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CIVIL SOCIETY AND NATIONAL NICT POLICY IN BENIN

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MAIN ACRONYMS USED

AGeNTIC	Agence de Gestion des Nouvelles Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication (Agency for the Management of New Information and Communication Technologies)
BUBEDRA	Bureau Béninois des Droits d'Auteurs (Benin Copyright Office)
CBI	Centre Béninois pour l'Informatique (Beninese Information Systems Commission)
CED	Centre d'Education à Distance (Distance Education Centre)
CPA-ONG	Centre de Promotion des Associations et Organisations Non Gouvernementales (Centre for the Promotion of Non-Governmental Associations and Organisations)
HAAC	Haute Autorité de l'Audiovisuel et de la Communication (Communication and Audiovisual Authority)
IP	Internet Protocol
ISOC-Bénin	Benin Internet Society
LDCB	Ligue pour la Défense du Consommateur au Bénin (Benin Consumer Protection League)
MCPTN	Ministère de la Communication et de la Promotion des Technologies Nouvelles (Ministry of Communications and Promotion of New Technologies)
MCRI-SCBE	Ministère Chargé des Relations avec les Institutions, de la Société Civile et des Béninois de l'Extérieur (Ministry for Relations with Institutions, Civil Society and Beninese Abroad)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NICT	New Information and Communication Technologies
ODEM	Observatoire de la Déontologie et de l'Ethique dans les Médias (Observatory of Deontology and Ethics in the Media)
OPT	Office des Postes et Télécommunications (Posts and Telecommunications Office)
ORIDEV	The word *Oridev* means "Communication for development"
ORTB	Office de Radiodiffusion et Télévision du Bénin (Benin Radio and Television Office)
RESAFAD	Réseau Africain de Formation à Distance (African Distance Education Network)
SDNP	Sustainable Development Networking Program
STN	Switched Telecommunications Network
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VINOTIC	Vulgarisation de l'Informatique et des Nouvelles Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal

INTRODUCTION

Benin is a West African country, situated on the Atlantic Coast, and bordered by Burkina Faso, Togo, Nigeria and Niger. It has an area of 114,763 km². According to the last general population and housing census (RGPH3), the national population is young (48% under 15 years old) and was estimated at 6,752,569 inhabitants, 62.3% of whom live in the rural areas. The Beninese economy is essentially agriculture-based, with the Gross National Product estimated at 232,630 CFA francs (approximately US$350) per inhabitant in 1999. The national incidence of poverty is 33% for the same year in both rural and urban areas. French is the official language of the country, which is a former French colony, but it is only spoken by an approximate 30% of the population, with a gross school enrolment ratio of approximately 76.49% (1999). Several national languages co-exist: Fongbe is the principal language in the South, and is spoken by nearly half of the population in the North and South. Dendi and Bariba are the main languages spoken in the North.

Although before 1989 Benin was ruled either by democratic regimes that were quickly overthrown, or by dictatorial military regimes, it returned to democracy in 1990 with the adoption of a new Constitution proclaimed by Law 90-31 of December 11, 1990. Democratic elections accepted by all of the nation's constituents took place regularly during this period[1]: three presidential elections took place (1991, 1996, and 2001), with two changes of government; new parliaments were elected four times; and municipal elections were held. In Article 8, the Constitution guarantees freedom of information and communication: "(the State) guarantees its citizens equitable access to health, education, culture, information, professional training and employment." Article 24 also makes provision for freedom of the press. International conventions guaranteeing human, communication and information rights were also signed.

Telecommunications infrastructures are relatively poorly developped. With the revival of democracy, the country experienced a considerable media boom, with the appearance and proliferation of private newspapers, radio and television stations. Benin was connected to the internet at the end of 1995, and the mobile telephone GSM network has expanded subsantially since its launch in 2000.

Non-governmental organisations, of which there are thousands, have also experienced renewed activity since 1990. Their involvement is essentially in "traditional" development areas (health, decentralisation, education, human rights, rural development, etc.), but since the mid-1990s, they have also participated in new communications technologies. In Benin, the terms "NGOs" or "associations" are used generally, irrespective of the local or international scope of their activities, or whether reference is being made to the organisations themselves or their supervisory institutions[2]. I will therefore use one or the other of these terms, or the term "civil society organisation" (understood to be any organisation that is not Governmental or private sector).

The objective of this document is to examine national NICT policy and regulation, as well as the role of civil society organisations in this area. It is structured in four parts: I will first present the current position and regulation of the press and NICT[3]; then the national new

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[1] Although fraud was often exposed.

[2] There are no requirements for an Association to call itself a "NGO", and most of them do.

[3] Although it is true that the new technologies (internet, mobile telephone network, new computer terminals, etc) are no longer new, for the sake of simplicity, and in compiling this document, I will distinguish between two areas: the press (radio, newspapers, television) and New Internet and Communications Technologies – NICT – (internet, telecommunications networks, and also fixed and mobile telephone networks). When referring to all of these sectors, I will use the general term "media".

technology policy which was recently adopted; then I will describe the involvement of civil society organisations in this sector and its regulation; and I will finally formulate recommendations.

1   NICT AND THE PRESS: CURRENT POSITION AND REGULATION

1.1   THE PRESS: CURRENT POSITION AND REGULATION

CURRENT POSITION OF THE PRESS

Towards the end of the 1980s, Benin suffered a serious economic and political crisis, and the military regime of Mathieu Kérékou thus reached its apogee[4]. In 1988, with special authorisation from the President of the Republic, the *Gazette du Golfe (the Golf Gazette),* was established, the first private newspaper in Benin in the era of democratic renewal (from the end of the 1980s)[5]. Until that time, the media environment had been characterised by the monopoly of a single government newspaper *Ehuzu* (which subsequently became "*La Nation"*) and a single radio and television station, controlled by the Office de Radiodiffusion et Télévision du Bénin (Benin Radio and Television Office) (ORTB). Since 1990, the situation has changed, particularly with the creation of the Haute Autorité de l'Audiovisuel et de la Communication (Communication and Audiovisual Authority) (HAAC), that is responsible for regulation of the sector; and the passing of the law on the liberalisation of audiovisual space in 1997.

The written press

The first private newspaper, as well as the second (*Tam-Tam Express)*, contributed towards increasing political and popular protest, which led to the organisation of a historical, prototype for Africa, national conference of active forces of the nation. The time for democratic renewal thus arrived, and private newspapers proliferated. Today, there are 26 dailies, 16 weeklies, 7 monthlies, 5 religious newspapers, and other periodicals that are sporadically published. (Vittin, 1992; ODEM, 2001; Djiwan, 2002). It should be noted that many of these newspapers are published irregularly, and some have disappeared altogether. There are approximately 30 regularly published newspapers, and two exclusively electronic newspapers: one is online, and the other is distributed via email.

