



Report of Activities

September 2004 – March 2005

1.0 Launch of LIRNEasia

- 1.1 Office opening (1 September 2004)
- 1.2 Official launch with message from Prime Minister and address by former Minister for Economic Reform, Science and Technology (17 September 2004)
- 1.3 Discussion with visiting experts and PM (16 September 2004)
- 1.4 Incorporation (29 October 2004)

2.0 World Dialog on Regulation (WDR) Projects:

www.regulateonline.org

2.1 2004 Asian Expert Forum:

- 2.1.1 Organized and hosted Asian Expert Forum at Mount Lavinia Hotel, with over 60 participants to discuss final papers under the WDR 2004 theme, *Stimulating Investment in Network Development* (Mount Lavinia, Sri Lanka; September 17-18, 2004)

2.2 2005 Asian Expert Forum preparation:

- 2.2.1 Organization of Asian WDR Expert Forum (October 2005) - two and a half day residential program - Approximately 60 participants consisting of researchers and policy/regulatory officials.
- 2.2.2 Preparation of case studies under 2005 WDR theme: *Diversifying Participation in Networks* for 2005 Asian WDR Expert Forum (October 2005)
 - Study of the conditions for replicating the Grameen Telecom approach of extending access to telephone services through microfinance mechanisms to rural areas in Bangladesh – *Terms of reference (TOR) finalized, team established, team signed on, work commenced, inception report to be submitted (end March 05)*
 - Assessment of Eastern Nepal's ICT infrastructure roll-out through least-cost subsidy auctions, and comparison with design of Sri Lankan least-cost subsidy auctions – *TOR finalized, team established, to be commenced*
 - Evaluation of the replicability of the WiFi based access innovations in Indonesia – *Team being established*
 - Assessment of the design and implementation of India's universal service policy and regulatory instruments – *TOR given; team established; inception report accepted; work to be commenced.*
- 2.2.3 Three-country study (Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh) to understand the strategies used by the poor in their use of ICTs and facilitate easier use through influencing policy and regulatory framework based on the results of the study. Survey to be conducted by market and opinion research professionals (TNS Lanka), assisted by LIRNEasia counterpart team – *Project commenced, pilot questionnaire complete, pilot surveys scheduled: ~21-24 March 2005.*

2.3 2006 WDR preparation:

- 2.3.1 **Asia ICT sector and Regulatory Performance Review:** Preparation for the WDR 2006 theme (expected to be Sector and Regulatory Performance Indicators) in with LIRNE.NET (www.lirne.net), through a planning workshop. This workshop will require the participation of persons associated with data collection and reporting in government, regulatory agencies and industry associations in the core group of countries – *Application to EU-Sri Lanka Small Projects Facility in Economic Co-operation submitted; response expected April 2005.*



3.0 Rapid Response Program - Based on the idea of the “teachable moment,” LIRNEasia makes quick responses to specific requests for training/advice by governments/entities in the region.

- 3.1 Response to Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (TRC) consultancy paper on Realignment/allocation of Spectrum in the 800/900 MHz Band issued by the Telecommunication Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka (October/November 2004) http://www.trc.gov.lk/trc12_consultation_document.htm
- 3.2 Response to Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) consultancy paper on rural telecommunication development in India (October 2004) <http://lirne.net/live/content/view/72/26/>
- 3.3 Provided consultancy assistance to High Level Committee for Information Technology (Nepal), on jump-starting Nepal's e-government and reform processes (9-11 December 2004) <http://lirne.net/live/content/view/76/26/>
- 3.4 Provided assistance to the Telecom Regulatory Body of Indonesia (BRTI; Badan Regulasi Telekom Indonesia) with activating process of asymmetric regulation in a multi-operator environment (8-11 March 2005)

4.0 NEWS:SL [National Early Warning System: Sri Lanka]

- 4.1 Developed a concept paper on the specifications for an Early Warning System for Sri Lanka, including Interim Concept Paper, consultation with experts and extensive media coverage. Done in collaboration with the Vanguard Foundation. Submitted upon request to Presidential Committee (01 Jan – 03 Mar 2005) <http://www.lirneasia.net/2005/03/national-early-warning-system/>

