

## **Industry Profile and Statistics**

### **Bangladesh**

Bangladesh Computer Samity (BCS)

#### **National ICT Policy**

The ICT sector of Bangladesh is one of the fastest growing sectors of its economy. The Government of Bangladesh is very positive for development of ICT and declared this sector as “the trust sector”. Realizing the importance of ICT, the name of the Ministry has been changed from "Ministry of Science and Technology" to the "Ministry of Science and Information & Communication Technology. Also the Government has set up the 15-member ICT Task Force headed by the Prime Minister stating the aim to harness and utilize the immense potentialities of ICT for the overall welfare of Bangladesh. The Government has set up the ICT policy with the following objectives:

- Promote and facilitate use of ICT in all sectors of the economy for transparency, good governance and efficiency improvement.
- Develop a large pool of world-class ICT professionals to meet the needs of local and global markets.
- Promote use of ICT by providing special allocations for ICT project implementation in the public sector. Train the decision makers in ICT use and promote an ICT culture.
- Provide effective incentives for development of ICT sector to both local and foreign entrepreneurs.
- Develop an efficient ICT infrastructure that provides open access to international and national networks.
- Establish legislative and regulatory framework for ICT issues like IPR, data security and protection, digital signature, e-Commerce, ICT education etc. as well as to ensure quality ICT education provided by different private organizations.
- Set up national databases that are reliable and easily accessible to all the people of the country.
- Set up an ICT organization at the highest level to continuously promote and foster ICT Industry.
- Enact Laws and Regulations for uninterrupted growth of ICT, in conformity with World Trade Organization (WTO) stipulations.

## **Chronology and Sectors**

It was in 1964 that the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission first introduced computers in the country, to be followed in late 60s and 70s by their use in the financial sector. Those were mainframe computers and were used mainly as a research and data processing tool at that time, and it was till the 80s that wider use of computer was made in the printing and publishing industries. However, at that time, their high price restricted them for more general and commercial use. Personal Computers gained popularity in the early 1990s when they became more user-friendly and affordable, but the real boost came in 1998 due to the Government exempted computers and ICT accessories from taxes that coincided with substantial price reductions in the global market. The result is that growth rate in the use of PCs in Bangladesh stands around 40% in recent years. As such, the Consumption of ICT in Bangladesh is rapidly increasing both in public and private Sectors.

Another milestone in the history of ICT in Bangladesh is the introduction of direct Internet connection using VSAT in June 1996. Due to high cost of VSAT the bandwidth was limited and expensive in the early years of Internet in the country. However, with the deregulation of VSAT in 2000, the available bandwidth has increased greatly, and rates have gone down substantially. Thus the Internet has gained massive popularity all over the world with millions of connected users worldwide.