The audiovisual press

Until 1994, as a result of the delay in passing the Law liberalising audiovisual communication, the State continued to exercise an effective monopoly. Some initiatives were tentatively launched, in the absence of relevant legislation. On August 20, 1997, Law 97-010 was passed, which established liberalisation of audiovisual space, and development in the private audiovisual sector accelerated. Today, there are approximately 30 private radio stations (non-commercial, religious, commercial, and local rural radio). A private television station was created in 1998 (LC2), mainly covering the South of Benin (Cotonou, Porto-

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[4] Interestingly, after having been voted from power, Mathieu Kérékou was democratically elected, and became President of Benin again in 2001.
[5] Since 1946, a private Catholic newspaper called *La Croix (the Cross)* has also been in existence.

Novo, Ouidah), in a 50 km radius. There are also three MMDS-type television stations, which re-broadcast foreign channels via satellite.

It should be noted that the public ORTB television station only covered 60% of the country in 2001 (mainly in the South). However, this situation is gradually changing with Intelsat satellite transmission of its broadcasts (since August 2001), and the current establishment of regional broadcasting centres, particularly in the North of the country. Last February, licences were granted to 5 new television stations and 35 new radio stations, which should enrich the national media environment in the future.

REGULATION OF THE PRESS

Legislation relating to the written press seems confused and sometimes obsolete. According to the journalist Emmanuel Adjovi (Adjovi, 2001), it is "governed by a series of scattered legislative texts, in which one is easily disoriented. Sometimes, due to a confusing system of abrogation,[6] one does not even know which standard is applicable. The status of private news agencies and press distribution services is defined nowhere, neither is that of online newspapers… shortcomings of audio-visual law… a repressive penal code… As a basis for the penalties set forth in the law of August 1997, the legislators used the law dated June 30, 1960[7]. The legislators maintained the prison sentences, but the minimum fines were multiplied one-hundred-fold, and the maximum fines were doubled at the least".

The following institutions are responsible for press regulation:

The Ministère de la Communication et de la Promotion des Technologies Nouvelles (Ministry of Communications and Promotion of New Technologies) (MCPTN)

MCPTN's mission is "to define and implement Government policy on information, communications, posts and telecommunications, and new information and communications technologies" in accordance with Article 1 of Decree 2001 444 of November 5, 2001, which defines its functions, organisation and operations. It was established in May 2001,[8] and is concerned with regulation of the press, especially with regard to management of public and private media. However, its responsibilities sometimes conflict with those of HAAC.

The Haute Autorité de l'Audiovisuel et de la Communication (Communication and Audiovisual Authority) (HAAC)

HAAC is an institution independent of all authorities, political parties, associations and pressure groups. It was instituted by the Constitution, and established on July 14, 1994. HAAC's mission is to guarantee freedom and protection of the press, and of all mass communications media, in respect of the law; it ensures respect of ethics in the news, and equitable access to State media by all political parties, associations and citizens (Article 142 of the Constitution of December 11, 1990). HAAC's jurisdiction also extends to spectrum management, and the issue of private radio and television licences (Article 11 of Organic Law 92-021 of August 21, 1992).

L'Observatoire de la Déontologie et de l'Ethique dans les Médias (Observatory of

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[6] Repeal of legal texts.
[7] This law relating to press freedom in Benin is still in force today, with some amendments.
[8] Previously, the Ministry of Communication had no responsibility for NICT, and was called the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications (Ministry of Culture and Communications).

Deontology and Ethics in the Media) (ODEM)

ODEM is a non-profit association composed of representatives of journalists, publishers, audiovisual media managers, and civil society. It was launched in 1999, at the initiative of various professional associations. According to Article 4 of its statutes, its objectives include:
- ensuring that deontology and ethics rules are respected by the media;
- protecting the public's right to "free, complete, honest and accurate" information;
- protecting press freedom;
- ensuring journalists' safety when exercising their profession, and guaranteeing their right to investigate freely;
- encouraging and ensuring professionalism in journalistic practice.

ODEM is recognised in its role by the various media stakeholders in Benin. It has a website (http://www.h2com.com/odem/), and has adopted a "Code of Ethics for the Beninese Press", which is available on line.

1.2   NICT: CURRENT POSITION AND REGULATION

CURRENT POSITION OF NICT

Background

The Beninese telecommunications network is still poorly developped. It is mainly an analogue network, although some components are being digitalised within the context of various current projects. The situation in the central and northern regions is even more difficult. In the large towns, the telephone exchanges are largely saturated, and it is a miracle today to able to get a telephone line in Cotonou, the economic capital. There is a waiting list of thousands of unfilled orders.

Notable amongst the current reforms are: the 2001 implementation of a 450 km fibre optic link (the country is approximately 750 km long) between Cotonou and Parakou, the main town in the North; the substantial reduction in hardware taxes since 2000 (they are currently less than 3%, but this is annually revised); the establishment of MCPTN in 2001; the creation of the Agence de Gestion des Nouvelles Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication (Agency for the Management of New Information and Communications Technologies) (AGeNTIC); the installation of a node of submarine fibre optic cables in Cotonou in November 2000, to enable a bit transfer rate of 40 to 60 gigabits/s, within the context of the international SAT3-WASC-SAFE submarine cable project, linking Africa to Asia via Portugal and South Africa (Benin is one of the sponsors of the project)[9]; the adoption of a national NICT policy by the Council of Ministers on February 12, 2003; and the current reforms in the Office des Postes et Télécommunications (Posts and Telecommunications Office) (OPT), the traditional public operator, that will lead to liberalisation in the coming months[10]. On 7th May 2003, the national Internet bandwith has been upgraded from 2 to to 45 Mb.

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[9] http://www.opt.bj/sous_marin.htm (OPT project document); http://www.safe-sat3.co.za/: international project site.
[10] This reform has been in progress for several months for many reasons including the fear of the Office unions that OPT will be sold off to a foreign company, as well as various internal, unresolved irregularities.

Telephone System

Telephone density (as of 2002, only inclusive of fixed telephone lines) is approximately 0.9 percent (9 telephones per thousand inhabitants), one of the lowest rates in the world, even though this is representative of the sub-Saharan African average. Including the mobile telephone network, teledensity is estimated at 1 to 2%. In reality, a larger number of Beninese have telephone access through many private telecentres and public telephone booths. In 2002, there were over 60,000 fixed network subscribers (fixed mobiles, and conventional fixed lines). The GSM mobile network, launched in May 2000, has grown rapidly. Although telecommunications are still largely under State monopoly, certain sectors such as the cellular system have actually been liberalised since 1997. Apart from *Libercom*, an OPT subsidiary, two private mobile telephone operators (*Télécel* and *Bénincell*) have been approved. Today, the estimated number of mobile subscribers is double that of fixed subscribers.

