

Transforming rural livelihood through Rural ICT Center (RIC)



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KATALYST

RDRS 2006

Vision

**Facilitating commercially sustainable
(profitable) rural ICT initiatives
(businesses) in Bangladesh**

***Developing and promoting ICT services
to meet information and advisory needs
of enterprises in Rural Bangladesh.***

Strategy

- ✓ Bringing private sector as partner
- ✓ Developing Business model
- ✓ Develop multi-stakeholder partnership
- ✓ Integrating traditional and high tech solutions
- ✓ Awareness building to stimulate demand in rural areas
- ✓ Capacity building of the service providers
- ✓ Facilitate development of Rural ICT service provider

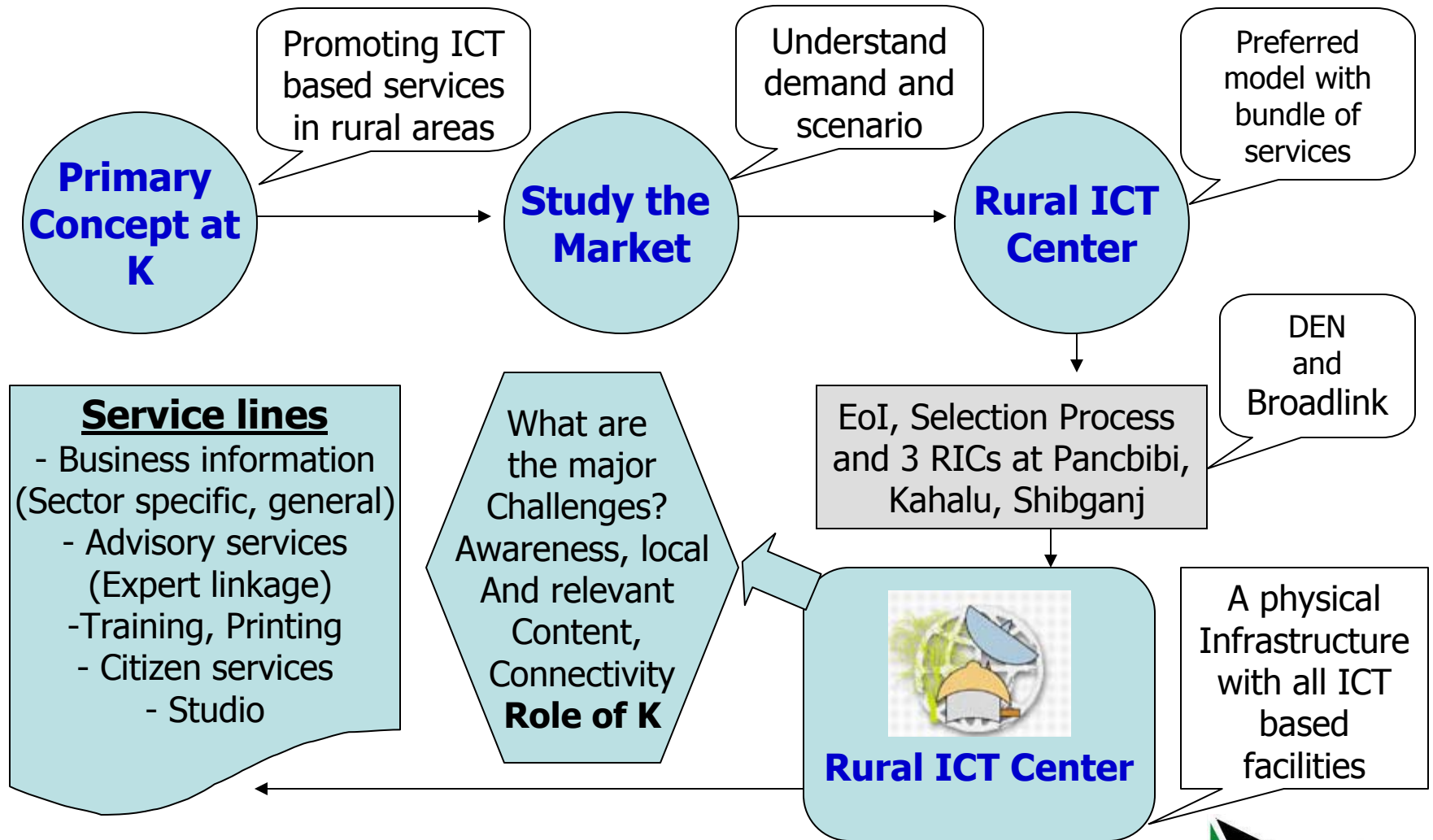
Market Assessment

KATALYST conducted a Market assessment with MART India at 6 locations of Bogra (including Panchbibi, Joypurhat) to understand the potential ICT interventions in rural areas ***to promote business and social development.***

Recommendations from market assessment:

- **Establishing Rural ICT Centers as business units**
- **Locations : Kahalu, Paanchbibi, Shibganj**
- **Sectors : Fisheries, Potatoes, and Poultry**
- **Bundling of services: business information and content, specialized services on selected sectors and other services including education, health, and citizen services etc.**

Evolution Process of Rural ICT Centers (RIC)



K intervention - Rural ICT Center (RIC)

A Rural ICT Center is a physical infrastructure with basic ICT facilities (phone, computers, printer, scanner, internet connectivity, digital camera etc.) in a rural set-up.

RIC disseminate business information for the local businesses in selected sectors (e.g., poultry, fisheries, potato etc) that are dominant in the localities. The centre is a source of various social, health-related, education development, and govt. information.

RIC led and operated by private sector as a commercial venture.

Role of K and Partners

KATALYST

- Developing content and ICT integration
- Support promotion and social mobilization
- Facilitate connectivity
- Capacity building of partners and operators

Partners

- Investment for equipment and establishment of center(s)
- Operation and management
- Developing local network
- Monitoring and Evaluation (Jointly with K)



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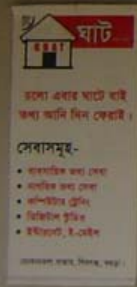
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ঘাট

(তথ্য কেন্দ্র)

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Human Interface

- ICT only as a Tool, people behind the process are driver
- Center operator are the key to make the



Serving rural businesses and communities

Case 1

Poultry – Advice on Micro-plasma and Gamboro disease

Case 2

GP outlet

Case 3

Business Networking between Dhaka and Joypurhat

Case 4

MPO Enlistment info for Schools

Preliminary Results

- 3 centers operational in district towns (Kahalu, Paanchbibi, and Shibgonj) in N Bengal
- Entrepreneurs invested their own capital in the setting up of the centers
- ~3,500-4,000 potential customers have visited the centers in the first 3 months of operation
- ~1,100 customers have purchased services
- ~40% of the customers are micro- and small business persons

- ***5-6 investors showing interest to start their own RICs***
- ***KATALYST is monitoring the development and working on offers***

Learning

- Business model is a must for the centers
- Bundling of services is essential in rural areas
- Connectivity and electricity are key
- Alternate energy source worth exploring
- Physical location of the centers vital
- Marketing with a cogent plan a must
- Networking in the local community

New areas of intervention

- K facilitated market study for 16 GP CICs and studying areas to move further to serve the rural communities in a sustainable approach
- Studying scopes to facilitate SMS based services for small businesses
- Develop country strategy paper for Bangladesh on ICT and Poverty Reduction
- Facilitate commercial service provider for content development for Rural ICT Centers or Telecenters
- Support ICT4D initiatives addressing rural businesses

Thanks