5.0 Connectivity Cookbook: Smart Subsidies, Regulatory Reform and Institutional Change

- 5.1 Authoring a book offering solutions to the problem of rural access to reliable, affordable ICTs in the developing world, namely through smart subsidies, regulatory reform and institutional change. *First draft near completion; publishing expected in late 2005.*
- 5.2 Organizing a workshop with participation from Asian researchers/academics writing on this subject, to discuss content and obtain input. *Workshop planning underway, scheduled for May 2005*

6.0 Building up capacity for ICT policy and regulatory reform in Asian universities

- 6.1 Study of the researchers within LIRNEasia's areas of competence and interest, as a starting point to a larger systematic mapping of Asian researchers in the ICT field. The research will widen LIRNEasia's research network improving its ability to participate in ICT infrastructure reforms. It will also generate proposals on how the improvements can be institutionalized. Discussions with School of Information and Communication at Nanyang Technological University of Singapore underway – *Research commenced on a pilot in order to develop full proposal.*

7.0 Fund raising Activities:

- 7.1 *infoDev* meeting (October 2004, Washington DC, USA)
- 7.2 Ford meeting (October 2004, New York NY USA)
- 7.3 Meetings with TERI [The Energy and Resources Institute], TRAI (New Delhi, December 2004).

8.0 Conference Participation

- 8.1 SAFIR [South Asia Forum on Infrastructure Regulation] 6th Core Course (Pakistan, October 2004) Lectures: Alternative Dispute Resolution; Competition in Infrastructure, etc. - *Rohan Samarajiva*
- 8.2 TERI [The Energy and Resources Institute] Regional Conference, (December, 2004, Delhi, India) Presentation: Extending Access to ICTs: Regulatory Reforms & Smart Subsidies- *Rohan Samarajiva*. Also participated: *Harsha de Silva, Malathy Knight-John*
- 8.3 CTO [Commonwealth Telecommunication Organization] Forum 2004 - ICT: Business and Development (Colombo, Sri Lanka, 20-21 September, Colombo) Presentation: The Govi



Gnana Service: A Unique ICT for Development Initiative to Fight Agricultural Poverty in Sri Lanka - *Harsha de Silva*

- 8.4 PTC [Pacific Telecommunication Council] 2005 Conference- Broadband and Content: From Wires to Wireless (Honolulu, Hawaii, 16-19 January 2005). Plenary presentation: What happened in Sri Lanka and Why it Won't be as Bad Next Time – *Rohan Samarajiva*
- 8.5 Conference on Higher Education, Information Technology and Sustainable Development: The central role of universities in building knowledge societies in Asia, Africa and Latin America (De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines 10-14 January 2005). Presentations: *Rohan Samarajiva; Sujata Gamage*

9.0 Monthly Colloquia – Forum for intellectual discussion amongst LIRNEasia partners,¹ regarding current projects, relevant issues as well as organizational matters².

- 9.1 Oct.15.04 – LIRNEasia upcoming projects and organizational activities
- 9.2 Nov.12.04 – Detailed discussion of LIRNEasia mission and vision statements; discussion of Information Society policy³ in relation to LIRNEasia's role in the policy process
- 9.3 Dec.16.04 – Discussion of project proposal for grant⁴, to fund Sector and Regulatory Performance Indicators Workshop (planned for October 2005)
- 9.4 Jan.07.05 – Discussion/planning session on LIRNEasia/Vanguard Foundation Early Warning System project
- 9.5 Feb.18.05 – Discussion on what steps LIRNEasia must take, in order to operate seamlessly in Asia, becoming a 'virtual' organization.

10.0 Organizational Development

- 10.1 Commissioning of office space, infrastructure, research staff, etc; incorporation; setting up bank accounts, etc (August 2004 onwards)
- 10.2 Strategic Planning workshop for LIRNEasia to define LIRNEasia's future directions and priorities, what LIRNEasia's role and focus should be, ways to go about developing the organization and future projects (19 September 2004)
- 10.3 Internal review of organizational development and approaches to building a virtual organization (January 2005)
- 10.4 Getting financial systems in order (February 2005 onward)
- 10.5 Website development (ongoing) see *Web Stats*.

¹ including LIRNEasia 'staff' and external collaborating researchers, colleagues, and interested individuals

² See <http://asia.lirne.net/index.php?cat=12>

³ Based on: Garnham, Nicholas (2004) Contradiction, Confusion And Hubris: A Critical Review Of European Information Society Policy

⁴ through EU-Sri Lanka Small Projects Facility in Economic Co-operation