Internet

Benin was connected to the internet in December 1995[11]. Since January 2002, the OPT-managed national bandwidth is 2 Megabits/s. Several other private internet service providers are also operational[12], and they offer access through switched telecommunications network (STN), local radio loop, or VSAT satellite. There is very low residential access. For example, OPT, the main access provider, had only about 3,500 STN subscribers in 2002; the total number of STN subscribers, including private service providers, is estimated to exceed 6,000, a relatively small number. However, because of the large number of telecentres that offer internet services (more than 100 in Cotonou), the overall internet population is well over 100,000. By comparison: in 1997, within the framework of a study, I counted approximately 1,500 subscribers, about 900 of whom were from the Campus Numérique (ex-Centre-Syfed-Refer) cybercentre, 500 from OPT, and less than half a dozen access points (Lohento, 1997).

The internet is much more developed in Cotonou, although there are a number of access centres and subscribers in many towns in the interior of the country. In 2002, the Government established about 20 community telecentres offering internet services. According to another study carried out (Lohento, 2000), it is estimated that 90% of internet users are in Cotonou. The current lack of Points of Presence in other towns makes access in the interior much more difficult (regular disconnections, connection only after several attempts, high communications costs, etc.). Non-governmental organisations are quite active in popularising new technologies, and have played a large part in their national promotion, resulting in the progressive emergence of social appropriation.

Apart from the above-mentioned communications costs and connection difficulties, other problems encountered in internet usage include: poor national electricity coverage (less than 30% of the country), recurrent power cuts, low computer literacy and illiteracy in the French language.

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[11] For detailed information on the history of the internet in Benin, consult www.iafric.net/benin, and the electronic bulletin board *Orita* of the NGO Oridev www.oridev.org. Also see the Bibliography.
[12] This liberalisation was motivated or accelerated by the establishment of the American Leland Inititative, which enabled an increase in the national bit rate from 64 to 128 kilobits/s in 1998. The site for the project's Beninese activities is http://www.usaid.gov/regions/afr/leland/benindex.htm

There are several **internet service providers** including OPT, the traditional government operator (www.opt.bj); Firstnet (www.firstnet.bj); Sobiex informatique (www.sobiex.bj); Espace Informatique et Télécommunications (EIT) (www.eit.bj); and Unitec-Bénin, Afripa-Télécom. The latter offers VSAT; Firstnet offers dial-up solutions as well as permanent radio connections (local radio loop) through UNITEC-Bénin (like OPT); a new operator Global Trading Agency also offers acces via satellite. http://www.globaltradingagency.biz/fr/INDEX.htm The Campus Numérique Francophone (Francophone Digital Campus) (www.bj.refer.org) provides connectivity to the university community; whilst the Ministry of Planning (http://www.planben.gouv.bj) connects the government. Permanent connections (by radio or cabled links) are in use by some large businesses like banks, international institutions, and service providers, and also some cybercafes. The speed of these connections varies from 64 kilobits/s to 1megabit/s. OPT has about 20 permanent connections (cable and radio), and Firstnet at least ten (only radio). There is also a Distance Education Centre that offers its customers a 512-kilobits/s satellite connection.

SECTORAL NICT APPLICATIONS

The Sustainable Development Networking Program (SDNP) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), whose global objective is to contribute towards the promotion of NICT in Benin,[13] has helped to implement several sectoral activities. Within the context of this project (1997 to 2000), the long-term implementation of a national integrated information system (intranet), made up of sectoral systems, to promote development and visibility of sectoral activities, was launched. Some of the activities mentioned below are linked to this project. With a few exceptions, sectoral activities are mainly linked to training, computerisation of organisations, and their connection to the internet.

Environmental Sector
The Agence Béninoise pour l'Environnement (Beninese Environmental Agency), in collaboration with UNITAR (United Nations Institute for Training and Research), and various other institutions such as SDNP, established the Environmental Information System on the Internet (EISI)) (http://www.sisei.net/nationaux/benin). All the stakeholders in the sector (civil society, private sector and public authorities) are involved.

Public Governance Sector
Apart from training personnel from a number of public institutions, a government information system was launched, one of whose entry points is the Government website[14]; a guide of administrative procedures for civil service users was put online (by the Cellule de Moralisation de la Vie Publique [Committee for the Moralisation of Public Life]),[15] etc. There are also sites created by political parties, communal, legislative and presidential election candidates, etc. For example, a special site was created during the 2002 municipal elections: http://www.municipales2002.gouv.bj/.

Health Sector

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[13] www.sdnp.org.bj
[14] www.gouv.bj: it should be noted that various ministries have their own, independent sites,
[15] http://www.bj.refer.org/benin_ct/eco/moralisation – also see the Government site

The best-known activities are training, computerisation of health organisations and implementation of information networks and systems, such as the Système National d'Information et de Gestion de la Santé (National System of Health Information and Management) (SNIGS).

Agriculture and Rural Development Sector
Despite its capital importance for the national economy, there are few NICT-related activities in this sector apart from those linked to training, increasing NICT awareness, and the connection of some organisations to the internet. There are initiatives such as the creation of the RUNetwork rural information system (www.runetwork.de), within the context of cooperation between Germany and the Institute National de Recherche Agronomiques du Bénin (National Institute of Agronomic Research in Benin) (INRAB); the establishment of the Réseau Béninois des Téléservices Communautaires (Benin Network of Community Teleservices) set up by the Songhai NGO (www.songhai.org); the provision of internet services to rural stakeholders; and the establishment of an information platform by the NGO BorgouNet (www.borgou.net).

Education Sector
Worth mentioning here are the activities of the Campus Numérique Francophone (ex-Centre Syfed-refer) in Benin (www.syfed.bj.refer.org), which offers NICT training and access for the teaching staff and students, as well as distance training in different disciplines; the establishment of the Centre d'Enseignement à Distance-Bénin (Benin Distance Education Centre) in collaboration with the World Bank; the activities of the Réseau Africain de Formation à Distance (African Distance Education Network) (RESAFAD) in Benin[16]; and the connection of some establishments to the internet. Various NGOs are also active in this area.

