

**ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK**

**JFICT:36632**

**GRANT ASSISTANCE**

(Financed by the Japan Fund for Information and Communication Technology)

**FOR SUPPORTING THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF A BUSINESS PLAN FOR  
A CENTER FOR LEARNING, INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION, AND  
KNOWLEDGE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

**December 2002**

## ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	-	Asian Development Bank
CLICK	-	Center for learning, information, communication, and knowledge
DMC	-	developing member country
ICT	-	information and communication technology
JFICT	-	Japan Fund for Information and Communication Technology
KPS	-	Knowledge Products and Services
VLL	-	Virtual Learning Laboratory

## GLOSSARY

Electronic advisory services	-	Provision of advice, analysis, and collaboration via the Internet or other electronic means.
Electronic commerce	-	The way that organizations trade electronically using technologies such as the Internet, intranets, electronic data interchange, etc. to communicate, carry out research or gather information, or conduct business.
Electronic finance	-	The provision of financial services over the Internet or other public electronic media. This includes money, banking, payments, trading, brokering, insurance, etc.
Electronic governance	-	The delivery of government services and information to the public using electronic means. Use of information and communication technology to promote more efficient government by allowing better access to information and making government more accountable to citizens.
Electronic learning	-	Learning that is accomplished through the Internet, via a computer network, CD-ROM, interactive TV, or satellite broadcast. This includes training, education, virtual classroom, and digital collaboration.
Electronic learning center	-	A facility that integrates and disseminates all learning information. The duties of learning centers include developing and managing online training, providing technical expertise, and maintaining knowledge data bases.
Electronic services	-	Delivery of electronic services, that perform work, achieve tasks or complete transactions.

- Knowledge economy - An economy that is driven by ideas and knowledge, rather than material resources. Resources of the knowledge economy are information and people with the skills to continuously convert information into new knowledge, products and services through innovative thinking.
- Knowledge management - The way that organizations create, store, manipulate and use knowledge to achieve organizational objectives, including the processes by which it is created, acquired, stored, accessed, validated, disseminated, and applied.
- Knowledge products - An Asian Development Bank expression defined by Strategy and Policy Department as analytical work, project preparatory work and capacity building, and institutional development irrespective of funding source.

#### **NOTE**

In this report, \$ refers to US dollars.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. In the knowledge economy, a premium has been added to education and intellectual capital, facilitated through information and communication technology (ICT). Therefore, improved dissemination and use of information and knowledge for development through ICT, especially in Asia and the Pacific, has become one of the priorities for the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and its developing member countries (DMCs).<sup>1</sup> ADB is committed to supporting ICT for development and to bridge the digital divide, the gap between those with ready access to information and those without it, within and across its DMCs.<sup>2</sup> In its recent reorganization, ADB has begun to embrace the principles of knowledge management. By sharing ADB's knowledge with its DMCs and other partners, ADB will reach a wider external network and be able to leverage more efficient use of ICT, greatly increasing the reach of ADB, its development impact, and thus its productivity.<sup>3</sup> To disseminate such knowledge and best practices and facilitate access to existing ICT-based systems and experiments for possible replication in the DMCs, a regional center for learning, information, communication, and knowledge for Asia and the Pacific (CLICK) will be established through ADB.

2. It is proposed that the Japan Fund for Information and Communication Technology (JFICT)<sup>4</sup> will help establish the CLICK that will be initially housed within the ADB to implement a program of producing value-added information products and services using ADB's reservoir of information and knowledge for development for dissemination to a wide audience. CLICK will also provide electronic advisory services through a specialized web site or "knowledge portal," and promote the use of ICT-based distance learning (electronic learning) and communication systems (networks and teleconferencing), whenever possible on a cost sharing basis, to improve institutional and human capacities of DMCs to timely access, use, and sharing of information for development. The first step in the establishment of the CLICK is the development of a sound and viable business plan that defines its mission, role, goals, and objectives.

## II. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

3. Asia and the Pacific represent the digital divide in all its complexity, and the path of development in the region can serve as the model of how the world can deal with the extreme disparities being noted around the globe. Asia and the Pacific have a workforce that is highly educated and highly illiterate, and economies that have pockets of high growth and high innovation, as well as extreme poverty and low access to information technology and services.<sup>5</sup> The emphasis on and the importance of investing in human resources has become a cornerstone of development. Adopting new approaches for providing life-long learning and access to knowledge resources, developing skills of specialized professionals, training staff, and educating scholars to better compete in a competitive global environment has become crucial

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<sup>1</sup> ADB. 2001. *Toward E-Development in Asia and the Pacific: A Strategic Approach for Information and Communication Technology*. Manila.

