
PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION & ICTs
PHASE II REPORT

Republic of Moldova

Prepared for the University of Washington,
Center for Information & Society.

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1 Extended Executive Summary

1.1 Research Project Overview

This research focuses on the public access to information and communication landscapes in 24 countries, with specific focus on public libraries, to understand the information needs of underserved communities, public access to information and communication venues, and the role of ICT.

Through field research in 24 countries conducted by local research partners, and cross-country comparative analyses based on common research design elements (see list of countries and research design overview in Appendix), The project aims to contribute to the knowledge in the field of information and ICT for development. Of particular interest and value are: the comparative look at key venues (libraries and other), and the mix of depth of in-country knowledge with breadth of global comparison to elicit success factors and scenarios to understand how diverse population can and do access and use ICT to improve their lives. All outputs of this research will be broadly disseminated to interested stakeholders and placed in the public domain.

1.2 Introduction

The present report is a compilation of the data generated through surveys conducted among the targeted users and operators of main local public access venues, in-depth interviews and focus groups discussions among key informants and stakeholders and site visits. In addition, the report also relied on the analysis of secondary data, including summaries of preliminary report and relevant country and sector studies. The various elements of the complex research are summarized below.

1.3 Country Overview

The current independent state of Moldova was established in 1991 after the collapse of former USSR. The capital of Republic of Moldova is Chisinau. After the independence Moldova began its transition to market economy. During the transition period Republic of Moldova has experienced radical transformations in political, social and economic situation. Since the beginning of reforms, Moldova faced the deepest and most prolonged recession among transition countries, and the resulting increase in poverty has made it the poorest country in Europe today.

Geography

The Republic of Moldova is a small, landlocked country located in South-East Europe. At North, East and South it is neighbouring with Ukraine (939 km), at West – with Romania (450 km). It covers approximately 33.8 thousand km² of territory. It stretches 350 kilometres from North to South and 150 kilometres from West to East. Moldovan relief is represented by hills and plains, which are mostly in the central part of the territory.

The Republic of Moldova has relatively few natural resources. Virtually 100% of its energy resources are imported. The country has important reserves of mineral resources which are used for construction materials. The main natural asset of the Republic of Moldova is its black soil called “cernoziom” which is propitious for the development of highly competitive agriculture.

Political/geographic divisions

Moldova is a parliamentary republic. The legislative body is a one-chamber Parliament, with 101 seats and is elected based on a proportional electoral system with one national constituency. The head of state is the President who is elected by the Parliament for a four-year term. The country's current ruling party is the Communist Party of Moldova that has been ruling the country since 2001.

At the regional level, the organs of representative power are the district and commune level local councils (Primariyas). The executive branch of power is the Cabinet of Minister with Prime Minister as a head of the government.

Administratively, the country consists of 32 districts, 3 municipalities and 2 semi-autonomous regions, one of which is the breakaway region of Transdnestria. In regional aspect, Moldova is divided in 6 regions: North, Center, South, municipality Chisinau, Territorial Administrative Unit Gagauzia and Transdnestria.

The Republic of Moldova is made up of 1530 localities, including 3 municipalities (Chisinau, Balti, Comrat), 54 cities, 1476 rural settlements, including 847 residential villages – villages where village councils are located (communities), and 629 settlements within communities and cities (without Transdnestria). Compared to other countries from the former USSR, rural localities from Moldova are rather big according to the number of people, and some of them are registered as the biggest villages from Europe (with a population of 15-20 thousand people).

Moldova has a territory with an excessive degree of anthropogenic exploitation of the natural space. Over 10% of the national territory is occupied by human settlements. By comparison with the neighboring states, the density of settlements network in Moldova is higher: 5 settlements per 100 km².

Demography

Moldova is one of the most densely populated European countries with a population of 3581,1 thousands, out of which 41.3% - 1478,0 thousands - is urban and 58.7% - 2103,1 thousands - rural). Approximately half of the urban population is living in the municipality of Chisinau. The Republic of Moldova continues to be the country with the lowest level of urbanization within Europe. In terms of gender balance men account for 48%, and women make up 52% of the total number of population.

The biggest city in Moldova is Chisinau with a population of 780,000 people, located in the central part of the country. The second most important city Balti is located in the north-central Moldova and has a population of 148,000 people.

The biggest rural populated regions are: Cantemir - 94%, Anenii Noi, Criuleni, Telenesti – 90%, Stefan Voda – 89%, Hancesti – 87%, Ialoveni, Soldanesti – 85%, Falesti, Glodeni – 83%, Sangerei, Briceni – 82%. The biggest urban populated regions are Basarabeasca – 39%, UTA Gagauzia – 37%, Ocnita – 34%, Taraclia and Ungheni – 32%.

During the last decade in Moldova is registered a decreasing in the number of population. The decrease took place given a number of reasons, the major being dramatic drop in birth rate and increase of mortality rate, which generated, starting with 1998, into a natural negative decline of population. a major factor is negative international net migration, especially of young people. As well, labour migration has a key role in changing the demographic situation, and is still a major problem for the medium and long term. The general census carried out in 2004 revealed that between two censuses (i.e. 1989 and 2004), 367,000 Moldovan citizens, or 10% of the population, have left the country to seek employment, while unofficial sources state that the number of emigrants was around 600,000 people in the same period - or practically a third of the total number of economically active population. Migration is both a consequence of poverty and a key strategy for coping with it.

