



Arab Republic of Egypt
Ministry of Communications
and Information Technology

Social Responsibility Strategy in ICT Sector

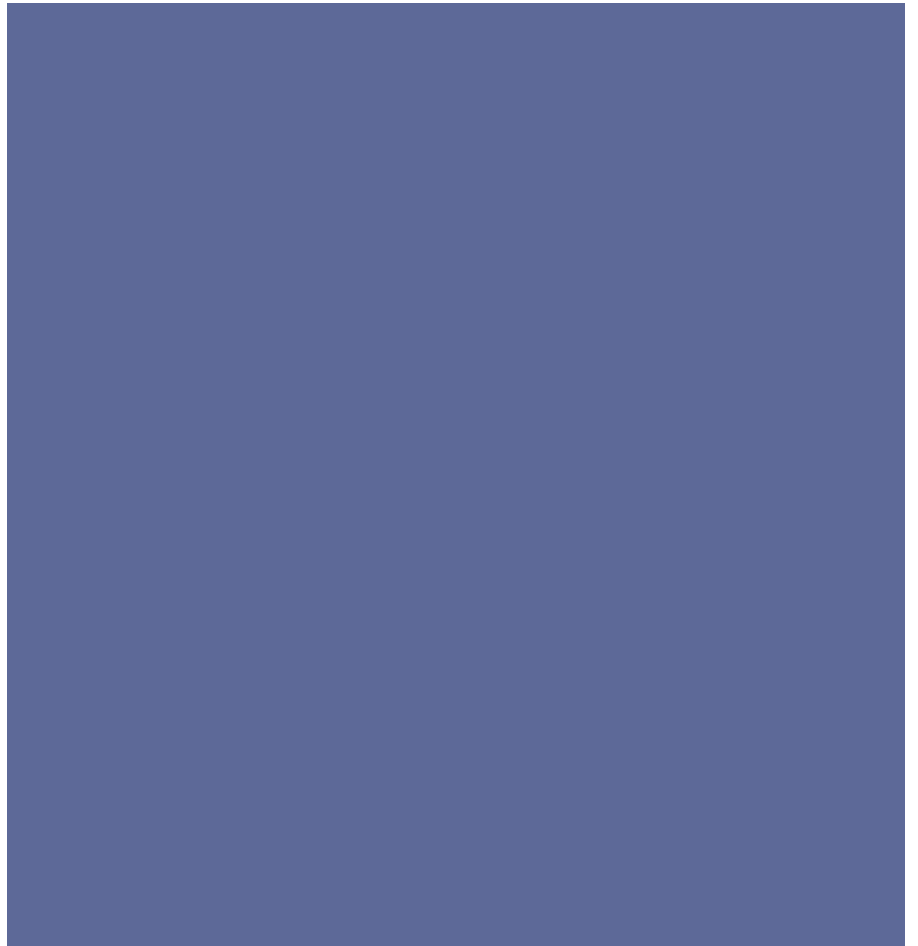
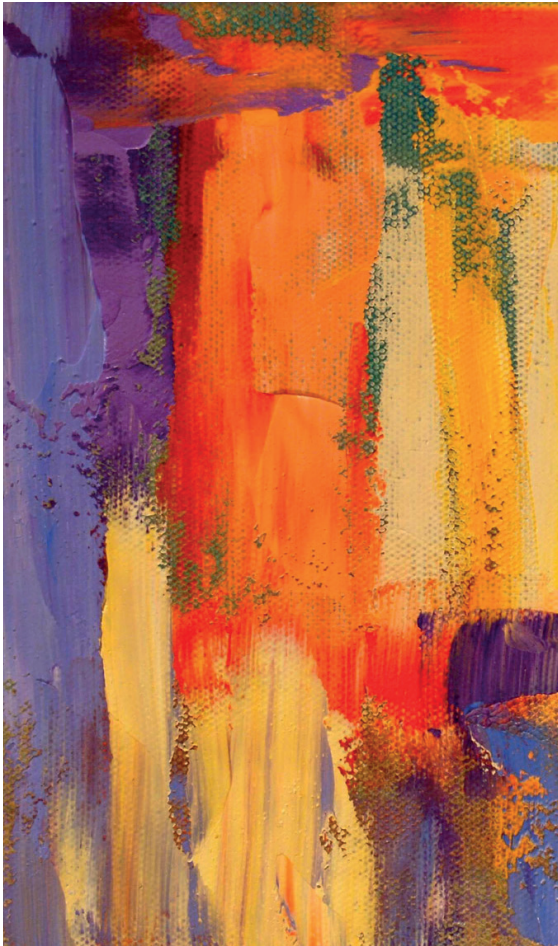


Table of Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Social Responsibility	5
3. Current Status	6
3.1. Social and Economic Indicators	6
3.2. ICT Sector Projects for Social Responsibility	6
4. Government’s Role in Social Responsibility	8
5. Methodology	9
6. General Framework of The ICT Sector Social Responsibility System	10
7. Vision	10
8. Mission	10
9. General Framework of The Strategy	11
10. Strategic Goals	12
10.1. Reducing Poverty and Improving Quality of Life	12
10.2. Providing Better Opportunities of Education and Health for Most-favored Groups	13
10.3. Empowering People with Disabilities	14
10.4. Promoting The Use of ICTs to Support Development in Rural Areas	14
10.5. Empowering Women and Promoting Gender Equality	15
10.6. Preserving The Environment and Rationalizing The Consumption of Natural Resources	15
10.7. Managing Knowledge and Supporting Civil Society Organizations	16
10.8. Regional and International Cooperation and Transfer of Expertise	16
11. Basic Principles for The Implementation of the Strategy	17
12. Monitoring and Evaluation	18
Conclusion	18

Annexes19

Annex 1: Suggested National Programs	19
e-Governance of Charity and Voluntary Work and Social Responsibility	19
Improving ICT Skills for Orphans	19
Training and Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities for Better Job Opportunities	20
Improving Educational Opportunities in Remote Areas	21
Digitizing Curricula for People with Disabilities	22
Innovation for The Society	22
Database and Portal for Blood Banks, Intensive Cares and Incubators	23
Financial Integration for Most-favored Groups through ICTs and Post Outlets	24
Annex 2: Entities Involved in The Development of The Strategy	25

List of Figures

Fig. 1: Target Groups	5
Fig. 2: ICT Sector Projects for Social Responsibility According to Action Line	7
Fig. 3: ICT Sector Projects for Social Responsibility According to Target Group	7
Fig. 4: Methodology	9
Fig. 5: General Framework of The ICT Sector Social Responsibility System	10
Fig. 6: General Framework of The ICT Strategy for Social Responsibility	11

List of Tables

Table 1: Challenges Facing Social Responsibility Projects and MCIT Role to Address Them from The Perspective of Companies	8
Table 2: Challenges Facing Social Responsibility Projects and MCIT Role to Address Them from The Perspective of Civil Society	25

1. Introduction

Several international conventions, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966, said that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of themselves and their families including food, clothing, housing, medical care, necessary social services. This is in addition to the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood or old age, as well as the right to make continuous improvement of their living conditions.¹ To achieve this, concerted efforts of development partners from the government, civil society and private sector are required, seeing that the integrated, balanced and sustainable development, as well as integration of poorer and most-favored local communities cannot be achieved through one party, but by seeking to bring about integration and coordination of efforts and initiatives of all partners and mobilization of their diverse resources.

The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) realized that individuals' capacities and achievements in the different fields, such as health, education and income – despite their importance – would not ensure the desired progress and development, and that capacities and work at the society level as a whole together with social cohesion and integration and social equity represent the gateway to sustainable development. The integration of different groups in society to achieve the principles of equality is as important as the economic success in achieving prosperity and social stability. According to the Human Development Report of 2013², communities that enjoy equality outshine those that suffer from inequality in their performance, in all human development standards, and benefit from the progress in reducing poverty more effectively than in the countries that witness significant gaps between different groups (Human Development Report 2013).³ Thus, It is necessary to promote the principles of equality, social equity and integrity in policies and strategies for development, in which social responsibility plays an important role through the implementation of projects that aim at developing the society and achieving social equity through responsible investments.

It is necessary to raise the awareness of the concept of social responsibility at the corporate level to shift it to the strategic level in the governmental action, link it to a unified electronic network and disseminate its culture through all accessible means. It is also important to stimulate civil societies to be engaged in social responsibilities and to develop principles that improve the work of the social responsibility and support its programs. This is to achieve sustainable development and to motivate companies to shift their work in social responsibility from stand-alone projects, which are distributed to several areas, to a unified strategy framework and understating of the mutual benefits of partners and society.

Therefore, MCIT has adopted, in cooperation with all its partners in the ICT sector, a social responsibly strategy for the sector as a whole to act as a general framework and offer strategic directions. The strategy aims at maximizing the impact of projects implemented in the framework of social responsibility, coordinating ongoing and future discussions with entities concerned with ICTs, avoiding duplication in the implementation of projects, and identifying and disseminating the best practices, through which social benefits could be maximized through the internet and ICTs.

