

# Why and how of ICT policy, strategy and plans

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# Objective

- Clarify different government functions and demarcation of responsibilities in ICT infrastructure and services/applications

# ICT infrastructure (telecom)

- Clarity re different functions and demarcation of responsibilities is important because
  - Multiple private players are active
  - Market and technology conditions change rapidly and
  - Large investments are at stake

# ICT services and applications

- Clarity re different functions and demarcation of responsibilities is important because
  - Even more private players are active, and
  - Market and technology conditions change rapidly
- Optimal sequence of actions may be different

# DEFINITIONS

# The framework . . .

- Is the supreme law, the Constitution

# Law is . . .

- **Made and amended by Parliament**
- Subordinate to the Constitution and sets out the broad principles and powers
  - Not expected to be changed frequently, though ICT sector laws become obsolete quickly
  - Rules made under a Law spell out details and allow greater flexibility

# Policy, plan and strategy are . . .

- **Adopted by the Executive;** subordinate to Law
- Policy sets out *what* must be done and justifies *why* it must be done
- Plans, which are more concrete and short-term, provide the strategy by which the policy is to be implemented
  - Plans define *how* the necessary actions will be taken by *whom* and *when* so that the policy objectives may be realized



# Regulation is . . .

- “Sustained and focused control by a public agency over activities in a sector”
  - Restraining
  - Enabling
- In a sector that is subject to sector-specific regulation, the regulatory agency plays an important role in implementing a subset of policies

# ICT INFRASTRUCTURE SECTOR

# Why policy?

- Some countries manage without formal policy
  - Sri Lanka's telecom policy is from 1994
  - Bangladesh's policy is from 1998
    - Both are almost completely obsolete
  - India adopted a formal National Telecom Policy in 2012, after 13 years
- But, a formal policy, adopted after due consultation, serves as a guide to private investors and stakeholders and reduces uncertainty, especially in infrastructure → encourages investment

