



Question 10/2: Communications for rural and remote areas

STUDY GROUP 2

SOURCE: JAPAN

TITLE: STUDY VARIOUS MECHANISMS BY WHICH TO PROMOTE THE
DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TELECOMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES FOR
RURAL APPLICATIONS

1 Abstract

Japan submitted to WTDC-98 (Valletta, Malta) a proposal to study "scheme for promoting the development of rural telecommunications systems in developing countries". As a result, the draft proposed Question "Study various mechanisms by which to promote the development of new telecommunication technologies for rural applications" was adopted as Topic 7 of ITU-D SG 2 at Valletta. In this document, Japan would like to propose the framework for this topic to be studied in the Focus Group.

2 Major issues in this study

In the former contribution in WTDC-98, Japan pointed out that a system of technology that is really needed for rural telecommunications in developing countries is not likely to be developed if it is left to free competition in view of the economic feasibility. There are two issues which need attention when designing a mechanism to develop such technology. First, it is essential to introduce a market mechanism effectively to develop a low-cost scheme. Second, it is necessary to form an attractive framework in order to encourage positive reaction and cooperation of the private sector. If the above-mentioned two elements are not considered, the formation of a mechanism which works in the real world would be very difficult. Study of mechanism in order to develop an effective system of technologies for telecommunications in rural areas is a work which could be carried out by the ITU alone, as an international organization not only of administrations but also of private sector.

Concerning the above elements, Japan will propose terms of reference for the Focus Group as follows:

- The Focus Group on Topic 7 studies the various mechanisms by which to promote the development of new systems of telecommunications technologies for rural applications, makes a chairman's report as the only product, and submits the report to the second ITU-D SG 2 meeting.

3 Working method of the Focus Group

Originally, the working method of a focus group is derived from the discussions at WTSC-96 and is defined in the text of Appendix I of Resolution 23, WTSC-96. This framework might not be properly applied to the ITU-D Sector, however, we could utilize this framework in the context of the Focus Group in the ITU-D Sector as follows:

- A focus group is established to help accelerate the work of ITU-D study groups.
- The proposal, including terms of reference, to set up a focus group on a specific topic can come from, e.g. study groups or from TDAB.
- The specific topic for a particular focus group is to be well defined (prior to approval) and must include a plan of action with a clear indication of the expected deliverables and the time schedules for completion.
- A lead study group may be identified.
- A focus group will complete its work in a short period of time typically nine to twelve months.
- Any participant may submit a technical contribution directly to the focus group.
- Electronic document handling methods should be used as much as possible to advance the work rapidly.

Japan proposes the following principles for the work of the Focus Group of Topic 7:

- 1) The Lead Study Group is ITU-D SG 2.
- 2) The time-frame of the Focus Group of Topic 7 is shown as following Section 4.
- 3) It is recommended, in order to accelerate efficiency of the work, an e-mail reflector is set up to have discussions mainly through exchange of e-mails.
- 4) The focus group shall appoint a chairman, a vice-chairman and rapporteurs.

4 Draft time schedule

	Relevant meeting	Work
September 1998	The first meeting of ITU-D SG 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Decision of the terms of reference.- Appointment of a chairman, a vice-chairman and rapporteurs.
July 1999	The focus group meeting (face-to-face meeting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Discussion of the draft chairman's report to finalize it.
autumn 1999	The second meeting of ITU-D SG 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Submission of the report to ITU-D SG 2 by the chairman.

5 Image of output

The process to develop the chairman's report which is required for this topic, is likely to be as follows:

- i) The focus group should undertake studies using questionnaires, for example, the situation of supply of electricity (electric outlets and available resources, specific circumstances of telecommunications development in rural areas of developing countries then, put in order the specific issues and subjects particular for telecommunications development in rural areas in developing countries based on the above studies, and analyse the technical conditions appropriate for telecommunications development in such areas.
- ii) Based on such analysis, the focus group should examine and make summary recommendations for the purpose of developing systems that meets the qualifications. These recommendations may include subsidy arranged by the ITU, and organizing a competition to accelerate studies by entrusted corporations with regards to development of technological systems.

6 Conclusion

As described above, Japan proposes the "terms of references", working objects, working methods, time-frame and the image of the output on Topic 7 "Study various mechanisms by which to promote the development of new systems of telecommunication technologies for rural applications". It is the most important thing for us to consider the necessity to begin the studies of this Focus Group urgently.
