

GLOBAL BROADBAND & INNOVATIONS (GBI) PROGRAM

Overview

The Global Broadband and Innovations (GBI) program was launched in late 2010, with a focus on extending affordable broadband access into rural communities. The driver for this broadband focus is the growing recognition that:

- Broadband access is increasingly considered to be essential for inclusive social and economic growth.
- There is an expanding digital divide in affordable access between people living in urban environments and those in rural communities. With this growing disparity people living in rural locations are denied life-changing access to a wide range of value-added services in health, education, economic growth, etc.

“The Digital Divide continues to be the Development Divide”

*Irina Bokova, Director-General,
UNESCO*

Areas of Focus

Since the GBI program was launched, it has engaged in an expanding number of countries with two complementary sets of partners:

- The public sector with a focus on improving the legal and regulatory environment in order to support the expansion of telecommunication services
- The private sector with a focus on introducing newer cost-effective technology solutions. GBI works with local telecoms and ISPs, as well as several of the Lab’s cornerstone partners, from U.S.-based high-tech firms to major international NGOs, to help scale broadband delivery innovations

Over the initial four years, the GBI program has been engaged across the three geographic regions of Africa (with projects in Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana), Latin America and the Caribbean (with projects in Colombia, Peru, and most recently Jamaica), and in Asia (with projects in Indonesia and Burma).

Several of these projects are also serving as launching pads for further scale and regional replication. Active discussions are taking place for an expanded engagement in Africa through three separate initiatives: 1) a gender partnership in Kenya and Nigeria involving USAID, Intel, World Vision, and World Pulse, built around Intel’s “She Will Connect” program, 2) a new Africa Broadband Partnership aimed at continuing broadband support in Kenya and Nigeria, and adding support to South Africa and several other countries, and 3) work with PEPFAR for an expansion of broadband in as many as seven countries to support critical health-related initiatives in rural communities currently not served by broadband.

The following provides a quick overview of the GBI program's focus:

Public Sector: Universal Service and Access Funds and National Broadband Plans

There are over US\$ 12B in undisbursed universal service and access funds. The GBI program works in several countries, including Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, Colombia, Indonesia, and Peru, to repackage and release these funds. Current projections predict a release of more than US\$ 550M in 2014 alone.

For several countries the work includes releasing yet additional government funds as well as attracting private sector investments. A recent evaluation showed that in Nigeria and Kenya over US\$ 137M in funds were leveraged, with a spent/ leverage ratio of 1:139 and 1:539 respectively for these two countries. Work starting to reach fruition in Indonesia will leverage funds at a considerably higher ratio.

Private Sector: Rural Broadband Deployments

The GBI program has been actively engaged in working with the private sector on a growing number of rural broadband deployments. Through partnerships with firms such as Microsoft and Cisco, we are deploying new technologies and solutions that lower both capital cost and operating costs.

In partnership with Microsoft, GBI has been instrumental in supporting rural deployments of new TV White Space technologies. These projects have extended broadband to rural locations in Kenya, Indonesia, and the Philippines in support of USAID priorities ranging from environmental protection to gender. A new initiative is just now getting underway supporting rural schools in Jamaica.

Shared Solution Center

One of the long-term shortcomings of leveraging ICTs in development has been the all-too-frequent one-off solution, where new initiatives are undertaken without the advantage of earlier lessons learned.

The GBI program has supported the development of an Internet portal that facilitates sharing of successes, accessible at <http://solutionscenter.nethope.org/>. This portal provides for hosting of webinars, blogs, discussion forums, and information on a range of ICT solutions.

GBI Implementers and Partners

The GBI program currently relies on three primary implementers. Integra LLC provides support in the national broadband strategy and universal service and access funds arena. The GBI-NetHope Alliance leverages NetHope's 42 international NGO members operating in over 180 countries. In addition, NetHope pulls support from a number of high-tech firms such as Intel, Cisco, and Microsoft. Finally, the Technology Leadership Program leverages legal and technical resources from across the U.S. Government.

Originally launched in the E3 Bureau, the GBI program was recently relocated into the new U.S. Global Development Lab, specifically the Center for Global Solutions' Digital Development team.

Contact us:

GBI Program Manager, Joe Duncan

E-mail: jduncan@usaid.gov

Telephone: +1 (202) 712-0474