According to surveys data, about 60% of migrants go to Russia, a traditional destination for migrant agricultural and construction workers during the Soviet period, and about 30% to one of the EU states, most commonly Italy. Over half are under 30 and 88 per cent are under 45. Demographic and migration movements had a considerable impact on age structure of the population. Thus, in the Republic of Moldova is more evident the increase in demographic ageing, firstly, it is due to the number of young people under age 15 and, concomitantly, to a rise of the number of old people (aged 60 years and over). The average age of the country's population increased from 33.4 years in 2000 up to 35.6 years in 2007, putting Moldova in the group of countries with "adult" population.

The discrepancy in the age structure of population is more obvious when considered by regions, caused by territorial variations in the demographic phenomena and by the migration flow of population. The proportion of elderly is 1.4 times higher in rural areas than in urban settlements. Almost 12% of the rural population is over 65 years, and the elderly women account for 14% of the total number of women living in rural settlements. In urban settlements, the average age of women is 2.9 years higher than the age of men, with the age gap reaching 3.3 years in rural areas.

The reduction in the number of working population and the increase in the average age of employees in the national economy have resulted in complex consequences for the country's social and economic development, with a direct impact on the overall supply of labour force, investments, income distribution, public expenditure for social insurance, etc.

According to 2004 census, 75.8% of Moldova's population are ethnic Moldovans/Romanians. Ukrainians (8.4%) and Russians (5.9%) constitute the largest minorities. Other minority groups include Gagauz (ethnic Turks, 4.4%) and Bulgarians (1.9%).

Moldavian, virtually the same as the Romanian, is the dominant language, officially declared in its Latin script in 1994. Other spoken languages include Russian and Gagauz. Eastern Orthodox is the predominant religion in Moldova.

1.4 Research Rationale, Sample, and Methods

For the purpose of the study it was selected the key venues where shared, public, open and unrestricted access to information is available, both with and without ICT at the present time: public libraries, internet café, telecommunication centres and NGOs. In order to best generate desired information, the project incorporated both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. The fieldwork was carried out in June 2008.

The selection of study areas for the Project aimed to take into consideration a range of important aspects: (i) to present residential area: urban / rural (ii) to present country's administrative and regional representation (iii) to provide socio-economic conditions of the communities, (iv) ethnic composition of population and (v) to demonstrate fairly diverse set of views and attitudes that can be described in relative depth among key stakeholders via qualitative methods. The *study areas* included five areas of Moldova – North (counties Edinet and Balti), Center (counties Rezina and Calarasi), South (counties Taraclia and Cahul) and Municipality Chisinau. In each region were selected urban and rural settlements. Due to political situation Transdnistrian region was not included in the study areas.

Quantitative methods included survey among users and operators of public libraries, cybercafés, telecenters and NGOs. It was applied two separate questionnaires for users and operators, which consisted of closed-ended questions and open-ended questions. The total number of questioned persons for quantitative part included: 1092 users and 37 operators.

Qualitative methods included analytical and participatory tools of data collection and analysis. Data collection methods included (i) focus group discussions (FGDs) and (ii) individual semi-structured individual/expert interviews.

Given the selection criteria, the total number of the interviewed for qualitative part of the study included 44 persons. They comprised a total of 4 focus group discussions (FGDs) in 4 regions that made up total of 34 people (8-9 people per FGD) and 10 individual interviews (IIs) involving representatives of all key stakeholder groups. FGDs included discussions with librarians, representative of public rural and urban libraries. Individual interviews were conducted among key informants of Public Library System, Telecommunication sector and Civil Society.

Additionally, several sources of secondary data were used for the purposes of the study. They included the latest country statistical data provided by the National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Information Development; summaries of initial in-depth interviews conducted with key informants; available country and sector studies, and sociological reports that provided more general historical and socio-cultural context and helped to determine social development issues such as public access to information and communication landscapes, social capital and social diversity, etc.

1.5 Information Needs of Underserved Communities

Analysis of collected data revealed the following information needs:

- (i) Country legislation, policies and regulatory framework. Some of this kind of information is presented in Official Monitor of the Republic of Moldova. Due to its quite high cost (annual subscribe - 1815 MD Lei, equivalent - about 170 US \$) most of public libraries, especially in rural areas cannot afford to subscribe it.
- (ii) Information in agriculture sector: new technologies, markets, consultations, information about prices for products, possibilities for buying seeds etc.
- (iii) Information on health.
- (iv) Information on human rights.
- (v) Offers of job opportunities. Unfortunately there is no content, or even e-content of job offers for population outside the Chisinau.
- (vi) Access to main republican periodical editions. Nowadays due to poor financial situation of a great part of public libraries, especially in rural areas, subscribes mainly the cheapest newspapers and magazines.

New services for underserved communities:

- (i) Access to computers and Internet. Staff of public libraries stated that the number of users in these venues considerably increased once they begun to provide such services. Access to Internet provides new opportunities for users.
- (ii) Access to useful databases (economic agents, markets etc.).
- (iii) Access to e-governance services. In a few years in Moldova was reached some success in this field and access to it of underserved communities would be a great achievement.
- (iv) Photocopying of desired information. Because most books are available in only one copy and these are demanded.

