



Summary of results of the 2nd round of the Policy Delphi about ICT for development priority areas in Latin America and the Caribbean

eLAC foresight intends to provide insights about the short-term policy priorities of Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) Information Societies in order to nurture the regional debate for a future ICT policy agenda after the completion of the actual Regional Action Plan eLAC2007 (<http://www.eLAC2007.info>). This debate is intensifying as the region approaches the **High-Level Ministerial Conference on LAC Information Society development in El Salvador, beginning of November 2007**.

The natural starting point for this work was to evaluate the eLAC2007 priority areas by their potential development impact for the year 2010 on a Likert scale from 1 to 7. The analysis was undertaken in terms of three critical parameters - impact on *social* development, impact on *economic* development and impact on *political* development. The response of the ICT stakeholder community was overwhelming and a representative group from all sector and areas participated in this rather time-consuming exercise of creating a common and internationally harmonized vision for public policy. 501 experts participated, coming from the private (35%), public (28%) and academic (26%) sectors and civil society (11%).

Top ten of social, economic and political impact of ICT for development

In the second Delphi round, 47 ICT areas of interest have been evaluated. These include all the priority areas of the current Action Plan eLAC2007, as well as additional topics that have been identified during the first Delphi round. Four of the top ten issues relate to **access** (Universal ICT access, ICT connectivity for schools, ICT connectivity for local authorities and Advanced ICT-based networks for research and education), two issues underscore **training for workforce**, especially for micro-, small and media sized enterprises and four issues point at the **modernization of the State** in administrative tasks (e-government, diffusion of public information through ICT), as well as for political decision-making (national information society strategies and agendas and e-democracy).

Top ten issues pounded the social, economic and political impact equally

Rank	Goal	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Universal ICT access	6.24	0.80
2	ICT connectivity in schools	6.20	0.79
3	ICT connectivity for local authorities	6.10	0.83
4	ICT training for micro-, small and media sized enterprises	6.09	0.81
5	E-government	6.08	0.89
6	ICT training for workforce	6.07	0.79
7	National Information Society strategies and agendas	6.02	0.88
8	Diffusion of public information through ICT	6.02	0.85
9	Advanced ICT-based networks for research and education	5.98	0.94
10	E-democracy	5.97	1.01

A more detailed analysis of the issues by social, economic and political impact shows that the impact of ICT is evaluated lower for the political development than for social and economic development. It is remarkable that the **socioeconomic impact** is greater for issues that aim at **inclusion**, as (i) access and infrastructure, (ii) capacities and (iii) financing. The **political impact** is evaluated higher for issues that aim at **innovation** and modernization of society, as (iv) e-applications, (v) legal frameworks and (vi) national strategies. Interestingly, according to the LAC stakeholder community, none of the issues pointing the promotion of industries enter under the top 30 priority areas. The focus seems to be on usage of ICT for inclusion and innovation, not the production of the technology itself.

Evaluation of selected goals

E-government (rank 5 in the combined ranking): Its **political impact** is evaluated **much higher** (1st position) than the economic and political impact (17th and 15th respectively). The public and private sector, on the one hand, and the academic and civil society on the other hand, seem not to agree on the importance of e-government (2nd and 4th rank for the first and 11th rank for the second group). Surprisingly **women** evaluate the impact quite **lower** than men (12th vs. 2nd position).

Advanced ICT-based networks for research and education (rank 9): This goal takes the 9th position in the combined ranking, although the participants judge its **political impact low** (19th position). **Women** are estimating its impact **higher than men** (4th vs. 10th position). In line with the importance of such a network in their daily life, it is evaluated **higher** by people with **higher education level** (non universities 24th rank, universities 12th and master and PhD participants on 8th). As the Caribbean does not dispose of such a network, its urgent demand is demonstrated by positioning it on 9th.

E-justice (rank 19): Participants judge the **political impact** of the use of ICT for the strengthening of the legal system much **higher than the economic impact** (7th vs. 40th position). The private sector estimates the impact of this goal much higher than the **public and academic sector** (12th position vs. 30th). The **Caribbean** evaluates it very **low** (42nd). It is remarkable that **men** value its impact rather **high** on 14th rank than women (on 30th). Brazilian participants evaluate e-justice particularly high (on 7th rank).

E-commerce (rank 20): It is striking that the **economic impact** of e-commerce is evaluated **very low** on 44th position whereas the **political impact** is evaluated **very high** on 4th rank. One possible explanation could be that e-commerce is not yet expected to become massive in the short-term, but that it holds a great potential for best-practice demonstration to advance other urgent applications, such as e-government and e-education. In the combined ranking it gets on the 20th position. The **Caribbean**, which depends on distance trading, ranks it comparatively **high** on 11th position in contrast to the Andean region on 30th. **Women** evaluates the impact of e-commerce **lower than men** (27th vs. 18th).

Inclusive citizen participation in ICT policy making (rank 24): It is striking that the **social impact** of inclusive citizen participation in ICT policy making is estimated much **higher** (8th) than its economic and political impact (36th and 29th). Its impact is evaluated **lower** by the **public sector** (32nd position) than by the private sector (19th), and the social society (20th), challenging the believes in a true multistakeholder approach. It is notable that the recognition of the importance for multistakeholder participation is growing with the age (under 40 aged 26th position, 41-60 aged 25th vs. over 61 aged 14th position).

Intellectual property (rank 26): Interestingly the experts of the region estimate the **economic impact** of intellectual property **very low** on 43rd rank, but the political impact takes a 10th position. The **Caribbean** evaluate the impact of intellectual property comparatively **low** (37th position), while the **civil society** considers it as a **priority** (7th position). There is a notable gap between the opinions of women and men about the goal (19th vs. 26th position).

Content for mobile phones (rank 32): Participants do **not** estimate that until 2010 mobile content will have **any** impact on **social or political** development (both 39th position), but surprisingly **high** impact on **economic development** (4th position), showing clearly that mobile e-government is not yet expected.

Internet governance (rank 37): Defined as “the multilateral, transparent and democratic non-bureaucratic management of the internet, with the full involvement of governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations”. The **political impact** of internet governance is evaluated relatively **high**, on 17th, while the economic and social dimensions of the topic are not considered as a priority. The general impact the region expects form the Internet management question is comparable with issues like “basic ICT skills certificate” (the so-called “digital drivers license”), which is ranked next to it. This shows that the issue is perceived as an important, but quite specific building block of general Information Society development, which is overshadowed by more general concerns about access and the modernization of social and productive organization. The **academic sector** evaluates the topic the **highest** (33rd position). It is interesting that **women** evaluate it **higher than men** (33rd vs. 40th).

Distance Learning (rank 47): The experts of the region express reservation of the depersonalization of education processes whereas they attach importance to the involvement of ICT in education. Distance Learning is evaluated **lowest** of all goals, but e-education (defined as the broad usage of ICT in education facilities) takes 17th position. Nevertheless for the isolated island States of the **Caribbean** the topic seems to have importance (28th position).