1. Dr. Ebtsam El-Ga'afarawy – National Center for Social and Criminological Research – Initiative for The Support of Rights and Freedoms of The Egyptian Women – 2013

2. UNDP: HDR 2013: The Rise of The South: Human Progress in a Diverse World

3. Ibid

2. Social Responsibility

There are several definitions of social responsibility; all focus on the fact that social responsibility is the culture of commitment towards the society within the priorities of companies' strategic planning and full support and assistance by senior management in sustainable development in economic, social and environmental dimensions. MCIT adopts the following definition for social responsibility: "Institution's commitment towards the society in which it operates by contributing to a wide range of social activities, such as fighting poverty, improving health services and controlling pollution, creating job opportunities and solving problems of housing and transportation, etc.⁴ This reflects the institution's continuous commitment towards the society in which it operates by contributing to the economic development and improving the quality of living for local communities and the society as a whole".

Through the social responsibility strategy of the ICT sector, MCIT pays particular attention to the most-favored groups, including the poor, elderly, people with disabilities, women breadwinners, and others (fig. 1). Poverty reduction and empowerment of the poor are at the top of the Egyptian government's priorities for many years to come. Despite efforts exerted by the government through its initiatives targeting poverty reduction since the nineties, the impact was very limited. Work methodology should, therefore, target the principles of integrated development and concepts of multidimensional poverty. The suffering of the poor is not limited to the lack of income; it includes several other dimensions, such as deprivation of health and education. The European countries have succeeded in the mid-20th century in reducing poverty, not only by increasing incomes, but also by providing public services, such as health care and education (Human Development Report 2013).⁵ The corporate social responsibility should also move beyond the concept of voluntary and charity work – despite its importance and necessity – to the commitment and responsibility towards the society in the framework of strategic directions and action lines. This aims to maximize benefits of social responsibility projects, which should be measured by standardized indicators to determine the consistency of corporate strategies with the development goals of the country.

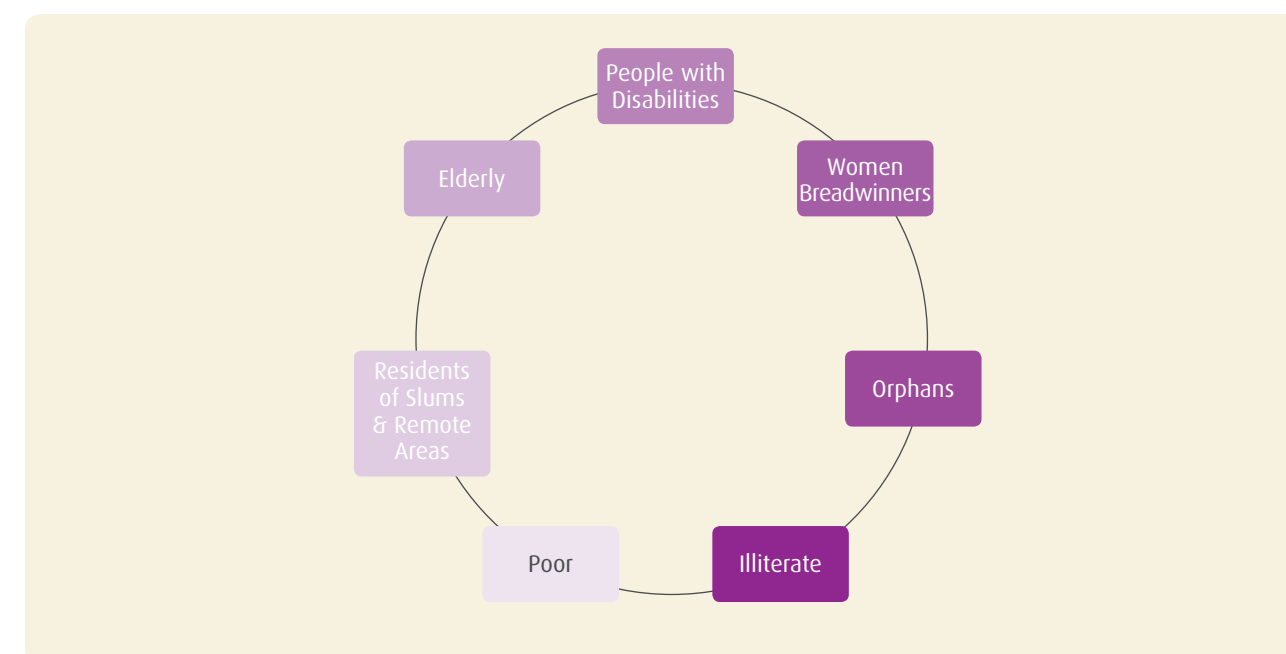


Fig. 1: Target Groups

4. Holmes, L. and Watts, R. (2000) Corporate Social Responsibility: Making Good Business Sense, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, Geneva

5. Ibid

3. Current Status

3.1.Social and Economic Indicators

Egypt faces many challenges, the most important of which are the widening disparities between classes and high rates of illiteracy, poverty and unemployment, which impose obstacles to comprehensive and sustainable development.

Egypt has a population of 92 million people, which is growing at a rate of 2.17% a year (2 million people). This is a huge rate of growth in population according to the estimates of the United Nations. Estimated poverty rates in 2010/2011 represent (less than 8.5 EGP per person per day) 25.2%, increasing by 3.6% than that of 2008/2009. The extreme poverty rates represent (less than 5.7 EGP per person per day) 4.8%. This means that around 61% of villages live below the poverty line, 20% of them live in extreme poverty⁶.

Illiteracy rate in Egypt was 24.9% in 2012; it is higher among females (32.5%) than that among males (17.6%). More than one third of the poor suffer from illiteracy, while the vast majority of them received only primary education. The number of unemployed reached 4.3 million in 2013, with a percentage of 12.7% of the total labor force. The unemployment rate among females is 24.1% compared to 9.3% among males (Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics 2012 and 2013).

3.2. ICT Sector Projects for Social Responsibility

In the framework of social responsibility, MCIT and its affiliated entities, in cooperation with ICT-related companies and the civil society organizations operating in the field of communications and information technology, conducted several projects that aim to support the most-favored groups in a number of areas such as health, education, empowerment of people with disabilities, providing adequate housing and others. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the number of projects implemented by the ICT sector according to the action line and target group respectively. These programs are not implemented in a framework that ensures their integrity and optimal performance. Therefore, MCIT, in terms of the importance of the government actions towards social responsibility programs, has advanced efforts in this area in order to maximize the benefits of these projects by promoting cooperation, partnership and integration between different project to address challenges of the development process in Egypt.

6. Family Income, Expenditure and Consumption Survey – Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics – 2009 and 2011

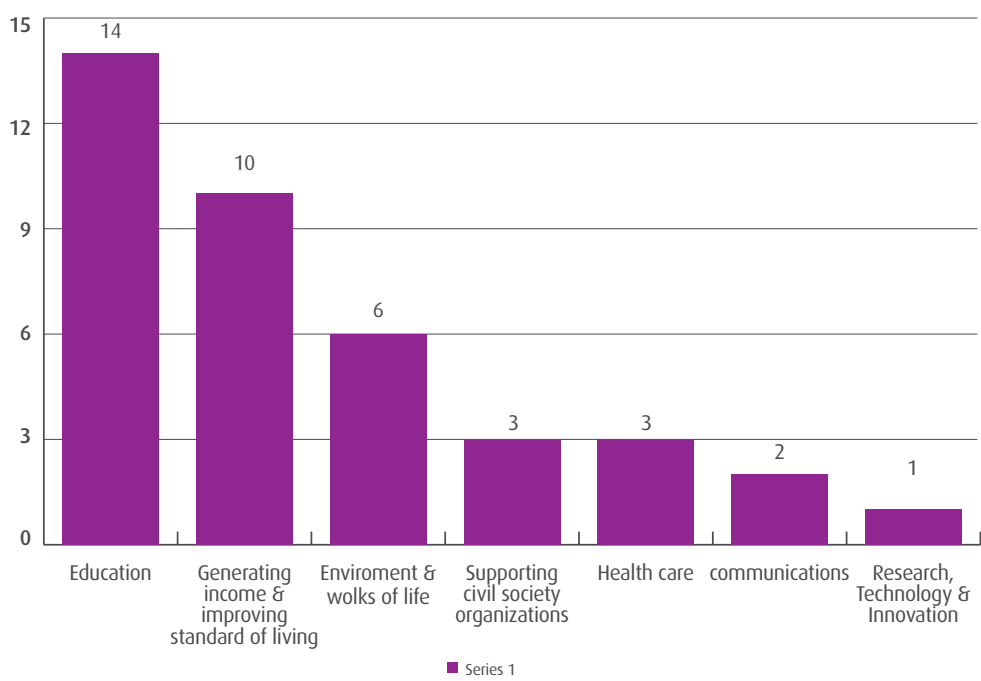


Fig.2*: ICT sector projects for Social Responsibility according to action lines – April 2013

