Overview of the e-Development Thematic Group

Mission: The e-Development Thematic Group's (e-TG) mission is to promote the efficient use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in development and World Bank operations by facilitating knowledge sharing on good practices in e-development, and an ongoing dialogue amongst a large and diverse community of practitioners.

Background: Modern ICTs have a pervasive impact on competitiveness and many aspects of life. Policymakers and business leaders have recognized the need to leverage the transformative potential of ICT to accelerate development, productivity and growth across all sectors of an economy.

The use of ICT for development, or e-Development, has become an important component of overall national development and competitiveness strategies and of World Bank supported programs and projects. In today's digital era, ICT is integral to transforming the Bank into a Knowledge Bank and helping Bank clients to transform their economies into globally competitive and connected knowledge economies.

History: The e-Development Thematic Group was created in 2003 by the World Bank in response to the increasing demand from various countries and internal clients who were involved in the design and implementation of a variety of e-development and e-government projects, and were looking for international best practices and lessons learned in ICT4D and e-Government. The e-TG was initially hosted by the Information Solutions Group of the World Bank, and transferred to the Global ICT Department in July 2006. The first Chair of the e-TG was Nagy Nanna. Robert Schware, Robert Valantin and Bruno Lanvin had also served as its Chair. The current Chair is Samia Melhem, a Senior Operations Officer with the Global ICT Department who brings with her over 15 years of experience in ICT, learning and knowledge programs, and field experiences across the world.

Target Audience: The e-Development Thematic Group is a global community of practice open for participation by World Bank staff and external clients and partners. It brings together ICT specialists and other development professionals for mutual learning, knowledge sharing, capacity building and operational collaboration.

Achievements: The eTG has achieved impressive results to date. It is:

Well-known: the e-TG brand is now well-recognized in the Bank and ICT4D community and in the client countries. It has more than 1,300 members (over 600 internal and over 700 external), and reaches over 100,000 in the development community via external partners (World Bank Weekly Update, Development Gateway and others). In addition, thousands of unique visitors per month access the e-TG website for event videos, slides and other resources for their learning or operational purposes.

Highly active: it has organized and/or co-sponsored about 90 learning and knowledge sharing events since its inception. This represents a substantially higher level of activity than any other thematic group, many knowledge management units, and strategic learning centers within the Bank. These activities include over 45 videoconference-based Global Dialogues and 3 major training workshops. In FY07 alone, 8 complex multi-country videoconferences and 6 brown-bag lunch events were organized.

Well connected: it has access to a large network of experts within the Bank and from client countries, other development organizations, private sector, academia etc. Previous events have featured over 150 distinguished experts, including Mart Laar (former Prime Minisiter of Estonia), ICT Ministers of Azerbaijan, Costa Rica and Kenya, Lalith Weeratunga (Secretary to the President of Sri Lanka), R. Chandrashekhar (Additional Secretary (eGov), DIT, Government of India), Mark Forman (first US Administrator of e-Government and IT), and numerous other world leading experts in their field. Let us know if you would like to recommend a particularly interesting speaker!

Knowledge-rich: it has an extensive online knowledge-base providing access to all past events and other resources in the form of multi-format videos, presentation slides, topic links and summaries etc. It also produces annually updated DVDs of past event videos which are in high demand.

Innovative: The eTG has leveraged cutting edge information and communication technologies in its activities, leading the way for other Bank units and external partners in terms of effective use of videoconferencing, webcasts, online discussions and other multimedia technologies to greatly expand the audience and impact of these events. In addition, it was one the pioneers to fully incorporate and proactively use videoconferencing and webcasts for knowledge sharing and learning purposes.

Operationally-relevant: e-TG events have contributed to initiation of several important ICT4D projects, and to changes in the design of operational strategies and programs within the Bank and across the client countries.

Sponsors and Partners: The e-TG is hosted and financed by the Global ICT Department of the World Bank. The Bank's Information Solutions Group also provides additional financial and logistical support through their IT Strategic Learning Center's (IT SLC) Quickstart program. Current strategic partners include the World Bank Public Sector Governance Unit, World Bank Institute Knowledge for Development Program, and the Development Gateway Foundation.

Partnership and Participation Opportunities: We welcome global, regional and country-level partnerships with all interested parties on delivering our Global, Regional and Country Dialogue seminars and on related knowledge sharing, packaging and dissemination activities. The partnerships can take various forms, from co-branding and marketing to co-sponsorships and intellectual contributions. To find out about specific opportunities related to our future and recent events, and to join our mailing list please contact Oleg Petrov , the e-TG Coordinator at opetrov@worldbank.oror edevelopment@worldbank.org, or call +1 202-473 8861.

Team: The e-TG Coordination Team consists of:

Samia Melhem (Chair)
Oleg Petrov (Coordinator)
Mikhail Bunchuk (Country Facilitator)
Martin Dimitrov (Web & Multimedia Designer)
Marta Priftis (Web Master)
Ana Carrasco (Event Coordinator)
Anthony Nathan (Program Assistant)