<sup>2</sup> ADB. 2001. *Moving the Poverty Reduction Agenda Forward in Asia and the Pacific. The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank (2001-2015)*. Manila.

<sup>3</sup> ADB. 2001. *Medium-Term Strategy (2001-2005)*. Manila

<sup>4</sup> R100-01: *Cooperation with Japan. Japan Fund for Information and Communication Technology*. July 2001

<sup>5</sup> W. Bowman Cutter. *The Significance of Asia to the Global Information Economy*. GIIC Asian Regional Conference, Manila, Philippines, July 12-14, 2000.

for all countries, especially for DMCs. The prospect of distance learning and knowledge sharing is becoming viable with the advent of ICT and the globalization of specialized communication and information networks. Electronic learning is supported by the growth of the Internet as a shared means of distributing information and knowledge as well as by the development of new and powerful communication tools, as recognized in ADB's Policy on Education.<sup>6</sup>

4. The vision for the CLICK is that it will become a leading development-hub of a regional node in the Asia and the Pacific region. The information content for the CLICK will focus on development issues related to Asia and the Pacific and on an Asian perspective of world development and poverty reduction. Initially, content will be provided and developed by ADB and its partner institution, the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI). Both organizations' comparative advantage consists of knowledge products and services (KPS): valuable publications, and documents produced as a result of extensive technical assistance and experience implementing projects in varied development areas, as well as lessons learned in the Asia and Pacific region. ADB has also developed specialized courses for its DMCs, e.g., procurement and disbursement procedures, consulting services, poverty reduction, governance, gender issues, environment, and law and development. These materials can be redesigned to suit an electronic learning or multimedia format. ADBI has taken the first steps in converting its public administration curriculum to an electronic learning format in its Virtual Learning Lab (VLL).<sup>7</sup> The CLICK must also establish links to local and global ICT-based information services provided to different sectors in the DMCs, e.g., agriculture (market prices and weather forecasts for farmers and fisherfolk), health (telemedicine and health advisory), education (training opportunities and on-line courses), and governance (electronic governance). ADB will work with DMCs to cultivate the development of local content.

5. The proposed CLICK will establish and develop partnerships, where possible, with existing initiatives (e.g., e-ASEAN, Global Disaster Information Network, J-Net, United Nations Development Programme, World Bank Global Development Learning Network<sup>8</sup>, and the United Nations ICT Task Force); and serve as an ICT laboratory to demonstrate the facilitation of communication and show methods that can be used to increase learning opportunities and knowledge exchange for development practitioners within and outside the region. The CLICK will also provide a place where the use, dissemination, and adoption of ICT will be available and on display for visiting officials from DMCs and ADB-sponsored workshops and seminars' participants, and will enhance the ICT-related knowledge within ADB.<sup>9</sup> ADB's experience and lessons learned from implementing other education and distance learning projects, and from implementation of the CLICK should provide useful experience for (i) replication in the DMCs, and (ii) development of partnerships with existing ICT-related initiatives to share and disseminate knowledge to enhance coordination efforts for better development assistance.

6. The goal of the CLICK is to build human and institutional capacity by offering an innovative electronic learning center to assist DMCs to investigate, experiment, and adopt new approaches for transferring knowledge, experience, education, and training focusing on

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<sup>6</sup> ADB. 2002. *Policy on Education*. Manila.

<sup>7</sup> ADBI's Virtual Learning Lab (VLL) is a web-enabled facility that supplements classroom learning. It consists of four components: Topic Specific Labs, E-Learning Courses, Research Center, and the Asian Policy Forum. ADBI has subject matter experts that guide the creation of VLL content.

<sup>8</sup> The Global Development Learning Network (GDLN) sponsored by the World Bank already exists, but with only four centers in Asia (People's Republic of China, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam), and none in the Central Asian Republics.

<sup>9</sup> Over 1,000 people from DMCs visit ADB headquarters each year for loan negotiations, workshops, and projects.

development issues of relevance to the Asia and the Pacific region. CLICK will provide accessible and affordable ICT tools geared to learning, and capacity-building facilities and services to development practitioners in the public and private sectors and civil society. The CLICK will facilitate access to a virtual library of knowledge accumulated and generated by ADB, its DMCs, and other sources. (A virtual library is an electronic library of reference data and materials, which resides in computers/networks). A web site or “knowledge portal” will consolidate and summarize without duplicating available information and provide a virtual discussion forum where ICT and development issues can be discussed interactively among members of the development community. To the extent possible, the CLICK will use the existing infrastructure in reaching out to DMCs. As an initial step, the CLICK will be brought closer to the DMCs by linking it to ADB’s resident missions.