Electronic Commerce Sector
Electronic commerce is at an embryonic stage in Benin. In fact, not only do few organisations attempt electronic transactions, but sale and after-sale processes are still at a primary stage (standard, and slightly dynamic use of the web; banks are still not integrated; payment is not electronic; sales are made almost exclusively abroad, etc.). Amongst the rare activities of this nature, there is the sale of Beninese legal documents by Afrikinfo (www.afrikinfo.org), the Songhai Centre's sale of products (food and household products, etc.) to potential Beninese clients (http://www.songhai.org/vente), and the sale of pharmaceutical products by the Sobeplant company (www.sobeplant.com). As its contribution towards the development of e-commerce, SDNP organised some activities, and collaborated with the Conseil National des Chargeurs du Bénin (National Council of Beninese Shippers) (CNCB); a site to this effect has been under construction for some time (a Trade Point Benin project - http://www.sdnpben.org.bj/SlabTrad/Tpb.htm).

Cultural Sector
As well as training, and the connection of some organisations to the internet, many cultural websites have been created.

NICT REGULATION

To date, there is still no **operational** entity with specific responsibility for NICT regulation. MCPTN and OPT tended to take responsibility for telecommunications regulation,

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[16] Coopération Française project involved with distance education http://www.resafad.net

but this came under criticism since the liberalisation of some telecommunications sectors like the mobile telephone network, and the internet dial-up service (access via the traditional telephone network). HAAC seems unable to deal with all the conflicts in this area. To resolve telecommunications-related conflicts, multiparty commissions are sometimes created around OPT and MCPTN. As a result of this situation, as well as reforms in the sector, the Government issued two Decrees on January 31 2002, in a special session of the Council of Ministers: Decree 2002-002 which set forth several fundamental principles of the telecommunications system, and Decree 2002-003 which created the **Autorité de régulation des Postes et Télécommunications** (Posts and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority), and outlined its functions. Compilation of regulations for the implementation of these decrees is currently underway, as is the establishment of the Authority. After its establishment, the Authority should encourage the establishment of area-specific regulations. HAAC and ODEM may be delegated some responsibilities. However, to date, the Regulatory Authority has not officially been created, and regulation can still be influenced by MCPTN and OPT, despite the establishment of multiparty commissions.

Regulatory and Telecommunications Authorities

Article 3 of the Decree establishing the **Autorité de régulation des Postes et Télécommunications** (Posts and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority) stipulates that the Authority "will ensure respect of the provisions of the law setting forth fundamental principles of the *postal* service, and of the law setting forth fundamental principles of the *telecommunications* service in the Republic of Benin, as well as respect of their regulations, under objective, transparent and non-discriminatory conditions (and) will take the necessary measures to ensure continuity of public service and to protect users' rights". The Regulatory Authority will therefore be involved with postal services as well as telecommunications.

The Decree setting forth fundamental principles of telecommunications services defines the general regulations of telecommunications service provision and management. It endorses the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector[17], sets forth general regulations conducive to fair competition (management of the frequency spectrum, transparent resource allocation procedures, restriction of dominant positions, etc.), service regulation, methods of protecting State interest (defence, domestic security), and protecting users (including the principle of universal access, quality of service, etc.), and encryption methodology. **It does not focus in particular on one type of service or one particular area. This focus must be achieved though implementation regulations, after the organisation is established.** December 31, 2005 is the date by which all telecommunication services should be liberalised (Article 35)[18].

Authorities involved in NICT regulation

This refers to institutions such as MCPTN, HAAC, ODEM (these last two are mentioned above), the future Regulatory Authority, and also the Bureau Béninois du Droit d'Auteur (Benin Copyright Office) (BUBEDRA), and the Commission Béninoise pour l'Informatique (Beninese Information Systems Commission) (CBI). These last two institutions are mentioned below.

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[17] The Office des Postes et Télécommunications will therefore be divided into two entities, one responsible for telecommunications, the other for postal services.
[18] One wonders if this time-frame will be respected, as the Authority has not even been officially created yet, and OPT has still not been liberalised.

Protection of intellectual property: BUBEDRA

The management of intellectual property rights is the domain of BUBEDRA, an institution answerable to MCPTN. It was created by Law 84-008 of March 15, 1984, to protect copyright in Benin. Its activities do not yet include the protection of copyright on the internet. Its better known activities are the protection of artistic works (music, theatre etc.) but "associated rights" (rights of artist-interpreters, video and record producers, radio broadcasting organisations, etc) are still not covered.

The Commission Béninoise pour l'Informatique (Beninese Information Systems Commission) (CBI) (http://www.cbi.bj/)

CBI's role is to ensure the regulation and control of computerisation programmes in the Beninese Government. It also works towards promoting NICT in Benin, and could cooperate with AGeNTIC in this regard. CBI is answerable to the Minister of State for Coordination of Government Actions, Prospective and Development (Ministère Chargé de la Coordination de l'Action Gouvernementale, de la Prospective et du Développement (MCCAG-PD)) and the Minister of Finance and Economy.

Future Projects for the Regulatory Authority

There are already several urgent projects awaiting the regulatory organisation, including:
- Management of free frequencies (around 2,4 Gigahertz): this frequency band is currently used by some wireless operators, and there is often interference;
- Management of the liberalisation of the mobile phone network, which is still under discussion (problems of licensing, fair competition, etc.);
- Management of the ".bj" domain: this task is currently the responsibility of OPT, and the conditions of allocating domains are not conducive to the development of sites in the national domain. This issue must therefore be reevaluated;
- Voice over IP regulations ;
- Regulation of the online press: there are some newspapers that do not have paper editions (*le Cordon, l'Araignée*[19]) and HAAC has neither the relevant legislation, nor the means to enforce regulations in this area; there are also subject-specific electronic bulletin boards (NICT, cultural heritage, etc.).

2   NICT POLICY IN BENIN

Since February 12, 2003, Benin has had a national NICT policy. The following paragraphs will describe the process of drafting this policy, the role played by civil society, and the content of the policy.

2.1   DRAFTING OF THE NATIONAL POLICY

The drafting of the national NICT policy can be traced back to the establishment of UNDP's SNDP project. After the Ministry for New Technologies was created, it collaborated with SDNP to implement its activities. The SDNP project, which had come to an end, also encouraged the establishment of AGeNTIC as its replacement, with the main objective of ensuring the implementation of government and international partner projects. MCPTN made the Agency responsible for many activities on a contract basis, particularly the development

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[19] *Le Cordon* is a an electronic weekly distributed by email; *Araignee* site : www.laraignee.com.

of a national strategy document. The national policy that was adopted is a part of this document.