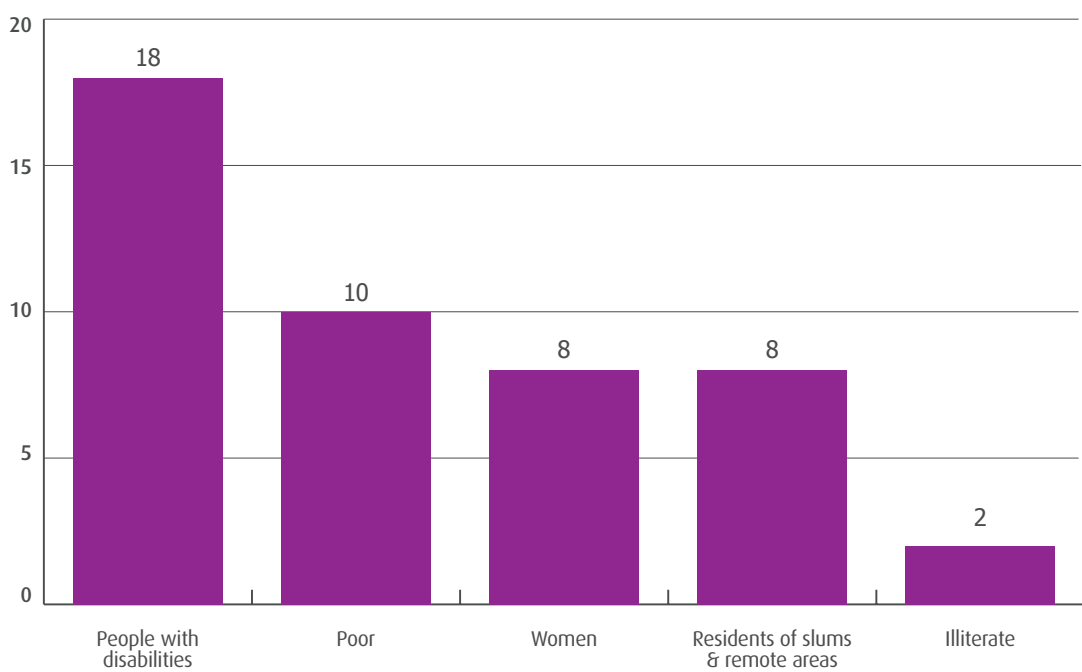


Fig.3: ICT sector projects for Social Responsibility according to target groups – April 2013

*A single project can target more than one target group

4. Government's Role in Social Responsibility

The Egyptian government plays a crucial role in promoting corporate social responsibility and coordinating partners' efforts. To maximize the benefit of its role, MCIT identified obstacles and challenges facing the civil society organizations and ICT local and multinational companies concerned with the implementation of social responsibility projects. Also, MCIT received their suggestions and ideas on how it can assist them to address these challenges. Tables 1 and 2 list the challenges facing the implementation of social responsibility projects and points, through which MCIT could contribute to the implementation of these projects from the perspective of both the companies and civil society organizations respectively.

Table 1: Challenges facing social responsibility projects and MCIT role to address them from the companies' perspective

Challenges	MCIT's Role
Lack of sustainability in idea and direction towards social responsibility in governmental institutions	Removing administrative obstacles and bureaucracy
Difficulty of identifying civil society organizations to cooperate with them as partners in social responsibility projects	Creating a database for civil society organizations
Duplication of projects	Providing directions concerning projects, in which the government seek companies to take part
Confusion about the concept of social responsibility and charity work	Establishing a regular dialogue between the government and all concerned stakeholders
Focus of some non-governmental organizations on the financial part of partnership only	Increasing government incentives for the companies that contribute to social development and form distinguished partnerships with the civil society
Lack of measurable criteria that achieve projects goals	Developing criteria that ensure the implementation of social responsibility programs and prevent the use of platforms to improve the corporate image without achieving the basic goals of social responsibility
	Appreciating projects conducted by companies through its social responsibility
	Promoting the exchange of expertise between companies working in the area of social responsibility
	Creating a joint committee for corporate social responsibility that includes members of government officials, business men and civil society

Table 2: Challenges facing social responsibility projects and MCIT role to address them from the perspective of civil society organizations

Challenges	MCIT's Role
Lake of resources for NGOs	Establish a fund to support social initiatives
Absence of some projects sustainability	Spread the social responsibility culture among local companies
Bureaucracy	Increase government incentives for NGOs and other incentives for NGOs with distinguished endeavors in social development
	Provide a list of prior social development projects to which companies can contribute

Civil society organizations recognize their significant role in raising awareness among companies in terms of contributing to activities of social responsibility and its role in societal development.

5. Methodology

The work methodology is based on the effective contribution of MCIT affiliates, private sector companies and civil society organizations. The work is divided into three major phases: evaluating and analyzing the current status, developing the general framework of the strategy and the final development of the strategy (fig. 4):

- Evaluating and analyzing the current status: basically aims to identify the ongoing projects implemented by different entities within the ICT sector by conducting several workshops and individual interviews with all companies, and preparing an introductory document for each ongoing project.
- Developing the general framework of the strategy: based on the review of some social and economic indicators of the Egyptian society, the international experiences in the use of ICTs in social responsibility, and discussions with partners on the strategy action lines and goals, a survey was developed and sent to companies to learn about their vision concerning the social responsibility strategy of the ICT sector. Based on the results of this survey, the strategy initial draft was formulated. At this phase, partners agreed on the necessity to propose a number of national projects to be implemented by different entities within the ICT sector. However, these national projects should form extension to ongoing projects.

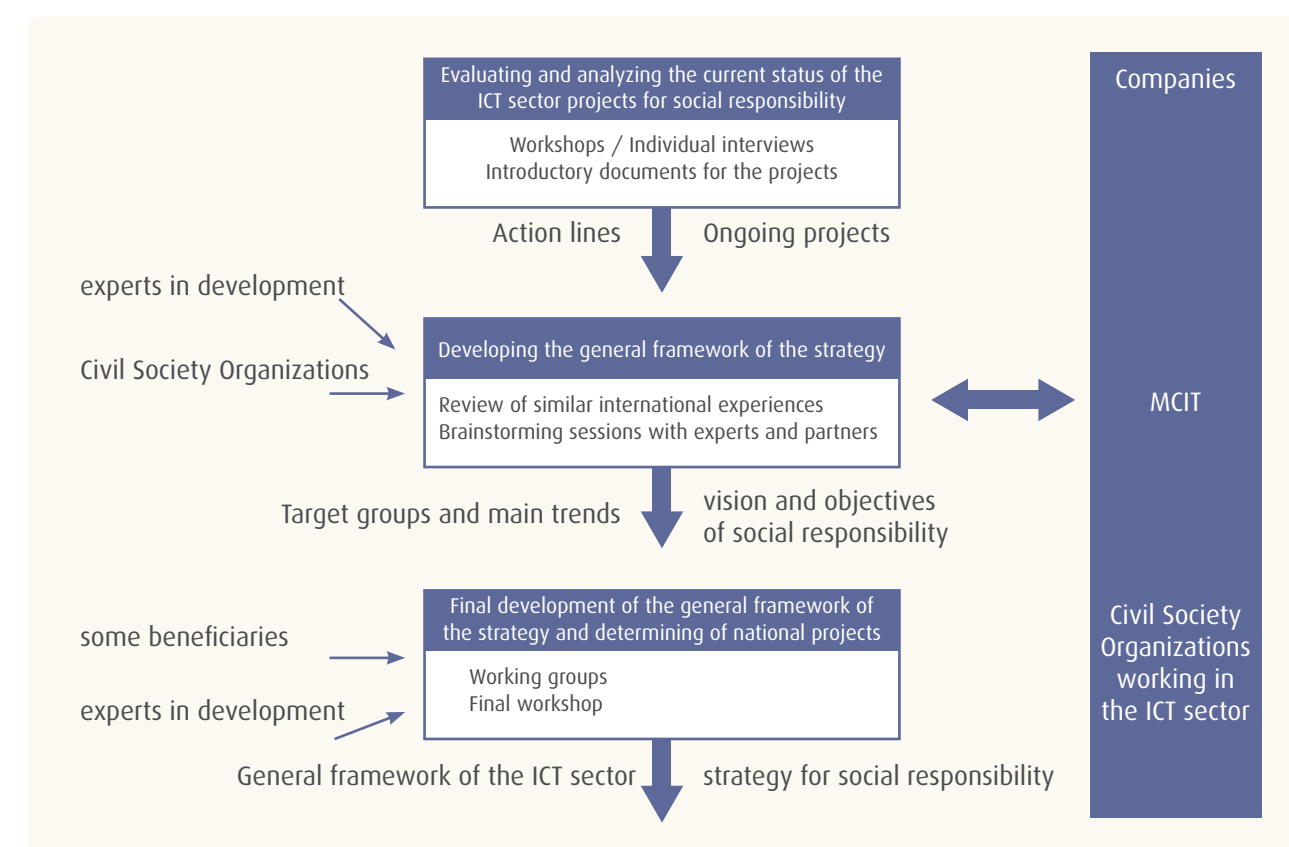


Fig. 4: Work Methodology

- The final development of the strategy: at this phase, in addition to the discussion of what has been achieved at the phase of (Developing the general framework of the strategy) with all partners in the ICT sector, some external experts in social development—together with some beneficiaries of the strategy—were invited to review the strategy from a comprehensive perspective. The final draft of the strategy was discussed and national projects that the ICT sector could contribute to, under the umbrella of MCIT, were agreed.