7. In the long run, the CLICK will assist business development in DMCs by facilitating timely access to relevant and needed information about the best business known practices, open markets, new earning opportunities, access to basic services, etc. to help DMCs bridge the digital divide and in reaping consequent benefits. The information revolution is advancing rapidly, and can allow developing economies to bypass old technologies. ICT can offer low cost access to a huge amount of information and expert advice on subjects from engineering, to plant cultivation, to health care. It also gives the poor a voice to demand government support and reform to improve its welfare. CLICK will facilitate access to information by DMCs and exchange of information between them and ICT industries and leaders to design adequate projects, incorporating governance and ethics required for electronic finance and electronic commerce, and will assist small entrepreneurs to access market, financial, and logistical support.

8. During the development of a business plan for the CLICK, will be assessed the feasibility of the rationale for building a knowledge center for Asia and the Pacific by examining the potential external audience for ADB KPS and learning materials, the collaborative opportunities with existing programs, such as ADBI’s Virtual Learning Lab, the niche areas where ADB can make a significant impact, the prospects for ADB electronic services, as well as the opportunities and risks, operating costs, institutional arrangements, and commitment to maintaining the CLICK.

### **III. THE JFICT PROJECT**

#### **A. Objective**

9. The objective of the proposed JFICT project is the development of a sound and viable business plan, which is a prerequisite to establishing the CLICK. The plan will define the mission, role, goals, and objectives of the CLICK. The plan will thoroughly explore the feasibility of the two key components of the CLICK: (i) an ICT-based distance learning and information center to help the DMCs build human and institutional capacity, and (ii) advisory services to assist capacity building and business development in facilitating timely access to relevant information on development prospects in DMCs. The logical framework is given in Appendix 1.

## **B. Scope**

10. The business plan for the CLICK will be developed through extensive consultation, within and when possible outside ADB, to (i) establish an innovative electronic learning center for development, (ii) provide electronic advisory services in key development areas for development practitioners and users to strengthen ICT awareness programs and elaborate strategic ICT alliances and networking. The formulation of the business plan will take into consideration the accumulated experience of externally funded projects as well as existing ADB initiatives and web sites to avoid duplication and to augment and complement other information mechanisms.

11. The business plan will explore and define how the CLICK will:

- (i) host an original classroom using the latest ICT, including web-based and videoconferencing, to deliver courses and seminars;
- (ii) facilitate communication and increase distance learning opportunities and knowledge exchange; and
- (iii) establish a virtual library of knowledge and ICT information drawn from ADB 's KPS and ADBI's Virtual Learning Lab by developing an attractive and user-friendly web site underpinned by a common hardware and software infrastructure.

The business plan will also explore and define how the electronic advisory services, through an original web site will assist DMCs to have timely access to relevant information to:

- (i) organize the local and/or regional information content and the development gateway;
- (ii) determine the legal and regulatory environment for ICT to facilitate absorption of the new technologies;
- (iii) assess the needs for ICT infrastructure, human resources, and applications in key development areas;
- (iv) identify ICT projects for innovative applications of appropriate technologies and/or in some cases leapfrogging outdated technologies; and
- (v) establish public-private sector partnerships for ICT-development (e.g., access venture capital through the Internet to encourage use of on-line services).

## **C. Cost Estimates and Financing Plan**

12. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$180,000. ADB will finance the project on a grant basis from the JFICT. The grant will cover the cost of remuneration including per diem, travel, and other project-related administration expenses. The detailed cost estimates and financing plan are given in Appendix 2.

## **D. Implementation Arrangements**

13. ADB will be the Executing Agency for the CLICK. The ICT Thematic Committee, under the chairmanship of the ICT Specialist, Regional and Sustainable Development Department, Finance and Infrastructure Division, will supervise and coordinate the preparation of the business plan. The ICT committee will seek guidance from the Knowledge Management Committee on strategic issues, if any. The ICT committee will consult with the Office of Information Systems and Technology (OIST), the Office of Administrative Services (OAS), and

the Budget, Personnel and Management Systems Department (BPMSD) on logistical and administrative matters.

14. The comprehensive business plan for establishing the CLICK will be developed during 3 months, from January 2003 to March 2003. The developed JFICT will support the implementation of the business plan to establish the CLICK within ADB facilities. Future human resources and budget for operations and maintenance to permanently sustain the CLICK will be detailed in the business plan, as well as funding from other sources.