1.6 Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities in Key Public Access Venues

Strengths:

- Existing of national network of public libraries covering more or less the entire territory of the republic.
- Collaboration experience with international financial organizations and donor countries in development of public library system and their availability to continue providing financial and technical assistance for public library system development.
- Collaboration experience between public libraries and civil society (NGOs, mass-media etc.).
- Existence of comprehensive legislation in the electronic communications sector, overseen by the National Regulatory Authority (ANRTI). Approval and implementation of important documents for ICT development in the Republic of Moldova: Strategy on Building Information Society “E-Moldova” (2005); Reports Moldova’s e-Readiness for Building Information Society (2005, 2006); National Development Strategy for 2008-2011.
- Development and expanding in the last decade of telecommunication sector.
- Skilled human resources in non-governmental and telecommunication sectors.

Weaknesses

- Inefficient legal system on Libraries that needs modifications as it does not corresponds to nowadays.
- Technologies, services and information offered in Moldovan public libraries are not appropriate to the local population needs, especially for underserved communities.
- Due to lack of available funds, the offices of public libraries were not repaired for many years; the furniture is old and damaged and needs to be changed; public libraries, especially in rural areas, are functioning without heating during the winter; there are localities where public libraries are not even connected to electricity
- Growing deficit of skilled labour force, in particular due to outbound migration of manpower. The migration of labour force, which mostly scaled up during the second decade of transition, contributed to the outbound flow of skilled manpower. Due to the low salaries and the lack of librarians, many employees of the public library system do not have required professional training, are not acquainted with the new technologies, don’t have necessary skills for fundraising and writing project proposals etc. In the past years, there has been registered an aging of the library staff, especially in rural areas.
- Limited financial capacity of central and local public administration to provide adequate financing for public libraries.
- Poor targeting of social assistance through implementing special programs for underserved communities.
- Social and economic gap between the municipalities of Chisinau and Balti, and other communities. During the transition period, there was a sharp increase in the contrast between urban and rural settlements. The country’s development is still polarized, the most developed in all terms being the municipalities of Chisinau and Balti. Because of certain more vulnerable communities, there is a considerable gap across regions including

revenues, labour force employment, access to health care and education services, physical and social infrastructure.

- The level of political will and public support for public libraries system in Moldova is unsatisfactory and inadequate to its needs.
- Private economic agents providing ICT services are not motivated to extend their services in rural areas, as most of rural population can't afford to pay for their services.

Opportunities

- Collaboration with international financial organizations and donor countries that provide financial and technical assistance for the country's development.
- Modify the Law on libraries according to nowadays demands.
- Enlargement of communications and IT sector in small towns and in rural area
- Extension of service area according to local population needs.
- Develop programs for underserved communities.
- Strengthening the capacities of the Local Public Authorities and of the public service providers in small towns and rural areas.
- Strengthening the collaboration with Local Public Administrations, local economic agents and civil society.

1.7 Salient Findings

Public library system is one of the most important venues relatively covering the entire territory of the republic, inherited from the Soviet period.

Along with the reform tendencies emerged in the Republic of Moldova, system of public libraries has undergone essential changes. During the period of transition, the public library system has considerably deteriorated, which caused a series of obstacles in the achievement of public access to information. The legal and regulatory framework on public libraries has been changed. According to the Law on Libraries (1994) and the Law on Local Public Administration (1998) public libraries have passed under the jurisdiction of local administrative authorities (mayoralities). At present local authorities are the main financial sources of the public libraries.

Rural localities with poor local budget can't afford to manage a public library and as a consequence these venues are closed or the allocations are really insignificant for their developing. Thus, the poorest localities don't have any access to information. The process of closing and liquidation of public libraries has significantly reduced the access to information of the poorest categories of population.

Technologies, services and information offered in Moldovan public libraries are not appropriate to the local population needs, especially for underserved communities. Accordingly, there is a huge gap between customer expectation levels with services. A big quantity of book funds can not be used any longer because of ideological or linguistic considerations.

All the efforts to modernize services, to update collections, and to introduce new technologies were hindered by insufficient funding. It should be mentioned that there is an uneven development of libraries in Moldova, where the capital city, Chisinau, retains most of the

funding, technical equipment, and expertise to the detriment of the rest of the country; thus the discrepancies between the urban and the rural areas is growing ever deeper.

However, during the transition some progress in development of public libraries has been registered. This refers to public libraries that have benefited from projects, grants, programs provided by different international organisations, foundations etc. (mainly by SOROS Foundation, USAID, UNICEF etc.) and in localities with important local budget revenues (many prosperous economic agents etc.).

Only in the few years along with economic recovery the national allocations for public libraries have increased. Nonetheless it is far not sufficient for the public library system development. However significant steps have been done by the Government to ameliorate the situation of cultural sector, by including it in the priorities of National Strategy on the Information Society E-Moldova (2005) a chapter on "e-culture", dealing with new forms of promoting culture through electronic media in different sectors of national culture, including libraries. Public Libraries could be transformed in Public Access Internet Points. If this be implemented in practice, it would be a great achievement for our country and particularly for underserved communities. It seems that Government of the Republic of Moldova did acknowledge the importance of digital TIC for improving socio-economic situation in the country and poverty reduction.

Non-governmental sector as well is an important provider of services aimed to improve the situation of disadvantaged communities. The associative sector in Moldova has considerable developed in the last decade, yet in an uneven way. There is a difference between the development of the associative sector in Chisinau, where NGOs have a larger access to information, work with more donors and are more experienced, and the development of the associative sector in the rural communities or in the small towns that are situated far from the capital of the country, where the associative sector is developing more slowly. Most of the non-government organizations involved in activities with significant social impact were created and are being supported mostly by foreign donors.