6. General Framework of the ICT Sector Social Responsibility System

Work in the field of communications and information technology is divided into three major pillars: the strategic level, pilot projects and implementation of projects (fig. 5). This work is conducted in cooperation with partners of ICT sector, under the umbrella of the committee for social responsibility, which was created according to a ministerial decree to include representatives of the private sector, multinational companies, and civil society organizations working in the field of ICT.

As illustrated in figure 5, the ICT strategic issues are addressed through the bureau of the advisor to the Minister for social responsibility and services. Pilot projects are supported by Egypt ICT Trust Fund, while the implementation of the projects are carried out in cooperation of all partners of the ICT sector, under the umbrella of the committee for social responsibility.

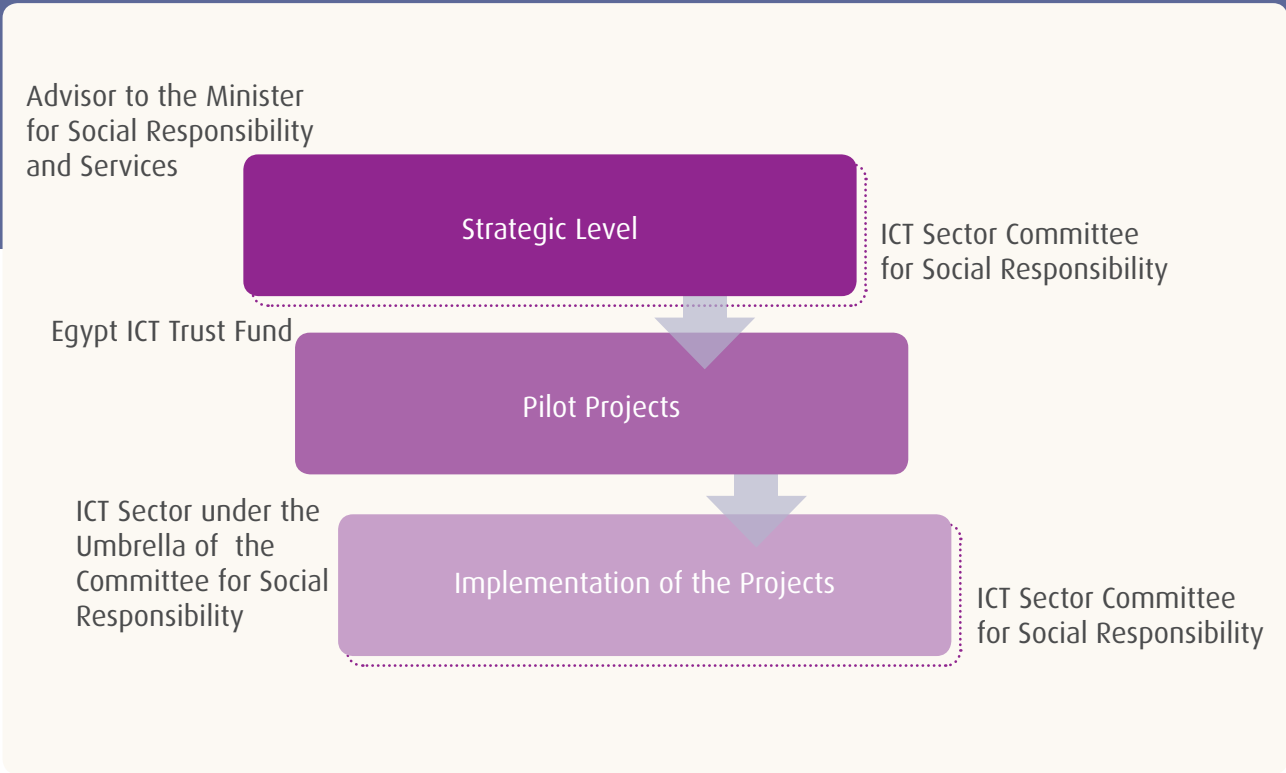


Fig. 5: General Framework of The ICT Sector Social Responsibility System

7. Vision

A digital knowledge society, in which social responsibility plays an active role in achieving social justice

8. Mission

Stimulating ICT tools through social responsibility of partners of ICT sector in order to empower the most-favored groups and achieve social justice

9. General Framework of The Strategy

The strategy aims at maximizing the ICT sector’s role in contributing to the achievement of social justice by exploiting the social benefits of the projects that aim to serve and foster the most-favored groups by using ICT tools. This is done by supporting development partners to take an institutional, strategic approach in cooperation and partnership with each other and with concerned stakeholders (civil society, Academia, governmental organizations, etc.). The strategy should be based on a strong infrastructure that includes substructures (technological and legislative substructures, and others), scientific research, technology, innovation and enabled civil society organizations.

The strategy, basically aiming to contribute to the achievement of social justice, contains three vertical pillars: education, health care and income generation and improvement of standard of living. This is in addition to two transverse pillars: development of rural areas and women’s empowerment. In order to ensure efficient implementation of this strategy, the tools of knowledge management and international cooperation should be utilized to benefit from local and international experiences and best practices of the projects, implemented in the framework of the ICT sector strategy for social responsibility (fig. 6).

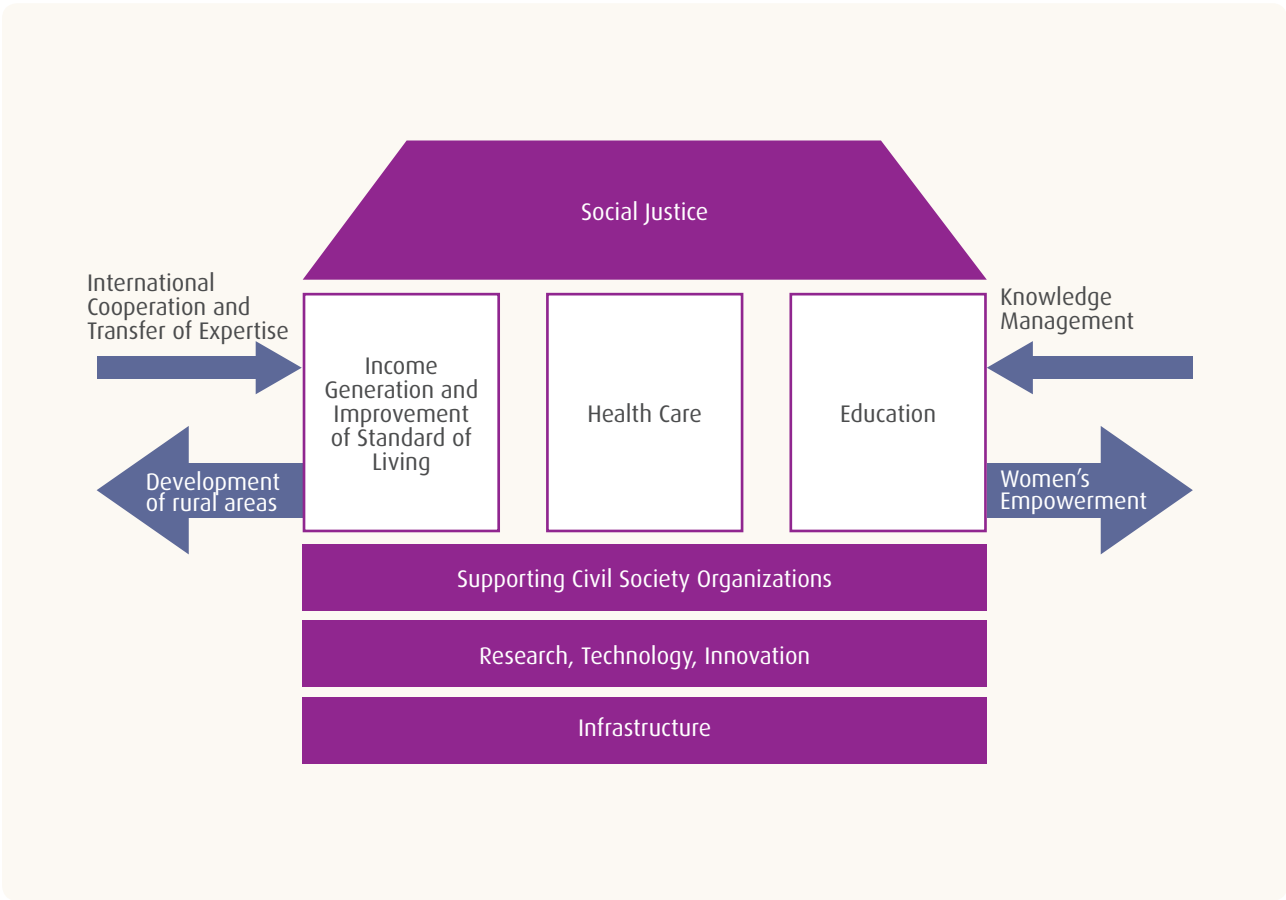


Fig. 6: General Framework of The ICT Sector Strategy for Social Responsibility

10. Strategic Goals

The strategy includes eight major goals, using ICTs to:

- Reduce Poverty and improve the quality of life
- Provide better opportunities of education and health for the most-favored groups
- Empower people with disabilities
- Promote the use of ICTs to support development in rural areas
- Empower women and promote gender equality
- Preserve the environment and rationalize consumption of natural resources
- Utilize tools of knowledge management to support civil society organizations
- Stimulate international cooperation and transfer of expertise in ICTs for social responsibility

10.1. Poverty Reduction and Improvement of Quality of Life

The programs of this pillar aims to promote sustainable development and poverty reduction by empowering marginalized groups in knowledge, and to provide basic service that support their lives and enable them to take their responsibilities. There are several international experiences and practices, from which we could benefit and which clearly reflected the role of communications and information technology in fighting poverty by providing necessary services for the most-favored and marginalized people including for example, local radio stations, development of service centers and widespread use of mobile phones by farmers, fishermen and owners of small businesses, in order to have access to vital information.

■ Technology Homes

Expanding the establishment of technology homes as multipurpose public and social access points allows access to individuals to diverse resources of communications, particularly free or affordable internet. This is in addition to the expansion of services provided for citizens according to the needs of local communities, which would include information about prices of agricultural produce on daily basis. This would support the negotiating position of agricultural producers. As well, this includes access to information on agriculture, weather, livestock and food in order to have quick access to comprehensive, updated knowledge, information and relevant details. Technology homes are also used as centers for distance education and eradication of illiteracy.

■ Non-profit Call Centers

These non-profit centers aim to improve youth employment in rural and remote areas. They contribute to providing services at competitive prices and foster distance work to enable people with disabilities, women and residents of rural and remote areas to have job opportunities.

Living Labs

The European Union defines living labs as “open innovation environments in real-life settings, in which

user-driven innovation is fully integrated within the co-creation process of new services, products and community infrastructures”⁷. Through these labs, we can assist owners of small and micro businesses by providing them with innovative solutions based on ICTs. Since these labs were already established in some countries, like South Africa, we should be aware of lessons learnt and best practices of these experiences to maximize the benefits from these labs.

■ Community Portals

This seeks to expand the establishment of community portals which aim at supporting various segments of society and promoting the development of the portals that support social responsibility projects, which are implemented in the framework of this strategy. This is in addition to the management of the content of specialized knowledge rules for exchange of expertise and knowledge management by the society.

10.2. Providing Better Opportunities of Education and Health for The Most-Favored Groups

■ Distance Learning and Training

This endeavors to advance distance learning and training in various fields to enhance capacities and eradicate illiteracy, particularly in rural and remote areas. This is achieved through community outlets, such as technology homes, youth centers, schools, etc., taking into consideration the need of providing the necessary human resources for training.

■ Technological Capacities for Community Schools

This aims to contribute to the development of educational process for poor groups in rural and remote areas by building the technological capacities of students of community schools. This is achieved through providing training on computer basics and training facilitators, as schools are considered the main portals for education, which address the problem of dropouts in remote and poor areas.

■ Distance treatment

This targets to expand the use of distance treatment to serve poor and remote areas and link together governmental health units and university hospitals in each governorate. This can count on mesh technology to serve the areas that have no infrastructure for internet services.

■ Health protection

This strives to provide health services and raise community awareness of health protection methods through specialized portals.

7. Living Labs for User Driven Open Innovation, DG Information Society & Media, European Commission, 2009

10.3. Empowering People with Disabilities

ICTs are considered one of the most important tools that could, to a large extent, facilitate the daily life of people with disabilities, who number 15 million Egyptians, and provide them with opportunities of education and training comparable with those available for their peers of normal people. Since this segment of the society has been suffering from marginalization for a long period of time, MCIT paid particular attention to them and developed a special strategy to serve them and benefit from their wasted energy, which could effectively contribute to the construction and development of the country, if we developed efficient strategies and plans to integrate and rehabilitate people with disabilities to become active and productive members of the society.

- Supporting the educational process for people with disabilities

This endeavors to utilize ICT tools to provide equal and appropriate educational opportunities for all types and levels of disabilities in the different levels of education by providing necessary hardware and software to promote the integration of students with disabilities in public schools, higher education institutions and private schools. This also aims to train teachers – the cornerstones of the educational process for people with disabilities – to use ICTs to serve the full and partial integration process according to type and level of disabilities. This is in addition to paying attention to the enhancement of mental capacities for people with intellectual disabilities and opening new areas for understanding and innovation through non-formal education.

- Training and building capacity for better job opportunities

This seeks to ensure the right of people with disabilities to have equal job opportunities in the area of ICT and other areas that suits their academic and technical qualification, in order to enable them to achieve the maximum level of independence and improve their quality of life. This ICT strategy aims at serving people with disabilities, opening new labor markets for them and promoting their job opportunities through training programs on basic IT skills and the training for employment initiative for people with disabilities in call centers, and through cooperation with major companies operating in the area of IT.

- Promoting research, development and innovation in ICTs to serve the people with disabilities

Given that new technologies are one of the most important useful tools for people with disabilities, and that Egypt has qualified and efficient human resources in the area of software development, MCIT promotes development of technological applications and actions, and fosters research and development of new technologies designed for people with disabilities, with priority given to low-cost technologies and their availability in Arabic. MCIT seeks to call for research and innovative proposals on the integration of people with disabilities through ICTs in cooperation with the Ministry of Scientific Research.

10.4. Promoting The Use of ICTs to Support Development in Rural Areas

This is one of the transverse pillars that intersect with the previous pillars, as the projects in general aim to develop rural areas. This pillar focuses on the following items:

- Linking remote areas to internet services

To provide internet and broadband services for the poor and remote areas and use mesh technology as a tool to activate many basic services, such as distance education and treatment in the areas without internet.

- Enhancing the services provided to poor and remote areas

To empower local communities by providing opportunities of using ICTs in poor and remote areas, and promote the development of community portals and production of e-content to disseminate knowledge relevant to these communities.

- Designing and developing ICT services and programs to face development challenges

This is achieved through supporting technology developers and university students to develop programs and mobile applications that could meet challenges facing the most-favored groups by launching an annual competition in innovation for social responsibility.

10.5. Women's Empowerment and Promotion of Gender Equality

Females form 48.9% of Egypt's population. Egypt is ranked 126 of 135 in the Global Gender Gap Index issued by the World Economic Forum, which examines the gap between men and women in four fundamental categories: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment⁸. As for the participation in economic activities, males form 74.6% of the total number of males, while females form 22.5% only⁹, which is less than the global average (52%)¹⁰. The unemployment rate among females is higher than that among males. Thus, it is quite important to pay attention to women's participation and to support their engagement in different programs, one of the goals of all projects implemented in the framework of this strategy. The programs of this pillar also include the development of training and educational programs, improvement of women's income to adapt the culture of some rural and remote areas and promotion of developing specialized and community portals that address issues of interest to women and raise their awareness of different life and health matters.

10.6. Preserving The Environment and Rationalizing Consumption of Natural resource

Egypt faces a number of crises in relation with natural resources, especially water and electricity. ICTs could contribute to the rationalization of these resources by raising the awareness of their importance and how to rationalize their consumption, in addition to using smart management methods. This pillar includes some projects as follows:

- Awareness campaigns through mobile phones to encourage citizens to rationalize the consumption of electricity and water

- Rationalization of natural resources, such as water and energy by using smart management systems, based on ICTs

8. World Economic Forum, The Global Gender Gap Report, 2012

9. Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, Annual Bulletin for Workforce in 2011, April 2011-2012

10. United Nations, DESA, The World's Women 2010, p.76

10.7. Knowledge Management and Supporting Civil Society Organizations

Undoubtedly, we cannot develop a system or implement a strategy or efficient executive plans without having a strong IT infrastructure, through which we can support the coordination between civil society organizations. This should promote cooperation and enhance work performance in community development and document previous and international experiences to benefit from best practices and lessons learnt. This pillar includes several projects such as:

- Developing a geographic information system for social responsibility

This system provides information and data about the projects implemented in the framework of corporate social responsibility and those of ICT sector institutions and entities versus community needs as a first phase. This is promoted into a second phase to include developmental projects at the national level. It provides a clear roadmap for all social responsibility stakeholders: the private sector, civil society and government.

- Civil society information portal

This aims to provide an active tool for coordination of all efforts exerted by organizations operating in the area of development by providing information about their work scope, issues and future plans and the ongoing projects to avoid duplication of work, which is a waste of resources. This portal also documents the different experiences and projects and information on success stories, best practices and lesson learnt; all stakeholders contribute to the documentation process, aiming to exchange expertise.