The strategy document is entitled "**Politique et stratégie nationale des NTIC: Bénin 2025, une société de l'information solidaire, épanouie et ouverte**" (National NICT Policy and Strategy: Benin 2025, a Cohesive, Flourishing and Open Information Society). It consists of a declaration of the national policy, a description of the current NICT position, and a list of projects. The first phase of drafting this document consisted of compiling a report based on previous studies, written by various resource persons and institutions[20]. Subsequently, the private sector, the Government, the OPT, the Société Béninoise d'Electricité et d'Eau (Benin Electricity and Water Company) (SBEE), MCPTN and others amended this first version at a meeting at the Hotel Possotome in the department of Mono. In a third phase, the draft text was reviewed, and then submitted to various sectoral administrative institutions and development partners. New amendments were proposed, especially with regard to sectoral applications. At the same time, the document was published on a website[21] to seek opinions from the diaspora and all persons interested in the matter, with invitations for comments through mailing lists and local media. After this stage, a new meeting of consultants, managers, and civil society members was held in Mono from December 3 to 5, 2002. The final document was the result of this last meeting. The national policy document, entitled "**Déclaration de politique de promotion des Nouvelles Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication (NTIC) au Bénin"** (Declaration of the New Information and Communications Technologies [NICT] Promotion Policy in Benin**),** was adopted by the Government Council of Ministers, in its session of Wednesday, February 12, 2003. National popularisation is expected to follow.

Civil society has thus been associated in various ways with the production of the document. Another workshop for final ratification is planned, probably in connection with the rest of the document (in particular, projects to be implemented), since the national policy has already been adopted by the Government. It is to be hoped that concrete actions will follow the adoption of the national policy and the final ratification of the strategy document.

2.2   CONTENT OF THE NATIONAL POLICY

The national policy document is structured in six main parts: the preamble, the summary of the NICT environment in Benin; the policy objectives; the strategic objectives; the action plan; and practical guidelines with a brief look at funding.

The preamble recalls the important role that NICT can play in development efforts, and it shows the Government's interest in NICT promotion, as seen in the Government action plan, and the national study on long term strategies (Benin 2025 – Alafia).

The "institutional framework" covers the current reforms in the telecommunications sector with a view to its liberalisation and modernisation; the future creation of the posts and telecommunications regulatory body; the importance of developping the audiovisual sector (television, radio broadcasts) with particular reference to coverage for the whole country; and the poor national electricity coverage. On the regulatory level, shortcomings are identified: "existing regulations, especially those related to telecommunications network access conditions; service pricing; third-party activities related to telephone service provision; and conditions of issuing and using frequencies, are all major obstacles to the emergence of

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[20] This is particularly the case with the report "Development Plan for Information and Communication Infrastructures in Benin, 2000-2004", which was drafted in 1999 within the framework of the first African Development Forum (ADF '99) which was organised in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (African Information Society Initiative [AISI] programme) and whose focus was NICT.
[21] http://www.strategiesntic.org

electronic services. The removal of these obstacles is an important prerequisite to the realisation of the information and communication society in the Republic of Benin."

The "policy objectives" section describes the hopes for NICT development by 2025: "it will enable the whole Beninese population to become 'cybercitizens', effectively participating in the management of democracy, having the necessary knowledge and know-how to be involved in globalisation, and to bring to the international market innovations of their endogenous genius. It will facilitate strengthening and optimisation of all the sectors related to human life in Benin, thus generating a prosperous and competitive economy as well as well-being for individuals and the nation. It will also contribute towards reaffirming national solidarity and solidarity with neighbouring countries." Five central points have been identified around which these technologies will be developped: institutional and regulatory policy, human resource, infrastructure and sectoral application development, and cooperation.

Twenty-two strategies, related to these five central points, are then listed. In particular, "the promotion of professional organisations and associations involved in the area of NICT"; the creation of a support fund; extension of the electrical network; equipment of all schools and universities; development of free software; strengthening administrative information systems; development of regional, African and international cooperation, particularly with Asian countries.

The "Action Plan" recommends 154 diverse activities, on the basis of previously listed strategies, and covers practically all the sectors of national development. In order to achieve the policy vision, it should be progressively implemented until 2025.

Finally, the "programme and funding guidelines" section stipulates that the participation of all national stakeholders (state, civil society, and private sector) and development partners is a prerequisite for the implementation of activities: "Funding of the various activities is the responsibility of the State and the private sector respectively. The creation of a relevant and motivational institutional framework would stimulate the private sector's interest in operating in the field…. Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), who plan to operate in the sector will also be involved in implementing this action plan. The Government will also seek technical and financial support from development partners to ensure the comprehensive implementation of this policy."

Perusal of the document shows that the plan covers most of the challenges, and still leaves room for activities that were not initially planned. The role and importance of NGOs is recognised. The policy objectives appear too optimistic, and seem to grant too much power to NICT. It should be remembered that the rate of illiteracy in the French language is over 60%. It is to be hoped that a large number of these promises will become reality, although it is doubtful that all Beninese will become 'cybercitizens' by 2025.

3   NGOS AND NICT IN BENIN

This section will deal with civil society organisations working in the area of NICT, irrespective of whether they are specialised; and their activities within the context of NICT regulation will be examined. Other non-associative institutions working in the sector, and/or potentially involved in its regulation were mentioned in the first chapter.

3.1   NGOS: ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND INSTITUTIONAL LIFE

NGOs increased in number at the end of the 1980s, with the democratic renewal, and they now number approximately three thousand. However, few are professional or really active in the field.

In order to have an official existence, an NGO must be declared and registered by the **Ministère de l'Intérieur, de la Sécurité et de la Décentralisation** (Ministry of the Interior,

Security and Decentralisation) (MISD). However, it was generally very difficult to obtain official registration, because of administrative delays. It was essential to "follow-up" the file in a certain way with unofficial and regulatory procedures. As a result, some associations waited years to get their official registration, and many of them operated without official recognition; because of this, cooperation with international partners was often difficult or impossible. There was also often an gap between the date of their first activities and their official registration date. This adverse situation is gradually changing, with the July 2001 Decree setting the operational conditions of NGOs in Benin. Decree 2001-234 of July 12, which set the conditions of existence and the *modus operandi* of NGOs and their umbrella organisations, filled a legal gap dating back several years. In Article 1, it stipulates that "(the following) are considered as non-governmental organisations (NGOs): a national or foreign non-profit, association, created through private initiative, bringing together moral or physical entities with a view to implementing activities for the general good, or activities relating to common aims, or voluntary cooperation for development." In Article 11, the Decree also states that "the receipt for the declaration should be issued by the relevant authority within two months of the date of the deposition of the declaration. After this time, the silence of the relevant authority assumes recognition of the NGO and authorises publication formalities" (in the official journal, in order to confirm the deposition, that the Ministry of the Interior must issue forthwith).