15. The project will require approximately 7 person-months of international consulting services over a period of 3 months. The consulting services will consist of (i) an ICT development and distance learning specialist and team leader (3 months), (ii) an ICT specialist (first 2 months), and (iii) an architect-technology center designer (last 2 months). The consultants will be recruited on an individual basis and will be engaged in accordance with ADB's *Guidelines on Use of Consultants*. The consultants will report to the ICT Committee. Outline terms of reference for consultants are given in Appendix 3.

#### **IV. THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION**

16. The President, acting under the authority delegated by the Board, has approved ADB administering grant assistance not exceeding the equivalent of \$180,000, to be financed from the Japan Fund for Information and Communication Technology on a grant basis for Supporting The Development Of A Business Plan For A Center For Learning, Information, Communication, And Knowledge For Asia And The Pacific, and hereby reports this action to the Board.

## LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

<b>Design Summary</b>	<b>Performance Indicators/Targets</b>	<b>Monitoring Mechanisms</b>	<b>Assumptions and Risks</b>
<p><b>Goal</b></p> <p>Facilitate learning and knowledge dissemination throughout Asia and the Pacific on development issues through improved communications via a center for learning, information, communication and knowledge for Asia and the Pacific (CLICK)</p>	<p>CLICK established by 2003</p> <p>Acceptance and use of CLICK services by Developing Member Countries and partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress report</li> <li>• Web site</li> <li>• Number of times CLICK has been accessed</li> </ul>	<p>Willingness and commitment of Asian Development Bank and Asian Development Bank Institute to share Knowledge Product Services with DMCs and partners</p> <p>Commitment to principles of knowledge management</p> <p>Management approval</p>
<p><b>Purpose</b></p> <p>Develop for the CLICK a sound and viable business plan that assesses feasibility, opportunities, risks, costs and sustainability</p>	<p>Business plan completed by April 2003</p> <p>Develop strategic framework for CLICK, assessment of options and phased approach to implementation</p>	<p>Consultation and progress report</p>	<p>Commitment from management</p> <p>Adequate interest from DMCs</p> <p>Potential for cost recovery</p>
<p><b>Outputs</b></p> <p>Assess the feasibility of an innovative electronic learning center, that will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an original information and communication technology showcase classroom</li> <li>• Develop electronic learning</li> <li>• Develop an online library</li> <li>• Detailed plan and design of the space where the CLICK will be located</li> </ul> <p>Assess the feasibility of electronic advisory services through a user-friendly web site</p> <p>Develop links to existing ICT-based information services (in DMCs when available) and/or national gateway</p>	<p>Electronic learning center detailed in the business plan</p> <p>Electronic advisory services detailed in the business plan</p>	<p>Consultation and progress reports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate interest, funding, and willingness to disseminate KPS</li> <li>• Lessons learned from previous existing electronic learning centers and information available</li> <li>• DMCs provide adequate data and information on national gateway when possible</li> <li>• Stakeholders and partners' interest</li> <li>• DMCs' interest</li> <li>• Adequate technology</li> <li>• Adequate KPS and content</li> </ul>

<b>Design Summary</b>	<b>Performance Indicators/Targets</b>	<b>Monitoring Mechanisms</b>	<b>Assumptions and Risks</b>
<b>Inputs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Consultants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICT Specialist and ICT Thematic Committee</li> <li>• \$180,000 /7 person month consultants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and progress reports</li> <li>• ICT and Committee meetings, reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate supervision by staff</li> <li>• Qualified consultants available</li> <li>• External demand by DMCs and partners for Asian Development Bank Knowledge Product and Services</li> </ul>

**COST ESTIMATES AND FINANCING**

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<b>Item</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
Japan Fund for Information and Communication Technology Financing	
1. Consultants	
a. Remuneration (7 mos @\$20,000)	140,000
b. Travel	20,000
2. Other Project-Related Administration Expenses	5,000
3. Contingencies	15,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>180,000</b>

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Source: Asian Development Bank estimates.

## OUTLINE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR CONSULTANTS

1. The business plan to establish the Center for Learning, Information, Communication, and Knowledge (CLICK) will be developed by a team of consultants who will intensively review documentation of and experience with past and ongoing projects to avoid duplication of effort, and will work closely together to combine and share their expertise and findings. The consultants will report to the ICT Thematic Committee. The work that the experts will undertake includes the tasks indicated below.