- Training of employees of civil society organizations on the use ICTs

The use of ICTs is an essential tool for the work development and enhancement of its performance. This should lead to better services on a large scale. This also results in a multiple benefit for the society as a whole. Therefore, the ICT sector could contribute to this process by developing programs that help civil society organizations manage their financial resources and projects and by training their employees on the use of these programs to save time and effort in their development of the management process.

10.8. Regional and International Cooperation and Transfer of Expertise

International cooperation and transfer of expertise is one of the most important tools of the development process. Thus, MCIT pays particular attention to this pillar, which includes many programs such as:

- Creating cooperation programs with donor countries, not only to fund projects, but also to benefit from their experiences in the implementation of similar projects in other countries, such as the living labs project which was implemented in South Africa in cooperation with Finland.
- Taking part in the regional and international events to exchange expertise and create partnerships
- ICT regular conference for social responsibility

The conference discusses what have been implemented through the ICT strategy for social responsibility, success stories and cooperation between the different entities. It also forms a platform to discuss new aspects of cooperation between partners, in addition to the presentation of some international experiences that the Egyptian society could benefit from, and discussion of potential cooperation at the international level.

11. Basic Principles for The Implementation of the Strategy

This strategy includes six basic principles that should be taken into account when implementing the projects:

- Sustainability of projects and possibility of application on a larger geographic scale

The good practices of development—in which projects achieve positive impacts, particularly in poverty reduction—are characterized by sustainability and the possibility of reapplication of pilot projects in different areas and on a larger scale. This requires the participation of all entities, institutions, and members of society, who benefit from the projects' outcomes, in the planning, management and evaluation processes in order to rationalize policies and decisions of development management and to accelerate necessary behavioral changes. This also includes citizens' recognition of available capacities for rural development and assisting and training citizens on developmental problem-solving methods, as improving the capacities of individuals and enabling them change from being a burden to instead a resource are among the most important components of sustainability .

- Implementation of projects in the framework of comprehensive development

It is important to know that ICT programs, not taking into account the several aspects of development, don't achieve desired outcomes. Therefore, ICT projects should form part of more comprehensive developmental projects that are driven by local demands and can adapt to the conditions of target communities. Attention must also be paid to capacity building, citizens' participation and development of local content as much as it is paid to information technology. Thus, concerted efforts of all partners and the participation of non-governmental organizations represent a crucial component in the design, planning and implementation of the programs relevant to social responsibility.

- Maintaining balance between the most-favored groups

There is a huge debate concerning ICTs contribution to increasing the gap between the different segments of the societies. Thus, maintaining balance between the most-favored groups is a basic principle in implementing this strategy. Therefore, planning for projects should be carefully done in order to avoid negative effects that could result from favoring some groups at the expense of others. For that reason, the projects in general, should provide services to the majority of most-favored groups, so that principles of social justice could be achieved.

- Social participation

Social participation is defined as the process in which individuals play an important role in political and social life of their society, and have the chance to take part in identifying difficulties and problems facing their life and society. They could also participate in setting the general goals for social development and best practices to achieve these goals. This leads to more efficient projects that are based on the actual needs of beneficiaries. This participation also incorporates individuals and groups' responsibility and enables them to contribute to the development of their society.

- Benefit of ongoing projects

The various entities within the ICT sector have implemented several social responsibility projects that had positive impacts on the target communities. Therefore, the benefit of these projects and the capitalization on them will maximize benefits of the ICT sector strategy for social responsibility.

- Cooperation with external partners

Since work in social development requires the ability to look at projects from comprehensive perspective, it entails cooperation with several entities outside the ICT sector in order that each entity takes its responsibility in the implementation of the project. Based on this, MCIT bears the responsibility of coordinating between partners outside the ICT sector, including the government, private sector and civil society organizations to ensure the implementation of projects within an integrated framework to achieve sustainable development.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation

To monitor the achievement of goals of the strategy, a practical plan should be developed to evaluate performance, and identify standardized indicators (qualitative and quantitative) by comparative statistical indicators. Therefore, the framework of this strategy includes the following components:

- To develop and launch an indicator for social responsibility for ICT companies
- To monitor and regularly publish indicators for social responsibility, which can be used as a tool, not only for evaluation, but also for developing policies and directing programs and resources
- To evaluate the impact of social responsibility programs on the development of target groups
- To link indicator to companies' incentives

Conclusion

Social responsibility is one of the most important tools that effectively impact the development of society and the attention for its most-favored groups. Therefore, the main goal of the ICT sector strategy is to contribute to achieving principles of social justice and narrowing social gaps between various segments of society, a goal Egypt's government strives to achieve through the use of ICTs.

The ICT sector, throughout the past years, has been effectively contributing to advancing production and development in Egypt. Represented by MCIT, the ICT sector recognizes its responsibilities which will result in the enhancement of citizens' standard of life within the Egyptian society. In light of challenges facing the society, MCIT strives to consolidate efforts exerted in social responsibility within the ICT sector for the development of most-favored groups. This strategy is the fruit of cooperation between the partners of ICT sector to alleviate the suffering of the marginalized groups in the Egyptian society. This is regarded as a model for effective and positive community partnership between the government, private sector and civil society organizations.

We have recognized, while developing this strategy, that MCIT role, even though it is considered a corner stone, forms only one side of social participation; and in order to have this system completed, we had to include the other sides of the triangle, i.e., civil society organizations

and private sector companies working in the area of ICTs. Thus, we sought to include them and open new channels for communication, which had a very positive impact on the development of this strategy.

The ICT sector seeks, through this strategy, to optimize the use of ICTs to respond to the needs of most-favored groups in poor and remote areas and to enhance the standard of living, provide better opportunities of education and health and empower women.

The selection of most-favored groups is based on studies and local and global references, which showed an urgent need to take care of these groups, as this would have several advantages, including ensuring citizens' statehood and enabling them to be productive and effective. This will positively affect the interest of society and the national economy. No doubt that the more care the state gives to citizens, the more productive they can be. As such, we found ourselves moving around in a perfectly connected circle of advantages, the center of which is the individual. As by caring for individuals, who form the basis of the state, we can achieve the desired progress and hoped development.

Finally, the ICT sector introduces, through this strategy, a model for integration and cooperation in social responsibility, without which the country will be loaded with heavy burdens that hinder the process of progress and prosperity.

Annex1: Suggested National Programs

e-Governance of Charity and Voluntary Work and Social Responsibility

The network of civil associations in Egypt includes around 17000 associations that carry out various activities in 17 areas, such as education, culture, charity work, services and other walks of life. These associations have human resources and experts and operate in the poorest communities, which enable them to effectively contribute to the development process. The state must empower these associations and cooperate with this sector to enhance its performance and ensure the optimal use of resources through the ICT tools.

Project goals:

- Linking together all partners of the charity and voluntary work sector, including supervisory, donor, non-governmental entities and benefactors
- Assisting decision-makers in developing work strategic actions
- Building a comprehensive database that includes all incoming and outgoing donations from/to all groups working in the non-governmental sectors
- Ensuring swift communication between all entities and beneficiary groups through electronic linkage system
- Organizing and saving data of all facilities, ensuring accessibility and accelerating practical procedures
- Ensuring development, standardization and flexibility of automatic systems in beneficiary charity associations and entities
- Providing and ensuring optimal use of operational human and material resources in the charity work society
- Developing income resources (donations)
- Ensuring full transparency for projects through providing free access to all programs
- Providing training on ICTs for the employees of the charity and voluntary work sector

Project summary:

The e-governance system of charity and voluntary work and social responsibility is an information management system and a website that aims

to automate operations in the area of charity and voluntary work and to link together all partners of this sector including supervisory, donor, non-governmental entities and benefactors. This would contribute to the enhancement of performance relevant to social responsibility, increase financial resources for non-governmental and charity entities and advance the national partnership between the private sector, government and civil society organizations. MCIT has signed an agreement with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to cooperate in this area, as the latter has a system of "global goodness" that will be transferred to Egypt through MCIT. MCIT will identify the needs based on the Egyptian environment through cooperation with major civil society organizations, the General Union of Non-governmental Organizations and the Ministry of Social Solidarity.

Improving ICT Skills for Orphans

Egypt has around 1.7 million orphans according to the UNICEF statistics (2009)¹¹, while civil society organizations working in the area of welfare of orphans estimates their number by 3 million orphans. Orphans usually, when leaving orphanages, are not well-educated and have no experience, posing social and economic threats to the society. Therefore, this project aims to provide orphans with skills that enable them to keep up with the 21st century's labor market. The project provides them with better opportunities for living and offers trained employees for companies.