Apart from the Ministry of the Interior that takes receipt of their official declarations, the associations have been officially represented since 1999 by the new Ministère Chargé des Relations avec les Institutions, de la Société Civile et des Béninois de l'Extérieur (Ministry for Relations with Institutions, Civil Society and Beninese Abroad) (MCRI-SCBE) (http://www.mcrigate.bj), in particular by its department for civil society, and the **Centre de Promotions des Associations et Organisations Non Gouvernementales** (Centre for the Promotion of Non-Governmental Associations and Organisations) (CPA-ONG).

CPA-ONG (http://www.mcrigate.bj/CPA1.htm) is an autonomous centre established by Decree 99-515 of November 2, 1999. Its statutes were approved by Decree 2000-491 of October 9, 2000, and it falls under the supervision of the MCRI-SCBE. Its creation was prompted by the recognition of civil society's role and position in the national development process, and its main objective is to promote NGOs and associations, and to improve their environment.

There are many NGO networks. There are four to five large multi-disciplinary umbrella organisations such as the Conseil des ONG en Activités en Bénin (Council of NGOs active in Benin) (CONGAB), the Fédération Nationale des ONG (National NGO Federation) (FENONG), the Conseil Supérieur des ONG (NGO Higher Council) (CS-ONG), but these do not include all the organisations. In fact, a large number of NGOs are in thematic networks such as the Fédération Nationale des Associations de Femmes Béninoises (National Federation of Associations of Beninese Women) (FNAFB), the Organe de Concertation des structures non gouvernementales en Environnement (Dialogue Committee for Non-Governmental Environmental Organisations) (OCE), the Réseau des ONG Béninoises de Santé (Network of Beninese NGOs in Health) (ROBS), the Réseau Béninois pour la Gouvernance Démocratique (Beninese Network for Democratic Governance) (RGD), and the WILDAF-Bénin network [22], etc. Some organisations are both multi-disciplinary and thematic.

3.2 NGOS WORKING IN THE NICT SECTOR, AND THEIR FIELDS OF ACTIVITY

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[22] http://www.wildaf-ao.org/html/fri.htm West African WILDAF site; in French WILDAF is FeDDAF (Femmes Droit et Développement en Afrique) (Women, Law and Development in Africa)

Activities by associations to promote NICT started in Benin in 1995. There are approximately ten associations who specialise in NICT; other non-specialised organisations currently integrate NICT activities into their programmes.

ORIDEV NGO (www.oridev.org**)**

Oridev was one of the first associations to start NICT activities in Benin[23]. It was created in October 1998, and is the regional office of ANAIS,[24] an international network whose goal is ICT appropriation in Africa. It also has independent relations with other partners. Oridev began its activities in 1998, and promotes NICT for development purposes in three ways: computer and internet training (youths, NGOs); information and awareness (studies, publications, conferences, internet exhibitions, etc.); and establishment of an access point for youths, within the framework of Point d'Accès aux Inforoutes pour la Jeunesse (Information Highway Access Point for Youths) (PAJE), a Programme of the Agence Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie (Intergovernmental Francophonie Agency). In 2001, Oridev and Isoc-Benin organised a virtual forum on NICT development in Benin during the internet exhibition[25].

ISOC-BENIN (www.isoc.bj**)**

Isoc-Benin is the national chapter of the international Internet Society. It was created in March 1999, and launched its activities on December 10 of the same year. Like its international sponsor, the association often works on internet governance, and is active during internet exhibitions; its focus is also on gender-related activities (awareness and training for women, and a project to create a portal on women).

VINOTIC (www.vinotic.org**)**

The VINOTIC project (Vulgarisation de l'Informatique et des Nouvelles Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication [Popularisation of Information Systems and New Information and Communications Technologies]) is an association created in 2000, that focuses on computer and internet training, and, like most associations, participates in internet exhibition activities; it also has a programme to promote NICT in education.

CED-BENIN (www.cedbenin.org**)**

The Association Centre d'Education à Distance du Bénin (Benin Distance Education Centre Association) manages the Centre d'Education à Distance (Distance Education Centre) (CED) project, that was established by Benin and the World Bank. It is a member of the Réseau Mondial d'Education pour le Développement (World Network of Education for Development) which brings together approximately ten pilot centres launched by the World Bank. It proposes and implements various distance education programmes on NICT, the economy, journalism, and development.

Le Centre Songhai (http://www.songhai.org**)**

The Centre Songhai (the Songhai Centre) is a "local voluntary organisation of a private nature", working in agricultural development (production and training). It established a network of telecentres[26] in three Beninese towns including Porto-Novo and Parakou (North). These telecentres give NICT access to the people, and to the institution's clients and partners.

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[23] In 1997, "Club Goli", a cultural association, and the Sesame Group (which no longer exists) organised conferences on the subject.
[24] www.anais.org
[25] Archives: http://www.iafric.net/intro.htm
[26] http://www.geocities.com/songhaiafrica/fr/telecentre-fr.htm

The Porto-Novo telecentre is currently connected to the internet by VSAT, through support from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

La Fondation de l'Entrepreneurship du Bénin (Enterpreneurship Foundation of Benin) (FEB) (www.fondationbenin.org)
FEB is a non-governmental organisation supported by Canada, whose activities are linked to the promotion of enterepreneurship. It also makes use of new technologies to this effect, and hosts a cybercentre connected by satellite.

ADINTAF (www.adintaf.org)
ADINTAF (Appui au Développement de l'Informatique et de l'INTernet en Afrique [Support to the Development of Information Systems and the Internet in Africa]) is an African-oriented association, that is currently implementing computer and internet training activities.

BorgouNet NGO (www.borgou.net)
BorgouNET is an association started by the Archdiocese of the town of Parakou (the main town in the north of Benin) that offers training and internet access (STN access through a cybercentre, by private wireless network and VHF radio) to religious workers as well as to development organisations in the northern departments. For several months, it has had a permanent radio connection (local radio loop); it also offers information services through its new site, which is a knowledge sharing platform.

AGENTIC: A SPECIAL CASE (www.agentic.bj)
The Agence de Gestion des Nouvelles Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication (Agency for the Management of New Information and Communications Technologies) (AGeNTIC), was established at the end of 2001. It brings together stakeholders from the private sector, civil society and the State. It is an economic interest group whose official mission is "to strengthen the project managing capacity of the State and development partners through expertise in New Information and Communications Technologies," and to "manage and ensure the implementation of projects, including the work, provision and services of consultants, in the New Information and Communications Technologies field, on behalf of public and private organisations and international institutions."

