

## ICT industry in Myanmar

The Government of the Union of Myanmar has taken numerous initiatives designed to position the country as a key global ICT hub. The Government's ICT master plan is focused on stimulating the development of Myanmar's ICT industry. It is targeted at attracting local and international companies to form a cluster of ICT-related businesses, supported by world-class infrastructure and technologies.

In line with its ICT vision, Myanmar signed the e-ASEAN Framework Agreement in November 2000, together with the other members of ASEAN. Myanmar, as a member state of ASEAN, has committed itself to implementing policies that will boost the sector in the future. The Government has created an e-National Task Force, to monitor the implementation of the e-ASEAN Framework Agreement.

While Myanmar is still grappling with issues such as inadequate telecommunication infrastructure, limitations of access, low tele-density and inadequate volumes of Internet usage, the country's Government is taking numerous steps to plug the loopholes and narrowing the digital divide within the country.

Efforts have been made to increase PC penetration across the country by establishing multimedia classrooms in high and middle schools. The Government has also been focusing on ICT education by opening Computer Universities in Yangon and Mandalay and Computer colleges in the larger cities of the states and divisions.

An e-Education Program has been launched by Electronic Data Broadcasting System, which has set up over 200 learning centers in the country. Fiber Optic Networks are being set up for Yangon, which will connect to Mandalay through a national backbone.

The Government is also in the process of establishing microwave radio routes and a Domestic Satellite Communication network. Policy makers are also looking at linking the country's telecom infrastructure with the SEA-ME-WE 3 Submarine Cable System.

A new ISP will provide Bagan Net, which will be accessible by government departments, private business enterprises and the general public.

Myanmar is also looking closely at narrowing the digital divide within the country by making ICT an important focus area.

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