

Chapter 19

Guidelines for Successful Public Internet Access Points (PIAPs) Implementation

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ABSTRACT

This chapter is prepared to explain important aspects and factors to be considered in PIAPs-related projects, especially implemented in country-level. It is likely a guideline offering step-by-step and systematic approach for successfully implementing PIAP projects. The content of the guideline is divided into following sections: Potential PIAP Types, PIAP Services, Management Structure, Operational Structure, How to Create Public Demand, and Critical Success Factors.

The content of the chapter is as follows: first, related literature is briefly explained to review important PIAP implementations in the world; then, trends in PIAP projects in the world are examined and discussed based on the findings of investigation over 21 PIAPs implementation in the world; after that, the guideline is explained with all details; and finally, the chapter ends with future research directions and the conclusion section.

Keywords: Public Internet Access Points (PIAPs), digital divide, ICT services, e-transformation, e-government, telecenters, kiosk, mobile PIAP, multi-purpose PIAP, mini-PIAPs.

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INTRODUCTION

Primary objective of Public Internet Access Points (PIAPs) is to provide citizens with access to information and communication technologies. To use PIAPs in full potential, the implementation phase should be managed effectively. For a better implementation, there is a need for planned and systematic approach comprising all related issues (e.g. PIAP types to be established, services to be provided, operational issues, etc) for building PIAPs. The purpose of this study is to propose a guideline for successful PIAP implementation in country-level. This guideline is intended to help executers during the planning of PIAPs-related projects and also during the establishment of PIAPs so that citizens will be able to benefit from them in full-potential.

The chapter begins with the background information part, in which the definition of what PIAP is and the benefits and advantages it provides for citizens are introduced. In addition, some statistical data based on the investigation over 21 PIAP implementations in the world are provided in order to identify the common trends and applications in the world regarding services provided in PIAPs, management structure and operational structure of PIAP projects, financial management etc. After background information is presented, the main part of the chapter comes next. This main part firstly explains the methods of the study and the common problems and difficulties in PIAP implementations leading to need for a comprehensive guideline for better serving PIAPs. Then, the guideline is explained in details under five main titles: (1) Potential PIAP Types, (2) PIAP Services, (3) Management Structure, (4) Operational Structure, (5) Creating Public Demand and (6) Critical Success Factors. Towards the end of the chapter, potential future research studies are discussed in order to improve and extend the scope of the guideline. Finally, the chapter ends with the conclusion section.

BACKGROUND

Definitions

Public Internet Access Points (PIAPs) can be defined as technological tools designed to provide citizens with access to information and communication technologies (ICT). PIAPs are generally established to provide ICT opportunities for poor communities living in rural areas, where the current technology is not available or where affordability of these technologies is not achieved by majority (Kumar and Best, 2003). However, PIAPs can be established in both rural and urban areas depending on the specific purpose of the PIAP. The important point is that intended location should be able to provide the required technological infrastructure so that the PIAP should operate in a way that intended services addressing the needs of local people should be provided effectively.

Having the major purpose as to diminish digital divide and to support socio-economic development, PIAPs serve with variety of content and services. In other words, besides ICT services, PIAPs offer variety of services considering the needs and interests of individuals in order to increase the user demand and consequently source of revenue for PIAPs. These services, for example, can comprise trainings (e.g. basic computer courses or occupational courses), specific e-government services, library services, telecommunication services, multimedia services, etc. Benefits of PIAPs can be explained in three main titles as follows:

Direct Benefits: Financial Profit:

- a. Contributing to decrease in unemployment rates via employment opportunities for the operation and maintenance of PIAPs,
- b. Supporting the e-Transformation of countries with minimal costs (i.e. it could finance itself

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