There are also other organisations such as NTIC'21, RENTIC, ACDEV, ACET-ONG, the Fédération des radios communautaires et assimilées du Bénin (Federation of Community and Community-Type Radios of Benin) (FERCAB), the Entrepreneurship and Information Systems Academy (EIA), and the Jardin des Plantes et de la Nature de l'Ecole du Patrimoine Africain (the Botanical and Nature Garden of the African Heritage School)[27].

3.3 NGOS AND NICT REGULATION[28]

Non-governmental organisations that are active in NICT, or are potentially involved in their regulation, range from NICT-specialised NGOs, to NGOs involved in development in general; including consumer protection associations, human rights associations, and associations working to promote democracy. The appendices contain the details of these organisations as well as others with potential involvement.

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[27] EIA: http://www.eia.nu; ACDEV: www.acdev.org; L'Ecole du Patrimoine Africain www.epa-prema.net,
[28] It should be emphasised that, as well NGOs and public institutions, private and international cooperation institutions working in the NICT sector are heavily involved in this regulation.

NGO participation in regulation is through criticism of the problems caused by lack of regulations and/or through participation in activities initiated by the Government within the context of NICT national policy and regulation. In Oridev's electronic bulletin *Orita*, the issue has often been raised, whether in relation to the internet or the mobile telephone network; the virtual forum organised by Oridev and Isoc-Benin during the 2001 internet exhibition raised the issue of regulation; this problem also keeps surfacing at various formal or informal meetings of associations with telecommunications officials, and during various radio shows. Recognition of civil society's role and position in the national strategy document is evidence of the result of these activities. I will present two cases demonstrating this participation in more detail below.

Civil society participation in the compilation of the NICT strategy document

Within the context of drafting the national strategy document, which contains the national ICT policy, civil society (NGOs and resource persons in particular) was approached during the various preparatory stages (see the second chapter section on drafting the national policy). After work by different consultants, various public pre-validation mechanisms were established. These included meetings in Mono, requests for comments through various discussion lists, in the media and to resource persons, the distribution of the whole document on the internet together with the establishment of a discussion forum[29]. It was therefore possible to collect comments through various channels (physical meetings, email contributions, and through the online forum).

Although civil society's involvement cannot be denied, two reservations should be noted. Firstly, some dispute its choice of representatives (only the organisations known to the operation's leaders would have been invited, and the stakeholders from the interior of the country would not have been approached). Secondly, proposals will not always be taken into account. On the first point, it can always be claimed that the publication of the national strategy document on the web is likely to favour comments by a certain section of national civil society.

LDCB's NICT activities (ldcb.cird@intnet.bj)

The Ligue pour la Défense du Consommateur au Bénin (Benin Consumer Protection League) (LDCB) is an association that has worked to protect consumer rights for many years. It is also involved in the NICT sector, as was revealed in 2002 when a tax was applied on telecommunications costs, particularly on prepaid telephone cards. On February 14, 2003, together with approximately ten other NGOs (not a single NICT-specialised NGO was an official partner of the demonstration!), LDCB organised a protest march against internet and telephone communications costs (fixed and mobile), the dysfunction of the mobile networks, and "speculation on portable phone spare parts." The organisers' demands included NGO participation in the regulatory body to be established. The demonstration also protested the dysfunction and shortcomings of the national electricity network.

4   RECOMMENDATIONS

How can civil society's increased involvement in the promotion and governance of NICT in Benin be guaranteed? What are the aspects of this policy that most concern civil society organisations? I will try to respond to these questions in the following paragraphs.

4.1   RELEVANT AREAS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY IN NICT REGULATION

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[29] http://www.strategiesntic.org/forum.php: site for discussion of the national strategy document.

With regard to national NICT policy and regulation in Benin, the main elements that should concern civil society are:

1. **Universal access to NICT, and preservation of NICT-related costs and taxes at a level accessible to all:** LDCB and other specialised NGOs who work in this area (Oridev, VINOTIC, CED, Centre Songhai, RUNetwork centres, BourgouNet, etc.) should consolidate their activities, and collaborate more.

2. **Gender and NICT**: the objective here is to ensure better training and participation of women in NICT; according to the study I carried out in 1997 (Lohento, 1997), only 14.28% of internet users were women, even in universities (13.13% at the Campus Numérique, ex- Centre Syfed); Isoc-Bénin and the Campus Numérique take the lead in this sector.

3. **Electronic governance** (e-governance): transparency of administrative procedures and public information should become a requirement; the internet is an excellent channel to make these available, even if it only targets the media and the small section of the population that is literate in French; community radio also has an important role to play within this context.

4. **Cultural diversity**: Benin is a country where several socio-cultural groups from various heritages live together; mutual cultural potential should be endorsed by NICT, and this multi-cultural wealth should also be used to promote the country touristically and economically.

5. **Rights to communication and information**: Benin is a young democracy, and freedom of information and communication must constantly be consolidated. NICT can be of use in this context, and the Beninese press and human rights institutions have a key role to play.

6. **Promotion of free software**: the "free philosophy" could benefit software availability and development in Benin; civil society organisations should therefore engage in this battle, especially on an international level. A free software laboratory project (LABTIC) is in process, with the support of the Francophonie Agency; an association was also created, but is not yet active.

7. **Open and negotiated standards**: As information systems' norms and standards are often dependent on access to information, and the conditions of this access, it is very important that this area be monitored; appeal is therefore made to associations such as Isoc-Benin.

4.2   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BETTER ACTION

To ensure civil society's increased involvement in the promotion and regulation of NICT, I propose the following eight recommendations:

1. **Strengthen cooperation between civil society organisations,** firstly between NICT-specialised associations, and secondly between the specialised associations and other development organisations. Cooperation in the first case is currently minimal; it should be strengthened in **important** areas such as literacy in French (and in local languages), health and agriculture. There is also no current **national network of NGOs participating in NICT**; such a network could play an important role in lobbying the State and international partners, and in knowledge exchange[30].

2. **The establishment of NICT monitoring and alert mechanisms**: these mechanisms would belong to civil society, and a component of their activities could be monitoring

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[30] Within the context of the Internet Exhibition, an informal mechanism called the Comité d'Organisation de la fête de l'Internet au Bénin (Steering Committee of the Internet Exhibition in Benin) (COFIB), was established, bringing together a large number of organisations involved in this activity; if it is strengthened, it could offer a framework for emergence to this network.

the implementation of the national NICT policy, independently of the mechanisms put in place by the State.