# Mobile Cellular Policy

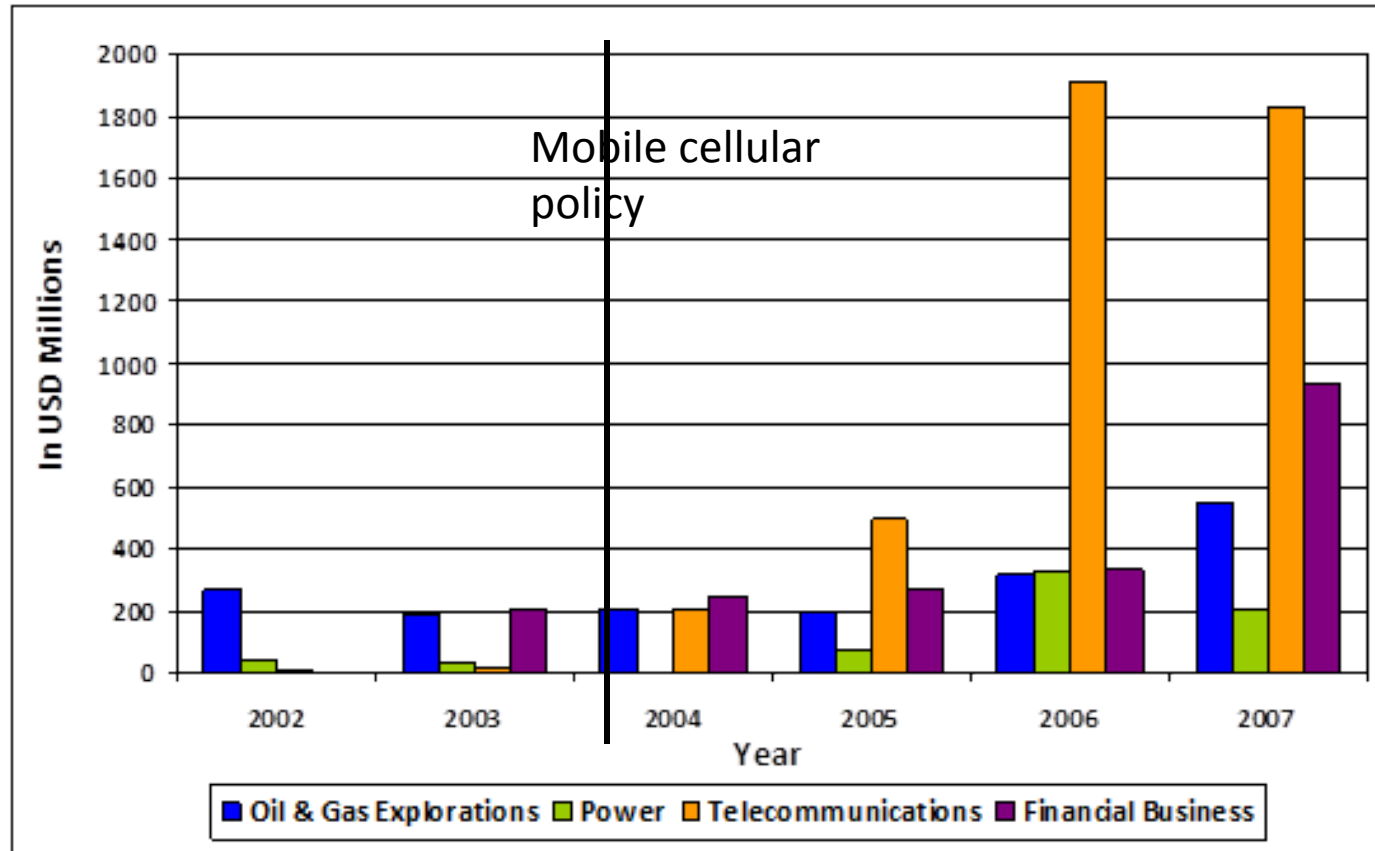
**Pakistan**



January 28, 2004

**IT and Telecommunication Division**  
Ministry of Information Technology

# Foreign Direct Investment in Pakistan by sector, 2002-07



# ICT SERVICES & APPLICATION SECTOR: AN EXAMPLE

# E Sri Lanka program

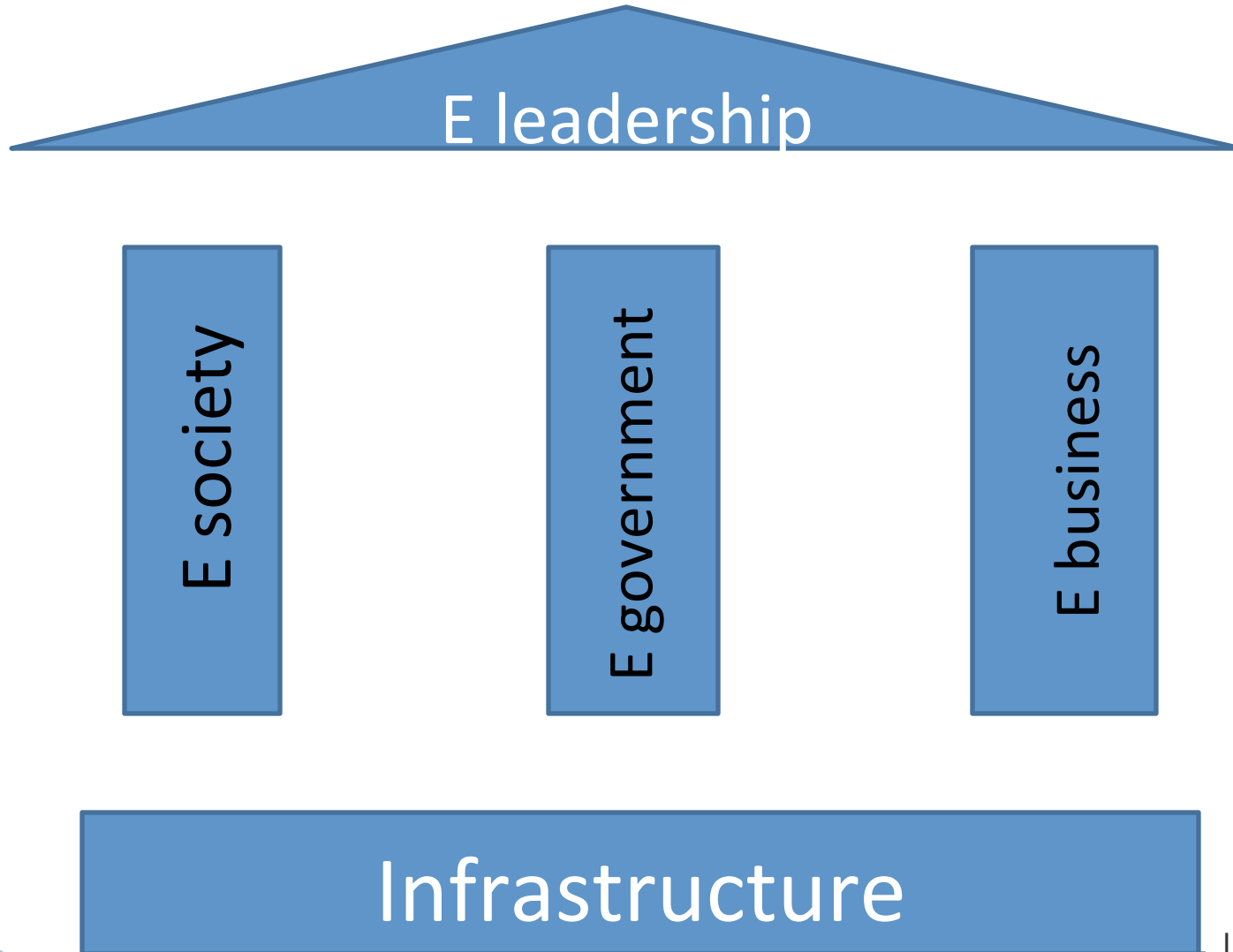
- 2001 economic and political crisis → new reform government; President & Prime Minister from opposing parties
- Prime Minister was keen to emulate Hyderabad and create white-collar jobs in IT enabled services
- Young, dynamic Minister with strong international credentials placed in charge of Information Technology, not Telecom

# Starting with a program

- World Bank aid was sought to formulate an integrated ICT development program for Sri Lanka, in mid 2002
  - Cross-sectoral effort; first time for World Bank
  - Local team actively participated in design
  - Infrastructure reforms to end contested exclusivity for international telecom services were being implemented in parallel



# Program architecture



# Diagnosing road blocks

- Existing organization, CINTEC, was unable to perform apex function
  - New agency?
  - What to do with old one?
- Coordinating with multiple government agencies to advance e government was seen as the greatest challenge
  - Authority higher than individual Ministers?

# Different sequence

- Program design, inclusive of policy, plan and strategy
- Informal linkage to related telecom policy
- Law followed

# IF WE ARE FOCUSING ON AN EXPLICIT POLICY AND PLAN . . .

# Policy v. strategy/plan

- Policy sets out *what* must be done and justify *why* it must be done
- Plans/strategies, which are more concrete and short-term, provide the strategy by which the policy is to be implemented
- Plans define *how* the necessary actions will be taken by *whom* and *when* so that the policy objectives may be realized.

# National telecom/broadband policy

- Must contain
  - A vision that is bigger than telecom/broadband
  - Principles
  - Goals and objectives
  - Actions by the Ministry responsible, Regulatory Agency and other government agencies
  - Metrics to ascertain whether objectives are being achieved
- The NTP must be articulated with other relevant national policies
- Where resources are required, it must indicate where they may be found

# Separating policy and plan/strategy

- Some degree of overlap is unavoidable; otherwise policy will be too abstract
  - Inadvisable to spell out minute details of implementation in a policy because that shifts attention away from the principles and goals set out in the policy
  - Excessive detail reduces the period of validity of the policy
- Principles are useful for making and implementing specific strategies and for dealing with unforeseen circumstances

# An effective ICT policy will address all parts of the eco-system