Project goals:

- Enhancing orphans' capacities relevant to information technology
- Ensuring better future for orphans through enabling them to be qualified for labor market and providing trained employees for companies
- Providing broader knowledge opportunities for orphans to keep pace with a quickly changing world, which advance and enhance their various skills
- Unleashing innovation and creativity for children and youth
- Providing technological rehabilitation for orphanages through hardware, software and internet
- Avoiding future social and economic problems that could result from lack of attention to this group and from not enabling them to pace with the labor market

11. UNICEF Statistics, available from http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/egypt_statistics.html

Project summary:

The project is a collaborative work between MCIT, companies and civil society organizations. It aims to provide orphanages with computers, software and internet; train orphans on computer basic skills and data entry; and unleash their energies of innovation and creativity by organizing contests and creating an enabling environment for knowledge, learning and innovation. These computers will be provided through a donation by ICT multinational companies that are regularly replaced. MCIT, together with ICT companies and civil society organizations, takes the responsibility of training orphans (MCIT provides part of the training through its various programs such as training of trainers in the governorates' information centers; the grant of the National Telecommunication Institute for the graduates of faculty of Engineering and others. Companies and civil society organizations support another part of the training). This is coordinated with companies inside and outside the ICT sector to provide job opportunities for youth of working age, who are well qualified. MCIT also launches several competitions to encourage orphans to use information technology for knowledge, and unleashes their energies for innovation and identifying the best cadres.

Training and Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities for Better Job Opportunities

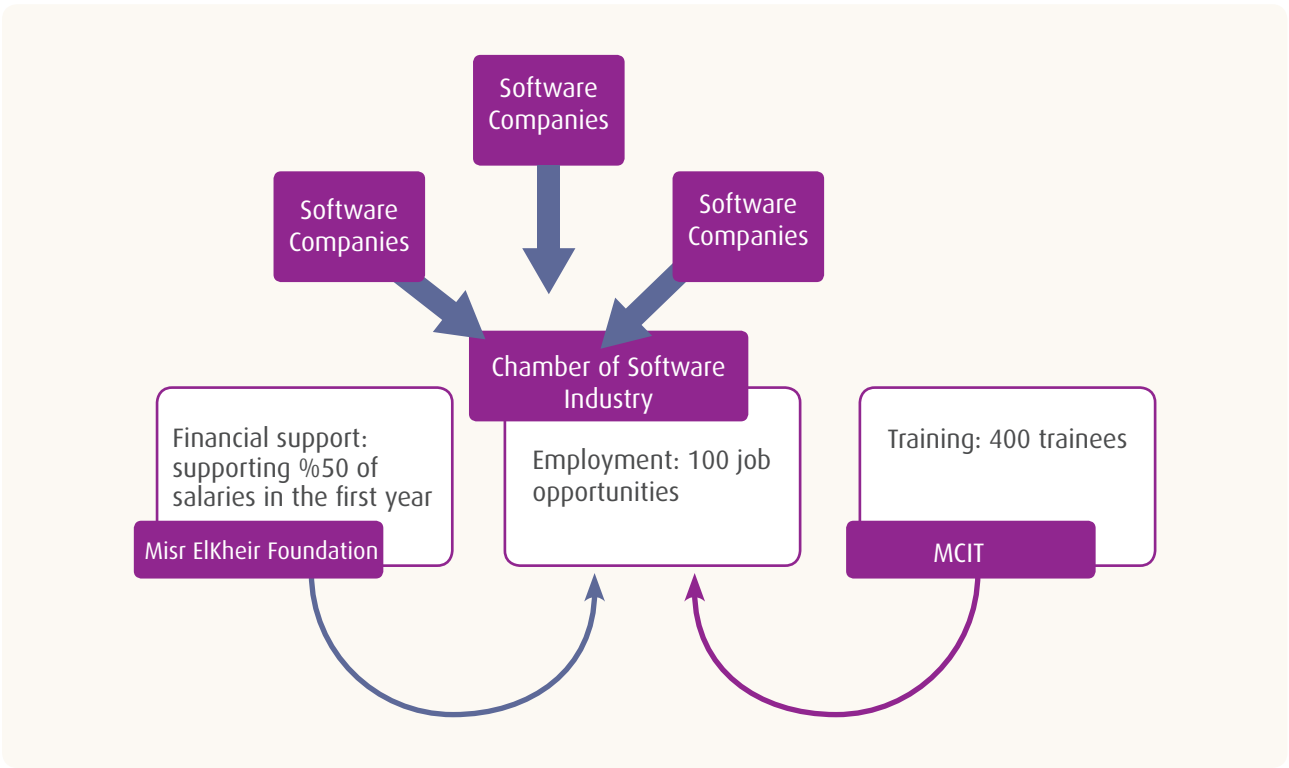
To ensure the right of people with disabilities to have equitable job opportunities in the area of ICTs and other areas that suit their academic and professional qualification and to enable them to reach the maximum level of independence and enhance their quality of life, MCIT launched the "Training and Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities for better Job Opportunities" as a pilot project to train people with disabilities on certain skills, based on the needs of ICT companies. MCIT aims to expand this initiative to include required jobs in the different areas, to which the training of people with disabilities on the use of ICT tools contribute.

Project goals:

- Providing rehabilitation of people with disabilities by training them on skills required by the labor market
- Supporting companies to recruit people with disabilities as productive individuals
- Creating market value for people with disabilities to be able to compete in the labor market
- Opening new markets for people with disabilities and promoting their opportunities to carry out their work

Project summary:

In partnership with the chamber of Information Technology and Telecommunications and the foundations Misr Elkheir and Design, MCIT implements the first and pilot phase of this project, in which MCIT trains 400 people with disabilities on telemarketing, data entry, and usage of ICTs in administrative work. These jobs have been identified by the companies in cooperation with the chamber of Information Technology and Telecommunications, which will offer job opportunities for about 100 well qualified people with disabilities. The foundation of Misr Elkheir bears part of the salaries for the selected persons through the first year, and the companies bear the salaries afterwards. This is to encourage companies to recruit people with disabilities until they learn about their skills and capacities and perform as normal people. MCIT plans, based on the pilot phase, to expand the project to become a national project and include employment in several areas.



Training and Rehabilitation Project of People with Disabilities for Better Job Opportunities

Improving Educational Opportunities in Remote Areas

School dropouts is one of the problems that face the Egyptian society, especially in poor, rural and remote areas. The percentage of school dropouts forms about 20% in elementary and primary education¹². For this reason, community schools - based on the one-class system and in which the educational process is run in a way adequate for children's social and economic conditions in these areas where many parents depend on the aid of their children in agriculture and other activities - are the most important tools to reduce school dropouts and thus reducing illiteracy, one of the priority challenges on the Egyptian government's agenda.

Therefore and for providing equitable educational opportunities for children, this project aims to provide these schools with necessary ICT tools and appropriate training for facilitators.

Project goals:

- Providing equitable educational opportunities for children in community schools just like other children in ordinary schools
- Providing training centers and usage of computers for community school students
- Providing training for facilitators on information technology to train children on computer basic skills

Project summary:

There are about 450 community schools in Egypt with 14000 children and 900 facilitators. MCIT plans to provide part of the training, provided that learners work in the training of trainers grant in the governorates' information centers offered by the National telecommunication Institute. The training will also include graduates of the Faculty of Engineering studying at the National telecommunication Institute's three-month grant at a low cost, covered by companies to train facilitators, and evaluate the training of the students in community schools. Egypt Post also provides a room for training and usage of computers in its branches around the country and according to their needs. This is in addition to the possibility of using technology homes and youth centers in this training.

12. Global Monitoring Report on Education for All – Global Monitoring Team Analysis Based on The UNESCO Institute for Statistics Figures (2012)

Digitization of Curricula for People with Disabilities

No doubt, ICTs could make a quantum leap in the life of people with disabilities from several sides, including facilitating their educational process. The digitization of curricula is on top of tools that effectively contribute to raising the level of educational process for this group. MCIT has already digitized some curricula for people with visual and hearing impairments as a pilot project to learn about their impact on the educational process for people with disabilities and measure their success before circulating them. This pilot project achieved a great success that encouraged MCIT to add this component to its strategy for social responsibility. MCIT also provided schools for students with special needs (blind) with computers and text-to-speech software programs, so that they could be ready for the digitization of curricula application. The technological rehabilitation is currently applied for deaf and hearing-impaired schools in 2013-2014 in order to provide people with hearing impairments with facilitated educational opportunities.