In Moldova there are NGOs of great importance for local population and especially for disadvantaged communities that provide valuable services, such as: information and training in information technologies, equality of genders, health, human rights, youth, volunteering, agriculture, prevention of human trafficking, institutional development of NGOs, social inclusion of disabled people etc.

However, the main problem for NGOs is financial sustainability. So far, neither the government nor the private sector provides real financial assistance to the NGOs. The majority of these organizations that finished their activity have done so mainly because of lack of funding. There are no government procurement opportunities for non-profit providers of services.

Over the last decade one of the most dynamic and viable sectors of Moldova's economy was telecommunications and informatics. Investments and application of advanced technologies produced a real revolution in the field. Fixed telephony, mobile telephony and data transfer services (Internet) have rapidly developed in less than ten years.

However, national and international evaluations show that Republic of Moldova is a country where digital divide is highly pronounced. According to E-readiness Report (Ministry of Informational Development - 2005, 2006) digital divide in Moldova persists between rural and urban localities, between different regions of the country, between different social groups, between public administration at different levels, between rural and urban educational institutions, between the general secondary schools, professional secondary schools, specialized high schools and universities.

In Moldova Internet cafes and telecenters are mainly concentrated in urban areas, especially the capital city, where infrastructure allows easier connection and broadband connection. Also, technologies available in Internet cafes and telecenters vary greatly from urban to rural areas: in towns users may benefit of a large spectrum of services, besides the possibility to simply use a computer they offer such services as Internet navigation using broadband connections of various types, scanning, printing, use of live video chats, burning CDs, DVDs, computer games, some of them also provide photocopying services. In rural areas usually there are no broadband connections and the cafes offer Internet through Dial-Up, computer games, some of them also offer printing and scanning services.

Since the implementation of National Strategy on Building Information Society – “E-Moldova” the local e-content has been developed. In the Strategy are stipulated seven most important domains: E-Governance, E-Education, E-Economy, E-Science, E-Culture, E-Health and Information Society Infrastructure. Despite of some positive results, yet it is in the incipient stage. As well due to low Internet penetration rate in Moldova, especially in rural areas, these attempts are not targeting the underserved communities.

1.8 Key Recommendations

1. Modify the existing legislative framework of the library system by adapting it to nowadays demands;
2. Conduct trainings with staff of public access venues on fundraising, project proposals elaborating and other important issues related to development of public information system;
3. Provide public libraries with TIC facilities and adjust them to Internet Public Access Points;
4. Provide legislative and regulatory framework for motivating local economic agents to sponsor and sustain the public access venues.
5. Diversify the sources of financing for public information system by creating a Common Fund, which would create opportunities for the development of these venues;
6. Conduct an information campaign among local public administration about the importance of public access venues for undeserved communities;
7. Provide legislative and regulatory framework for motivating local economic agents to extend TIC services in rural areas and provide special programs for undeserved communities;
8. Create a commission at the central level that will monitor the fund allocations for public libraries;
9. Design specific training programs in the use of ICT in order to meet the educational needs of public access venues staff. Training of information professionals should focus not only on new methods and techniques for the development and provision of information and communication services, but also on relevant management skills to ensure the best use of technologies.
10. Ensure nation-wide coordination of ICT implementation process in cultural institutions

2 Methodology

2.1 Venue Selection

2 paragraphs

Brief description of the selection process: how you selected the types of venues to be studied, why they were included, why others were left out.

Note: this data collection template is designed to capture info about 4 venue types. If you study in detail more than 4 venue types in the country, include a full description of the 5th one as an appendix, using the same set of questions.

In order to best generate desired information for the study, were selected the key venues where shared, public, open and unrestricted access to information is available, both with and without ICT at the present time: public libraries, internet café, telecommunication centers and NGOs. These venues are easy to identify, have a basic level of infrastructure and capacity, some of these types of venues are organised in a network or association spread all over the territory of the republic and are coordinated by a Superior Body.

Other Public Access Venues: Employment Offices, some specialized libraries, Public Access Internet Points (PAIP) opened with financial aid of different international organizations (SOROS Foundation, USAID etc.). These types of venues were not included in the study from different reasons: 1) are mostly visited by a specific category of users (i.e. unemployed, students etc.); 2) their activity may stop along with the end of their financing.

2.1.1 Venues studied

Enter the details to complete the table based on the venues studied in this country (more details will be filled in other sections):

	Public Libraries	Internet café	Telecommunication centers	NGOs
Total number in country	1391	500	39	3720
A. # in urban location	168	350	39	
% offering ICT	*	100	100	
Total # of people served (annual)	3691 thou	*	*	*
B. # in non-urban location	1223	150	0	
% offering ICT	*	100	0	
Total # of people served (annual)	4991 thou	*	0	*

Comments (comment especially on definition of urban/non urban in the country):

Cities and urban-type localities in the Republic of Moldova are officially designated as such, usually according to the criteria of number of inhabitants and predominance of agricultural, or number of non-agricultural workers and their families. The population in Republic of Moldova is mostly rural and appears to be ruralising. According to official data, as of January 1, 2007, the rural population constituted 58,7% and urban population 41,3%, inhabiting in 54 cities and 1476 villages.

Other comments: there is available only data about % of public libraries offering ICT - 9.3%, most of them are located in cities, especially in Chisinau.

There are quite difficult to provide some concrete data about NGOs in Moldova. The data are available only from studies conducted by different research centres.