3. **Consolidation of training and increased awareness of civil society NGOs with regard to NICT**: civil society organisations, whether or not they work in NICT, have a great need for NICT training; their international and national development challenges must be overcome.

4. **Establishment of a cooperative for joint procurement and servicing of hardware:** At the end of 2000, Oridev organised a workshop on NGOs and NICT, during which this recommendation was formulated.

5. **Lobbying and social mobilisation training**: lobbying and social mobilisation training is necessary for all organisations, especially those working in the NICT area; composed mainly of volunteers, NGOs are rather fragile in the area of human resources, as a result of the struggle for economic survival that is crucial in a developing country.

6. **Establishment of an electronic information platform on NGOs**: this online platform could be part of the activities of the Centre de Promotion des ONG et Associations (Centre for the Promotion of NGOs and Associations) (CPA-ONG) or other NGOs.

7. **Strengthen the professionalism of NGOs:** NGOs, in particular those that are specialised, must become more professional, and more forward-looking.

8. **Strengthen cooperation with the State:** non-governmental organisations, in particular those working in the NICT sector, should strengthen their cooperation with the State, especially within the framework of projects linked to information technologies, while still maintaining their independence.

CONCLUSION

Since February 2003, Benin has had a national policy for the development of new information technologies, which was drafted after consultation with stakeholders in the field, and civil society in general. After having recalled the important challenges brought about by the new technologies, and having indicated the government's willingness to work towards NICT development, the document lists important activities to be accomplished within all sectors, in order to exploit the potential of these technologies for the good of national development. The policy vision seems too optimistic, however, with regard to the hopes placed on NICT. The regulation of NICT (especially mobile telephones and internet services) has often been criticised: in effect, although some telecommunications services have already been liberalised, they still seem to be under the control of Government institutions. Appeal has often been made to the institutions regulating the press, but they seem incompetent in the telecommunications area.

Fortunately, the national policy document provides for the establishment of a regulatory authority, further to the Decree made in 2002. The prompt establishment of this body will enable NICT service provision to all citizens.

Some NGOs are active in the sector, and some have contributed towards establishing the national policy. In order to ensure better social appropriation and better regulation of NICT, cooperation must be strengthened, not only amongst specialist organisations in the sector, but also amongst these and civil society organisations working in other development areas (especially organisations working to promote democracy and human rights). This cooperation must be seen in concerted NICT, lobbying, and social mobilisation training activities.

APPENDICES

- Bibliography

- Contact information of associations with potential involvement in NICT regulation

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ASSOCIATIONS WITH POTENTIAL INVOLVEMENT IN NICT REGULATION

The associations that are not specialised in NICT are mentionned here for information only. The specialised associations that are mentioned are the most active.

NICT-Specialised Associations, or Associations promoting NICT

ORIDEV
BP : 690 Cotonou Bénin
Tél : (229) 05 82 79
www.oridev.org
oridev@oridev.org

BorgouNet ONG
B.P. 226 Parakou Bénin
Tél : (229) 61 37 72
Fax : (229) 61 37 29
info@borgou.net
www.borgou.net

ADINTAF
BP 160 Cotonou Bénin
www.adintaf.org
cyrille.dossa@adintaf.org

Centre Songhai
B.P. 597 Porto-Novo Bénin
Tél. : (229) 22 50 92 / (229) 22 28 81
Fax : (229) 22 20 50
songhai@songhai.org
www.songhai.org

ISOC-Bénin
01 BP 506 Cotonou Bénin
Tél. : (229) 31-53-84
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www.isoc.bj

ACET-ONG
BP: 248 Savalou Bénin
Tél. : (229) 54 00 58
ggbaguidi@hotmail.com

Fondation de l'Entrepreneurship du Bénin
Tél.:(229) 33 66 15
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Projet VINOTIC
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vinotic@vinotic.org
www.vinotic.org

Association Centre d'Education à Distance du Bénin
Tél. : (229) 30.83.58
Téléc. : (229) 30.84.59
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Fax : (229) 33 95 32
lodjouch@firstnet.bj
www.eia.nu

Human Rights Associations

Ligue pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme au Bénin (LDDH)
B.P. 03-630 ; Cotonou, Benin
Tel: (229)-33-21-93 ;
Fax: 229-33-26-01 / 31-38-09 / ; 31-46-04
ldhbenin@yahoo.fr

Association des Femmes Juristes du Bénin (AFJB)
04 B.P. 0331 Cotonou Bénin
(ou 01B.P. 234 Porto-Novo Bénin)
Tél:(229) 33 16 96 / 31 72 36 / 21 21 36
Fax:(229) 30 78 47
 afjb.benin@intnet.b et afjb.pn@intnet.bj
www.bj.refer.org/benin_ct/cop/ddlp/afjb/

Commission Béninoise des Droits de l'Homme (CBDH)
Tél : (229) 31-41-30

Amnesty International Bénin
BP 01-3536 Cotonou Bénin
Tél : (229) 32 36 90
Fax : (229) 32 36 90
aibenin@nakayo.leland.bj

Transparency International Bénin
Tél. : (229) 30 80 38/39/40
Fax: +229-308 039
tibenin@intnet.bj

Associations for the Protection of Consumer Rights

Que choisir Bénin
04 B.P. 142 Cotonou Bénin
Tél : (229) 33 58 53
Fax : (229) 32 21 22
quechoisirbenin@avu.org

ARAMBE KAFU ATA (Association pour la Recherche et l'Amélioration des Conditions de Vie au Bénin)
BP 2820 Cotonou 03, Bénin
Tél.: (229) 32 12 64
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Ligue pour la Défense du Consommateur Béninois (LDCB)
02 BP 1112 Cotonou
Tél.: (229) 31 18 27
Fax: (229) 30 28 73/ (229) 3 118 29

Associations for the Promotion of Democracy

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CBDIBA - Centre Béninois pour le Développement des Initiatives à la Base
BP 256 Bouhicon Zou Benin
Tél.: (229) 51 04 85 / (229) 51 06 35
Fax: (229) 51 07 33
cbdiba@bow.intnet.bj
http://afrdh.org/cbdiba/

Networks of associations

Wildaf-Bénin
B P 04-0331, Cotonou, Benin
Tél: (229) 3316 96/30 23 71
Fax: (229) 32 27 86

Social Alert - Bénin
01 BP 2522 Cotonou - Bénin
Tél.: (229) 30 20 71
Fax: (229) 30 44 63;

E-mail: wildaf@intnet.bj

ctp@intnet.bj / ctpbcpa@intnet.bj
www.socialalert.org

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*RGD – Réseau des ONG béninoises pour la
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rgd@avu.org / ahouiss@avu.org