

## Launch of ICT & Emerging Services Working Group

In response to the growing interest in and potential of ICT and Emerging Services in Africa, NETWORKING4PROFESSIONALS.COM (N4P) is planning to launch a survey on strategic ICT and Emerging Services in Africa. The survey will focus on bridging the gap between the ICT needs of the Diaspora and the provision of these services by companies from Africa.

The survey report is expected to highlight, amongst other areas, Africa's potential as an alternative destination for emerging ICT based services ranging from Outsourcing to Mobile/Wireless Communications and also link African businesses, private institutions, NGOs, policy makers and other stakeholders with similar individuals or institutions in Europe, US and Asia Pacific Regions.

Following N4P's last two ICT seminars held in September 2004 and April 2007 in London, significant progress has been reported on a number of issues raised in both seminars. We have seen the creation of Export Processing Zones (EPZ) in the East African region and support for ICT deployment in high-tech services e.g. e-Commerce, e-Education and e-Agriculture. Efforts have also been made to upgrade telecommunication infrastructure across Africa through initiatives such as The East Africa Marine Systems (TEAMS), East Africa Submarine System (EASSY), Sea Cable Systems (Seacom) and Fibre Optic National Network (FONN) initiatives. Despite these efforts Africa still faces major challenges and stiff competition as a favourable outsourcing destination, sentiments echoed recently at the N4P ICT & Outsourcing WG kick-off meeting held in London.

N4P has convened an ICT & Emerging Services Working Group (WG) to formulate and set the research agenda for the survey report to be launched later in 2008. The WG will conduct research and feasibility study on innovative emerging services and strategic ICT initiatives in Africa.

### Call for Participation

The WG is calling on both members and non-members in the Diaspora to participate in formulating a research agenda in various challenging areas including:

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- ICT & Emerging Services modernisation at national and regional levels including initiatives to achieve competitiveness at the economic and political levels;
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- Propose reforms needed to develop and sustain the ICT & Emerging Services sector especially in defining front, middle and back office operations;
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How to develop cohesive public/private partnerships to stimulate growth especially in creating a sustainable resource bases i.e. skills, workforce and education planning;

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Provide input into innovative case studies on existing ICT services in the Diaspora;

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Creating an understanding of the critical role of infrastructure and technology in the scaling up for the ICT & Emerging Services, and addressing client service sector requirements

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Creating international collaboration opportunities; multi-country strategic alliances; exploring the creation of an Africa&ndash;APAC and Africa-US and Africa-Africa ICT corridor;

- Provide clear direction in responding to the growth in demand for world-class client service facilities in Africa ICT & Emerging Service regions.

How to participate in the WG activities:

There are three particular areas that we seeking support on and these are:

- Working Group members &ndash; to conduct research and analysis; as well as prepare and promote the outputs the working group. One does not necessarily have to be an ICT professional to be part of the working group, as there various non-technical activities that will be undertaken.
- Industry practitioners &ndash; public and private sector organisations that are active in this market, whether based in Africa or outside Africa, but with an interest in Africa
- Sponsors &ndash; to provide funding and other in-kind contributions in support of the working group and its activities.

To register interest or suggest an area for discussion, please contact the WG at:

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Working Group Chair:

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Current Working Group Committee Members:

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