2.1.1 Other experiences of public access to information that are not quite “venues”

Basic information about other experiences with potential to make a difference to the public access landscape (tea rooms, Wi-Fi hotspots, coffee houses, web information portals) although they are not quite a “public information venue” in the sense defined for this study (see research design document for definition).

Other public access experience #1: Name of Experience

Description :

Total number in country:

% offering ICT access:

% in urban location:

Comments on how it is influencing public access venues in the country:

Other public access experience #2: Name of Experience

Description :

Total number in country:

% offering ICT access:

% in urban location:

Comments on how it is influencing public access venues in the country:

2.1.2 Other existing public access venues, not included in this study

Basic information about other public access venues **not** included in the study (e-tuktuk, school or other private libraries not open to the public, health centers, etc), although they could play a role in public access information in the country. Indicate rationale for NOT including them in the study.

Other venue not studied #1: Specialized libraries

Total number in country: 102

% offering ICT access: there is no such data

% in urban location: 100

Description of the Venue:

Scientific, study, technical and other specialized libraries exist by the Ministries, Departments, other governmental and non-governmental entities, enterprises, associations and other institutions.

Reason why it was not included in the study:

Specialized libraries are not much known by population. In spite that these libraries are open for public, usually those are used by specific categories of users (public officers, academic staff, students etc.). These libraries offer access to particular kind of information according to their specialization (technical, agriculture, medical etc.). All are functioning in urban areas.

Other venue not studied#2: Library of educational institutions (schools, colleges university)

Total number in country: 1471

% offering ICT access:

% in urban location:

Description of the Venue:

Libraries of education institutions (schools, universities etc.) are coordinated by the Ministry

of Education and Youth.

Reason why it was not included in the study:

As a rule, libraries of education institutions offer services for pupils, students, staff that are studying, working in these institutions. Only a few university libraries, offer their services for public, but their services usually are not free of charge.

2.2 Inequity Variables

1-2 paragraphs each.

Describe how each variable affects equitable public access to information and ICT in this country, and what you did in this study to make sure each one was addressed (for example, if you visited venues in both urban and non-urban locations).

Also include additional variables of local relevance to your country, as you listed in Form 1, section 1a.

2.2.1 Socio-economic status

People's socio-economic status is one of the main variables that affect equitable public access to information and ICT in the Republic of Moldova. People with poor financial situation have limited access to information and communication services. They can't afford to buy computers, pay for Internet services and other ICT facilities due to their quite high costs.

In order to provide desired information on this subject, in study areas were included communities from rural area and especially from Southern region, where according to official data the most of the poor live. As well this subject was raised during the focus-groups discussions and in-depth interviews.

2.2.2 Educational level

Apparently education level is not a variable that affects equitable public access to information and ICT services in our country, as all public access venues offer their services without restrictions. Nevertheless, according to data, people with low education level are among those who are hit mainly by poverty and the most part live in rural areas. Also, usually those with higher education level have access to Internet at their work place, while those with lower education level have fewer chances to have access to computers and Internet at their workplaces.

Accordingly by including in rural communities study areas this variable is reflected. As well this subject was raised during the focus-groups discussions and in-depth interviews.

2.2.3 Age

The elderly are in a disadvantaged situation. Most of public libraries direct their fund book renewal towards youth (education, etc.). There are not much taken into consideration information needs of elderly. As well due to low pension, most of elderly live in poverty. This subject was raised during the focus-groups discussions and in-depth interviews.

2.2.4 Gender

This variable is not relevant for the Republic of Moldova.

2.2.5 Location

This is a good place to offer further details on the urban/peri-urban/non-urban definitions and relevance in your country, among other location variables.

In the Republic of Moldova the discrepancy between urban and rural areas is highly evident for almost all indicators. During the transition the most affected by poverty was rural population. Rural population has limited access to information and ICT facilities. Due to financial problems, in rural localities there was closed a significant number of public libraries. Most of public places that offer Internet services are concentrated in cities, especially in Chisinau. The same situation is regarding the information and documentation centers, most of them are located in cities. The penetration rate of the fixed and mobile telephony is much lower in rural area than in urban area.

In order to provide desired information on this subject, in study areas were included both urban and rural communities. Also this subject was raised during the focus-groups discussions and in-depth interviews.

2.2.6 Other inequity variables

Other Inequity Variable 1: Disabled persons

In the Republic of Moldova there is no special policy regarding the access to information of disabled persons. Nowadays only a few public libraries offer special services for this vulnerable social group. This subject was raised during the focus-groups discussions and in-depth interviews.

Other Inequity Variable 2: Inequity Variable (if needed)

Other Inequity Variable 3: Inequity Variable (if needed)

2.3 Data Gathering Techniques

Describe the different data gathering techniques you used to conduct this study. Provide specific examples and sample selection criteria.

2.3.1 Literature review

Describe the type and approximate number of documents reviewed. Include detailed references of the most useful ones. Include valid links for all online sources.

57 documents reviewed.

Several sources of secondary data were used for the purposes of the Project. They included the latest country statistical data provided by the National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Information Development and others; summaries of in-depth interviews conducted with key informants at the first stage of the project; available country and sector studies, and sociological reports that provided more general historical and socio-cultural context and helped to determine social development issues such as public access to information and communication landscapes, discrepancies urban / rural; social capital and social diversity, etc.

