the consensus-building process. The partnership between Internews and CDT meets all three criteria.

ABOUT INTERNEWS NETWORK

Internews works to improve access to information for people around the world by fostering independent media and promoting open communications policies in the public interest. Internews' programs are built on the conviction that providing people with access to vibrant, diverse news and information empowers them to participate effectively in their communities, effect positive social change, improve their living standards, and make their voices heard. Formed in 1982, Internews Network is a 501(c)(3) organization headquartered in California. It has worked in 70 countries, and currently has offices in 23 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and North America. Internews Network is a founding member of Internews International, an umbrella organization, based in Paris, made up of 12 media development NGOs.

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR DEMOCRACY AND TECHNOLOGY

The Center for Democracy and Technology, with offices in Washington, D.C. and San Francisco, California, was founded in 1994 to promote democratic values and human rights for the digital age. With a mix of expertise in law, technology and public policy, CDT combines the roles of convener, advocate and think tank, working for practical, real-world solutions that enhance free expression, privacy, open access and democracy in the rapidly evolving global communications networks. CDT is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, supported by foundations and a broad cross-section of the computer and communications industry.

INTERNEWS NETWORK

Administrative Headquarters:

P.O. Box 4448 • Arcata, CA 95518-4448 • USA
Tel. +1 707 826-2030 • Fax +1 707 826-2136
info@internews.org • www.internews.org

Washington, DC Office:

1640 Rhode Island Ave. NW, 7th Floor
Washington DC, 20036 • USA
Tel. +1 202 833-5740 • Fax +1 202 833-5745

Marjorie Rouse

Director of ICT Policy Development
+1 (202) 833-5740 ext. 304
mrouse@internews.org

CENTER FOR DEMOCRACY AND TECHNOLOGY

Administrative Headquarters:

1634 Eye Street NW #1100 • Washington DC, 20006 • USA
Tel. +1 202.637.9800 • Fax +1 202.637.0968
www.cdt.org

Jim Dempsey

Policy Director
+1 (202) 365-8026
jdempsey@cdt.org

Credits

Editors: Inna Rotenberg and Jim Dempsey

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