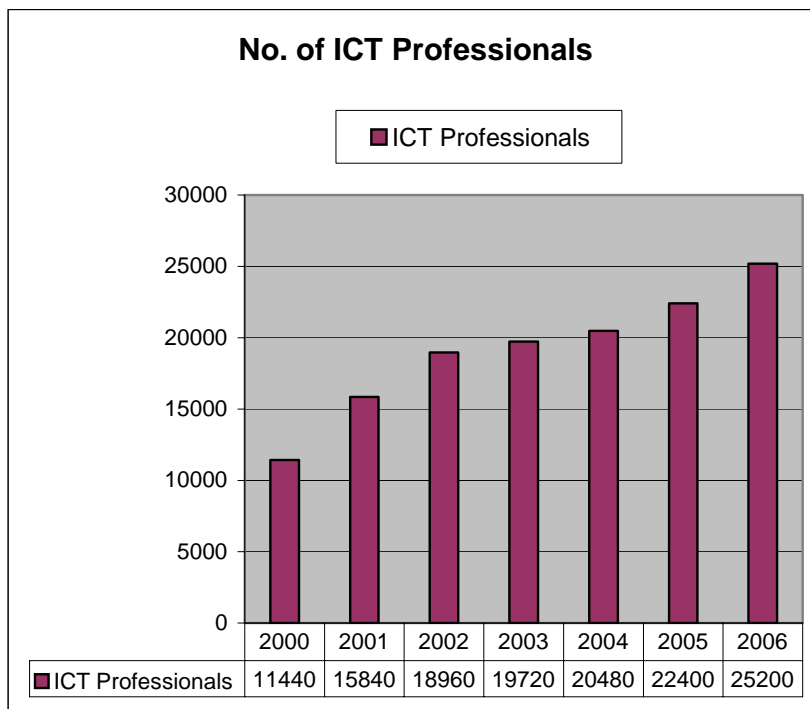
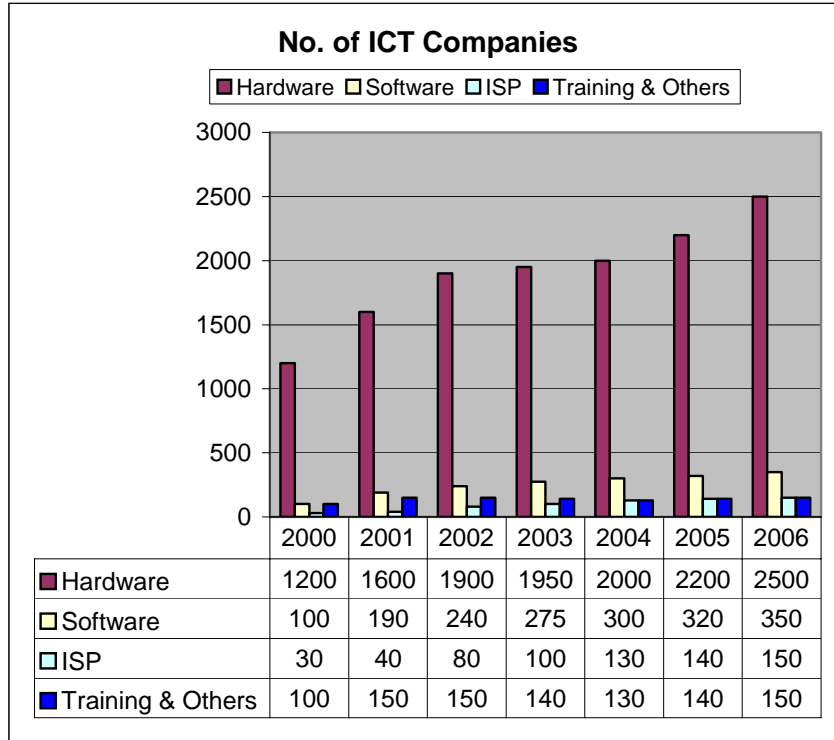
Software has been a relatively a late entrant in Bangladesh ICT market. However like any learning curve, more and more firms are coming into this fray; systematic procedures and practices are being implemented so that quality software houses are being produced rapidly. The basic clientele for the software houses has usually been the corporate houses. i.e. the institutional market. That being so it naturally follows that most of the software are database related.

There are mainly three broad categories of software such as Customized Software, Multimedia Software, Web Software developed in Bangladesh. The most widely used programming language used for developing software are Visual Basic, C++, MS Access, SQL, Oracle, Java, Fox-Pro, Developer 2000, HTML and more. The following graph shows the uses of various platform/languages by developers in Bangladesh:

One of the prime indicators or the growth factors for the software industry is technical people. In recent times, with the growth of the ICT training sector, availability of skill people has been enhanced. Also more and more software business houses are soliciting orders from outside. Hence it is expected that within a decade software sector will form a predominant part of Bangladesh economy.

## Industry Size / Volume

Growth of ICT sector in terms of business conglomerates and professionals is predominant in Bangladesh. The figures below show the number of sector-wise companies and ICT professionals during 2000-2006.



## **Strengths, Advantages and Opportunities**

Certain strengths, advantages and opportunities available in Bangladesh have made the country lucrative for building partnership among the ASOCIO economies. The most of its strengths are the unleashed English speaking youth force, skilled professionals working aboard, universities & other educational institutions turning out huge ICT graduates, substantial number of ICT graduates studying abroad and skilled workforce available at most competitive wages.

Bangladesh has become an ideal ground for advanced ASOCIO economies to invest due to its business friendly policy for the foreign investors providing various incentives including tax holidays and simplified regulations.