2.3.1.1 Most useful bibliography:

For the purposes of the Project the following studies were of particular importance:

National Strategy on Building Information Society “E-Moldova” (2005); Reports Moldova’s e-Readiness for Building Information Society (2005, 2006); National Development Strategy for 2008-2011; Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper; Reports of National Library Council; Annual Reports of J.S.C “Moldtelecom” - National Telecommunication Operator in the Republic of Moldova, Annual Reports on activity of National Regulatory Agency for Telecommunications and Informatics and Development of Telecommunications and Informatics Market.

2.3.2 Individual interviews

Describe the type and approximate number of individuals you interviewed. Include detailed contact information for the most useful ones (indicate for which topic, if appropriate). Discuss how representative is this sample of people you interviewed in relation to different opinions and perspectives in the country.

12 individuals interviewed.

For the purpose of the study were conducted in-depth interviews with key informants employed National Public Library System, Telecommunication and Informatics sector, Civil Society (mass-media, NGOs etc.). The interviewed persons represent the most initiated category in the matter of the investigated object.

The interviewing guide applied in the field aimed to direct the interviews on the most important subjects related to this project. The interviews with key informants were the opportunity for in-depth discussion of the condition of the sectors they represent, its potential for actively supporting change and concrete measures that might be taken by the public access venues involved in the process to support that potential and empower it.

The most useful discussions on public library system: (i) Larisa Gologan, main specialist, National Council of Libraries (contacts: tel. + 373 22 24-00-70, larisagologan@yahoo.com); (ii) Agafita Galina, director of public library, county Calarasi (+373 244 22 260)

The most useful discussions on Telecommunications and Informatics sector: (i) Sergiu Sitnic, chief of the department, Ministry of Information Development of Republic of Moldova (contacts: +373 22 50-46-64); Pislari Petru, Moldtelecom, county Taraclia (+373 294 237 30).

2.3.3 Group interviews and focus groups

Describe the type and number of group interviews or focus groups you conducted. If available, include detailed contact information for the most useful informants (indicate for which topic, if appropriate).

4 group interviews or focus groups.

Focus groups discussions were conducted with public libraries staff. For sampling design it was taken into consideration the following criteria: (i) residential area: urban / rural (ii) country’s administrative and regional representation (iii) provide

socio-economic conditions of the communities, (iv) ethnic composition of population.

Given the selection criteria, focus groups discussions were conducted in North (county Edinet), Center (county Calarasi), South (county Taraclia) and Municipality Chisinau. Each FGD, consisted of 2 representatives of urban public libraries and 6 of rural public libraries. Exception is municipality Chisinau, where all participants were from urban public libraries.

The interviewing guide applied in the field aimed to direct the interviews on the most important subjects related to country public library system.

All conducted FGDs were very important as provided useful information regarding the situation of public libraries, problems, opportunities, information needs, etc. both in urban and rural areas.

2.3.4 Site visits

Describe the number and location of site visits you conducted. If available, include detailed contact information for the most useful informants (indicate for which topic, if appropriate).

15 site visits.

Site visits were undertaken along with fieldwork. These include site visits to public libraries, representatives of which participated in focus-groups discussions, in-depth interviews and user survey.

2.3.5 Surveys

Describe the location and number of respondents to surveys you conducted for this study. Indicate their relative distribution across venues (for example, 30% in telecentres, 20% in cybercafés, 50% in public libraries), and how they were selected.

Describe the venues, their locations and the sample size for each:

	Public Libraries	Cybercafe	Telecenters	NGOs
# of urban venues surveyed	6	4	6	3
# of non-urban venues surveyed	12	3	0	3
# of respondents in urban venues	200	156	242	126
# of respondents in non-urban venues	131	117	0	120

Survey description and comments:

Survey was conducted among users and operators of key country public information venues: public libraries, cybercafés, telecenters and NGOs. There were applied the same selection criteria as for qualitative methods: (i) residential area: urban / rural (ii) country's administrative and regional representation (iii) socio-economic conditions of the communities, (iv) ethnic composition of population. Based on these criteria and in order to gather enough number of users for each of venues there

were selected necessary number of each type of venues (table above).

Taking into consideration that telecenters are placed only in urban areas, all surveyed venues of this type were selected in that area. There were some problems in selecting cybercafés in rural areas. There is not a strict evidence of them, the main majority has not precise hours of operations, or even are closed for some months due to different reasons.

The concrete respondent for interviewing was selected by random method at the gateway of each venue (each 2nd or 3rd depending on the users flow). The fieldwork was carried out in June 2008.

For collecting the information were used separate questionnaires for users and operators. In order to collect more useful information, in the received questionnaire were added two open-ended questions (information needs, suggestions for improving the activity of surveyed venues). The data was entered and processed in SPSS.

2.3.6 Other data gathering techniques

Other Data Gathering Technique 1: Data Gathering Technique

Other Data Gathering Technique 2: Data Gathering Technique

Other Data Gathering Technique 3: Data Gathering Technique

2.3.7 Most useful contacts

List here some of the most knowledgeable and useful contacts that can provide additional information and insight, in case someone else wants to gather additional information about this topic in the country.

To the list of useful contacts provided above in methodology chapter, can be added the following contact: in the topic of info needs on undeserved communities: Vasile Spinei (tel.+373 22 28-13-94; www.acces-info.org.md); Mihai Godea (tel. +373 22 23 3946; www.contact.md).

The most useful discussions on public library system: (i) Larisa Gologan, main specialist, National Council of Libraries (contacts: tel. + 373 22 24-00-70, larisagologan@yahoo.com); (ii) Agafita Galina, director of public library, county Calarasi (+373 244 22 260).