A. Team Leader — ICT Development and Distance Learning Specialist (international, 3 person-months)

2. The consultant will have relevant background and expertise in web-based, satellite, teleconference courses, training design, training content development, media production for education and learning, and low-cost delivery technologies, and knowledge of one or more of key subject areas of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for electronic learning. Experience should include developing and implementing project budgets, schedules, staffing, and contractor support services. Experience in business will be an asset. Under the supervision of ADB staff, the consultant will perform the following tasks:

- (i) Assess feasibility of establishing the CLICK by addressing ADB's comparative advantage as a regional knowledge center, the opportunities and risks for the CLICK, prospects for ADB electronic services, and revenue generation, operating costs, cost recovery, and institutional resources required to implement and maintain the CLICK.
- (ii) In close collaboration with ADB staff, conduct a rapid needs assessment of ADB operations in its developing member countries, including key areas such as promoting ADB's efficacy in achieving poverty reduction and its cross-cutting objectives, information dissemination and provision of training to government counterparts, and procurement and disbursement. Identify ADB knowledge product and services and documents that meet DMC needs. Identify the potential for distance learning or electronic learning sessions in these areas.
- (iii) Work with ADB staff to (a) conduct a rapid assessment of needs and capacities within ADB's DMCs in key areas such as poverty reduction, education, governance, health, environment, and gender issues; and (b) to identify how the CLICK can be used by developing its content and proper targeting to key stakeholders to promote advancement in key areas.
- (iv) Demonstrate conversion of existing course and training materials to an electronic learning format to help trainers and people responsible for course development see the benefits, techniques, and possibilities for electronic learning, including cost estimates, staffing, scheduling, and operation and maintenance of software development. Identify areas where courses offered in ADBI's Virtual Learning Lab can be enhanced by ADB-produced "knowledge products."
- (v) Evaluate options for phased-in implementation of the CLICK and propose tools to monitor usage of knowledge product and services delivered through the CLICK.
- (vi) Coordinate and supervise team members. Consolidate the findings of the team of consultants. Develop the comprehensive business plan with a clear and concise executive summary to establish the CLICK, including detailed cost estimates, staffing (with terms of reference), and schedule to implement the business plan and to operate and maintain the CLICK.

**B. Information Systems and Technology Specialist** (international, 2 person-months)

3. The consultant will be a technical specialist with experience in designing high-tech learning environments and will have strong analytical, design, and communication skills. The consultant should have an engineering degree and relevant professional accreditation in electrical, telecommunications, or a similar discipline; knowledge of telecommunications technologies, equipment, and services, primarily *broadcast-type technologies, transmission systems* (cable, optical fiber, and radio), and satellite technologies; experience with telecommunications system-level design, especially as with distance learning applications and knowledge of regulatory requirements for establishing the CLICK type systems and a familiarity in dealing with service providers (such as satellite operators, Internet service providers, etc.). Under the supervision of ADB staff, especially with Office of Information Systems and Technology, the consultant will perform the following tasks:

- (i) Assess technical alternatives that meet the requirements of the CLICK and recommend a proposed appropriate approach. This will be substantiated by technical analysis of the performance of different approaches, and a detailed cost assessment. The cost assessment will include capital investment and ongoing operating costs of alternative approaches.
- (ii) Assess any regulatory requirements, and the need for licensing, permits, and other contractual arrangements (such as satellite transponder lease) associated with different technical approaches. Provide a detailed description of the requirements for the selected approach.
- (iii) Identify operational impacts on ADB that will result from introducing the proposed approach, such as adjustments to building structure, provision of utilities, rights-of-way, access, and staffing for operation and maintenance.
- (iv) Provide specifications and other necessary information required by ADB in connection with the procurement of the appropriate computer hardware, software, and peripherals for the CLICK, and the required connections.
- (v) Develop a conceptual framework and work plan for the proposed CLICK web site, including defining coverage and sources of information, means of collecting information, thematic focuses, and targeted users. Include cost estimates, staffing, schedule, and operation and maintenance of the web site.

**C. Architect-Technology Center Designer** (international, 2 person-months)

4. The designer will have relevant experience in conceptualizing, planning, designing and constructing projects. Experience should include developing and implementing project budgets, schedules, staffing, and contractor support services. Experience in implementing and managing information and communication technology projects will be an asset. Under the supervision of ADB staff, especially with the Office of Administrative Services, the consultant will perform the following tasks:

- (i) Assess the physical space at ADB and propose an adequate location for the CLICK.
- (ii) Review and study similar centers and their designs. Coordinate with the other specialists of the team of consultants for the original design and the layout of the CLICK. Prepare drawings and submit a proposal, including detailed cost estimates, staffing, and project schedule for establishing, operating and maintaining the CLICK.