Project goals:

- Providing equitable educational opportunities for people with disabilities
- Utilizing and facilitating the use of ICTs to enhance the efficiency of the educational process for people with disabilities
- Digitizing all special curricula for people with visual and hearing impairments

Project summary:

This project is implemented in several phases as follows:

- Circulation of digitized curricula by MCIT in all schools for students with special needs (blind, deaf and hearing-impaired schools) in cooperation with the Ministry of Education
- Digitization of the rest of curricula, in which ICT companies provide necessary software programs and Bibliotheca Alexandrina takes the responsibility of implementation
- MCIT develops an electronic dictionary of global sign language in cooperation with the Ministry of Education in order to be circulated in all deaf and hearing-impaired schools

Innovation for The Society

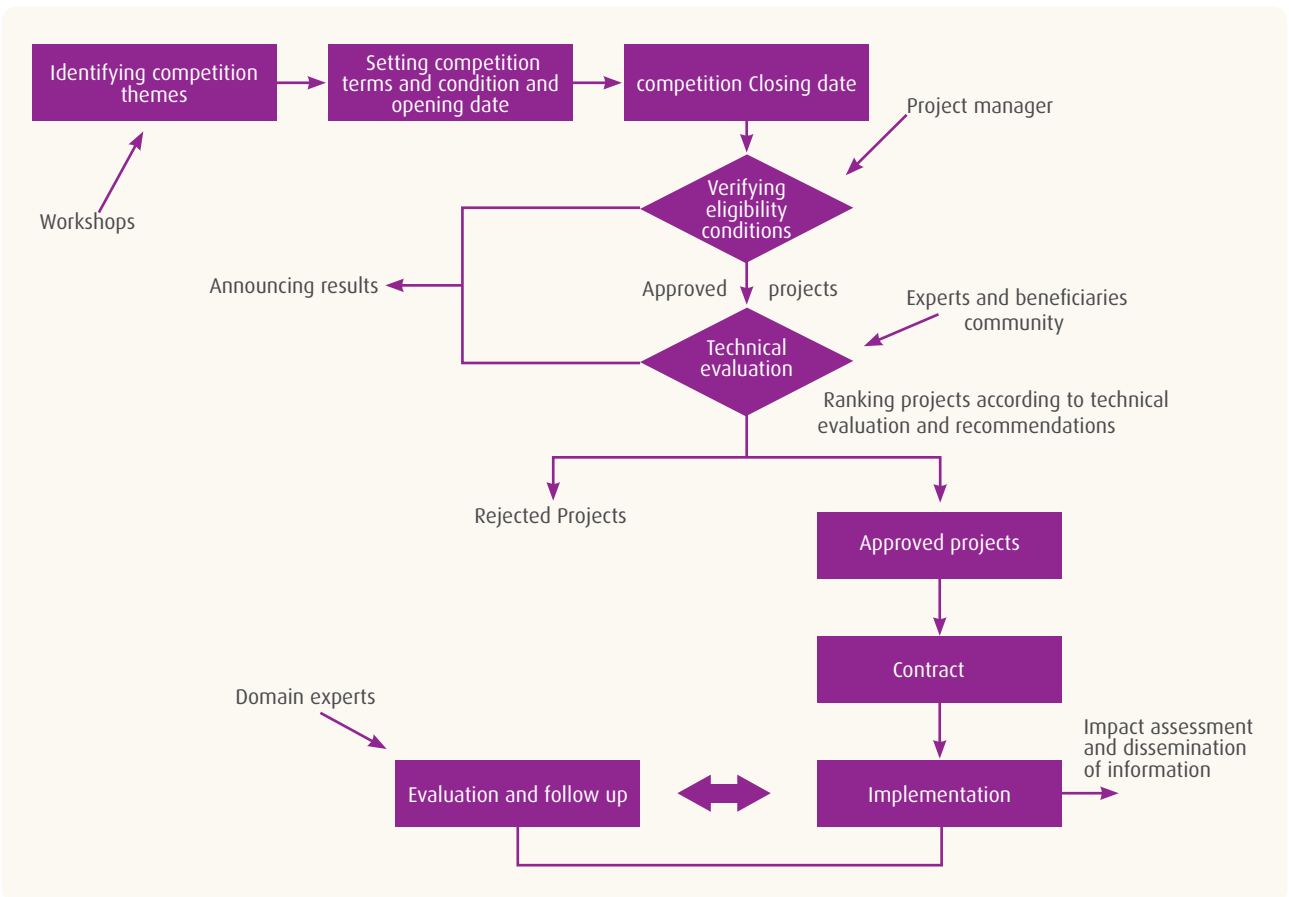
Innovation is one of the important ways to find solutions for the various challenges facing the Egyptian society. Given that Egypt has highly qualified and very efficient human resources in the area of software development – the basis for innovation – MCIT aims to foster the development of best technology applications to face the various societal challenges through an annual competition in innovation for the society. The competition addresses a different societal problem every year, such as rationalization of water and energy and smart management systems, as well as other challenges that ICTs could contribute to facing them at low cost. Moreover, MCIT will resume the “Tamkeen” competition: “Developing mobile phones programs and applications to empower people with disabilities”, which was launched in 2012/2013 on an annual basis.

Project goals:

- Harnessing innovation in the area of communication and information technology to address challenges of the society
- Creating new markets for information technology, such as empowerment of people with disabilities, which is regarded as a regional market

Project summary:

MCIT, in partnership with ICT sector companies, has called on semi-industrial and innovative models in the area of ICTs to solve certain problems, relevant to community development, which are on top of Egypt’s priorities. ICT companies provide technical and financial support to fund a semi-industrial product until it becomes a complete product in the market. The competition theme is identified every year in cooperation with beneficiaries community, technology developers and experts from various areas. MCIT will resume the “Tamkeen” competition, which promotes the development of mobile phones programs and applications to empower people with disabilities.



Work Cycle in The Competition of “Innovation for The Society”

Database and Portal for Blood Banks, Intensive Care Rooms and Incubators

Many citizens face numerous difficulties in obtaining needed blood for various emergency cases. This is often due to inefficiencies in distributing blood bags to blood banks and hospitals. As well, a lot of patients and premature babies suffer from the lack of intensive care rooms and incubators.

MCIT aims to create a database that includes all blood banks in Egypt, so that we could be informed of the status of each blood bank and the availability of blood types and display their statuses via a web portal. The project also develops an application for mobile phones that enable communication between blood donors and those who need blood. This application provides patients with information about intensive care rooms and incubators that are prepared to receive patients.

Project goals:

- Providing query service for citizens seeking blood ready for use in emergency cases
- Providing communication service between blood donors and those who need blood
- Enhancing the efficiency of blood banks system in Egypt
- Encouraging citizens to donate blood
- Providing information in an easy and affordable way about locations of incubators and intensive care rooms ready to receive patients and premature babies

Project summary:

The project is based on the cooperation between MCIT and the Ministry of Health and Population to provide various information relevant to blood banks, incubators and intensive care rooms and to create a database and an application for mobile phones to facilitate communication between blood donors and those who need blood. This is in addition to creating a web portal that provides two levels of exchange and dissemination of information:

The first level is related to blood banks to follow up their credits and to enhance their performance and efficiency. The second level is related to citizens to inform them with available blood in each blood bank, facilitate their treatment and provide them with general information on blood donation and addresses of blood banks. This project could be developed by following up on available intensive care rooms and incubators and providing similar information about them to enhance the medical service provided to citizens.

Financial Integration for The Most-favored Groups Through ICTs and Post Outlets

Several non-governmental and civil society organizations support the most-favored groups in Egypt. Egypt Post, affiliated to MCIT, is one of the oldest governmental bodies that contributes to the economic development for remote areas and marginalized groups of the Egyptian society. Egypt post also contributes to the social responsibility initiatives sponsored by MCIT, which target the most-favored groups. Since Egypt post has thousands of branches spread all over the country, it contributes to delivering financial support to entitled groups in an affordable manner and avoiding the duplication of receiving subsidies.

Project goals:

- Linking together databases of target groups entitled to subsidies or loans of non-governmental organizations—that work in the area of rehabilitation of the most-favored groups and people with disabilities—and the system of financial services in post offices. This allows subsidies to be delivered to the ones who deserve them most , as well as profiting from the wide spread of Egypt Post’s outlets across the country, saving effort and money for these groups
- Taking advantage of post offices and ensuring optimal use of them to help in providing social services and alleviate the suffering of most-favored groups

Project summary:

In order to facilitate services provided to the most-favored groups that receive subsidies from non-governmental organizations on a regular basis, Egypt Post implements a project that aims to link together databases of non-governmental organizations and the information network of post offices that are available across the country.

It is worth-noting that the majority of organizations that work in this area are keen to establish their headquarters in the centers of the different governorates to facilitate their cooperation with governmental bodies. This forces those who receive subsidies, including patients and incapable people, to travel every month to organizations’ headquarters, which are located far from where they live.

Thus, this project provides a great opportunity for recipients of subsidies to get them through their nearest post office, which save much effort, money and time, due to the wide spread of post offices in all villages and hamlets of Egypt. The implementation is carried out through the collaboration between Egypt Post and civil society organizations.

Annex 2

Entities Involved in The Development of The Strategy

Entities affiliated to MCIT	Companies	Civil Society Organizations
Egypt ICT Trust Fund	Mobinil	Chamber of Information Technology and Telecommunications
Egypt Post	Etisalat	Eitesal
National Telecom Regulatory Authority (NTRA)	Huawei	Egyptian Society for Information Systems and Computer Technology
Information Technology Institute (ITI)	Oracle	Internet Egypt
National Telecommunication Institute (NTI)	Microsoft	
Telecom Egypt	Google	
	Cisco	
	Smart Villages	
	IBM	