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2.4 Research Trustworthiness and Credibility

2-3 paragraphs

Describe any steps you took to minimize your own bias in conducting this study, and to increase the credibility and trustworthiness of the results you are presenting.

The sample for this complex study was design based on information collected at the first stage of the project. Also were taken into consideration suggestions of key experts on venues selection criteria and research topics.

The information on key issues, that were the main focus of the study, was obtained through multiple data collection techniques. For example, the main obstacles the venues are experiencing in providing access to information were identified through user survey, operator survey, FGDs, and in-depth interviews. The data gathered through all these techniques, were compared to each other. Besides, different sections of our draft report were presented to different field experts, and their feedback was considered. If the experts disagreed with any of the findings of the report, we explained methodology, through which the finding was obtained and asked the expert for possible reasons why the data could be not accurate from his/her point of view. And after this, we continued to get more information to validate or correct the results.

2.4.1 Research limitations

Describe important limitations you encountered in conducting this research, and limitations in drawing generalizations or broader conclusions based on the findings you report.

There were no important limitations in conducting this research. Only that during the summer time, the number of public libraries users per day is lower than in other period of the year (due to vacation period for academic staff, students, pupils etc.). In order to gather necessary number of respondents according to timetable, we selected more public libraries for investigation.

2.4.2 Team qualifications

1 paragraph

Description of the research team and its qualifications to undertake this study.

Group of companies IPM was established in 1995. Initially, several individuals worked in the company and they were focused on field activities. Within the years in the process of cooperation with international research institutions and largest corporations small field agency in Georgia turned into the huge marketing consultation company.

Nowadays the group of IPM organizations owns not only the full service research company, but it develops marketing and communication strategies, successfully implements PR projects, conducts business trainings, carries out full range of media research, monitors out-door advertising, TV broadcasting and printed media. IPM applies research technologies of international research institutions in the spheres of media, consumer, trade outlet studies and consultations.

IPM activities are focused on marketing and social studies. In 1998 the organization began to utilize research technique of international standards and in this regard it launched its first standardized product- panel research of TV and radio audience. This product was followed by media monitoring, trade outlet research, out-door advertising monitoring and study, printed media research, Media Marketing Index (MMI), price research and other standardized products. Nowadays IPM applies standards of international research industry that may be proved by research audit conclusions. In 2005 IPM established ISO 9001 quality management standard.

The Independent Sociological and Information Service “OPINIA” (ISIS “OPINIA”) was established in 1992 on the basis of the former Moldavian Division (branch) of the Unions Center for Studying of the Public Opinion (WCIOM). “OPINIA” has expertise in the use of qualitative and quantitative methods of research, conducting representative surveys of the population and target groups in Moldova, experts’ surveys, in-depth interviewing, focus group discussions, statistical and sociological analysis. OPINIA has substantial expertise compiling demographic, social and economic profiles of different segments of the population in Moldova using existent data sources and has compiled a rich database of social indicators, in Republic of Moldova since its independence, which is permanently up-dated with new information.

3 Country Assessment

3.1 Overall Country Assessment

Provide a broad picture of the public access information landscape in the country, informed by the results of this research. In 2-3 paragraphs, what is your overall assessment of public access information venues in this country?

The key public access venues in the Republic of Moldova are public libraries, cybercafés, telecenters and NGOs. Besides that there are other venues as specialised libraries, Public Internet Community Points, some libraries of education institutions etc. All these public access venues bring their contributions, some of them more others less, to public information. Each of these types of venues has its history of development; infrastructure; is facing special difficulties in participating in the public information process because of economic and specific obstacles associated to each one of them etc.

Nevertheless, the public library system is one of the most important venues as it is a network that covers relatively the entire territory of the republic. In some rural localities there are not other venues offering access to information than public libraries. Yet, the public library system was most affected by social and economic crisis that Moldova is facing in the last decade. Public investments in the public library system remain very small, certainly too small to be able to accommodate serious development and innovation. In the worst situation are rural public libraries. Noteworthy are the contributions in the development of the public library system from international organisations, donors etc. (book fund renewal, equipment with ICT etc.). As regards to Government contributions to Public Libraries it should be said that only in the last years it began to develop some strategies, plans of actions etc. However, in many cases structural initiatives initiated at the central level are not supported by local administrations, under whose jurisdiction public libraries are at present.

The non-governmental sector in the Republic of Moldova has considerable developed in the last decade. Most of the nongovernmental organizations involved in activities with significant social impact were created and are being supported mostly by foreign donors. The biggest problem for NGOs is financial sustainability. So far, neither the government nor the private sector provides real financial assistance to the NGOs. The majority of these organizations that finished their activity have done so mainly because of lack of funding. There are no government procurement opportunities for non-profit providers of services.

As regards to cybercafés and telecenters, these are mostly concentrated in urban localities. The explanation is that Internet is most often far too expensive to be accessible for the most part of rural population. As these venues are private, their main objective is a profit from their services.

3.2 Real Access Framework

Summarize the key findings and your assessment of each dimension in the Real Access framework used in this study. You will provide more details later.

3.2.1 Access

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of ACCESS ecosystem in the country (physical access, appropriate technology, affordability)?

The overall ACCESS ecosystem in the Republic of Moldova is characterised by a discrepancy between urban and rural areas. Due to lack of available public funds in rural area, a quite considerable number of rural public libraries were closed, while the number of urban public libraries remained stable. It is noteworthy that in the last few years along with some country economic recovery, there is a tendency for re-opening of rural public libraries. With no adequate financial support, book collections and services were not developed according to nowadays demand. The funds allocated by local budget are not enough for book fund renewal. As well, because of infinitesimal funds, public libraries usually subscribe the cheapest newspapers and magazines, as a rule local. Mostly, the ICT services are offered in urban public libraries. On the other hand, the situation in urban areas has developed in an uneven way. There is a difference between Chisinau, the capital, and other cities of the republic. If in Chisinau, almost all public libraries offer ICT services than in other towns only a part of them.

Poor library collections inhibit the quality of the work and lead to dissatisfaction amongst users, staff and quality assessors as well. In an advantageous and advanced situation are the staff and users of public libraries that have benefited from grants, programs, projects provided by international organisations (mainly financed by SOROS Foundation).

The same situation is regarding the access to ICT facilities. All telecenters and most of cybercafés are located in urban areas. Private economic agents are not motivated to extend their services in rural areas, as most of rural population can't afford to pay for their services. Another issue is that most of the rural population does not have the knowledge to use the computers and other information and communication technologies.

Similarly, the associative sector is developing in an uneven way. There is a difference between the development of the associative sector in Chisinau, where NGOs have a larger access to information, work with more donors and are more experienced, and the development of the associative sector in the rural communities or in the small towns that are situated far from the capital of the country, where the associative sector is developing more slowly.

3.2.2 Capacity

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of CAPACITY ecosystem in the country (human capacity, locally relevant content, integration into daily routines, socio-cultural factors, trust in technology, social appropriation of technology)?

The CAPACITY ecosystem in Moldova can be better described for each type of venues, as the situation considerably differs from one type to another. The capacity of the public library system is deteriorating since the transition to market economy. Due to the low salaries and the lack of librarians, many employees of the public library system do not have required professional training, are not acquainted with the new technologies, don't have necessary skills for fundraising and writing project proposals etc. In the past years, there has been registered an aging of the library staff, especially in rural areas. The number of young specialists employed by public libraries is insignificant. The main part of available content in public libraries, especially in rural areas, is not relevant for local stakeholders. The worst situation is regarding the equipment with ICT facilities.

As NGOs sector in Moldova is mostly financed by international donors, they can afford to employ well-

trained staff, to buy necessary equipment etc. These services provided by most of NGOs are of great importance for local population and especially for disadvantaged communities, such as: information and training in information technologies, equality of genders, prevention of HIV/AIDS, writing of projects, human rights, youth, volunteering, agriculture, prevention of human trafficking, institutional development of NGOs, social inclusion of disabled people etc.

As most of cybercafés are telecenters are private economic agents, they manage themselves according to the demand and supply, the number of employed, appropriate technologies and services etc.

3.2.3 Environment

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of the ENVIRONMENT ecosystem in the country (local economy, national economy, legal and regulatory framework, political will and public support, regional and international context)?

Development of Public library system in Moldova depends on Government financial sources (local and national budgets). Social and economic crisis during the transition has caused drastic reduction of budget for public libraries. The level of political will and public support for public libraries system in Moldova is unsatisfactory and inadequate to its needs. The justification of public officials is poor socio-economic situation in the country, and as a consequence no available funds for culture sector, including public libraries. It seems that authorities don't perceive the importance and role of public libraries in improvement of socio-economic situation, their contributions in offering concrete solutions for most disadvantaged communities etc. The legal and regulatory framework of public library system is based on Law on Libraries (1994) and the Law on Local Public Administration (1998). Law on Libraries need modifications as it does not corresponds to nowadays.

The state generally protects the rights of the independent civil sector. Registration is relatively easy, and there is no excessive bureaucratic pressure on NGOs. The main problem for NGOs is a lack of resources for institutional development. The low number of active NGOs is due primarily to the lack of a tradition of civic activism in Moldova, as well as the comparatively negligible support that NGOs receive from private donors in Moldova. Few businesspeople support civil society, and even the low level of domestic support goes mainly into charity rather than activities with greater political salience. Foreign donors remain by far the biggest financial supporters of civil society in Moldova. Any improvement of the present legislative framework, as well as the implementation of the normative documentation, would provide first of all the possibility to use the enormous potential of the citizens' associations, along with the possibility to solve a number of social problems which the state bodies are currently unable to deal with.

3.3 Information Needs of Underserved Communities

Describe the specific information needs experienced by underserved populations, based on the results of your research. Who could benefit from better public access to information? This could relate to e-government services, health or agriculture information, job training, employment search, among many others. Include reference to the key inequity variables in your country.

- (i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.
- (ii) Indicate the sources of data for this assessment

According to gathered qualitative data, in Moldovan public libraries there is a huge gap between information needs of local population, especially of underserved population, and information provided. This is a general situation in the country, as there are valuable experiences of some public libraries that succeeded with financial aid of different international organizations to adapt their services to nowadays demand.

Most of public libraries staff participated in discussions remarked that in the actual situation of the public libraries all information would be welcomed and useful for their users. However, the main topics are:

- (vii) Literature for school program, as the great part of public libraries users are pupils, especially in rural area. Children from poor families can not afford to buy books that's why they are coming in public libraries where the access to information is free.
- (viii) Information in agriculture sector: new technologies, markets, consultations, information about prices for products, possibilities for buying seeds etc.
- (ix) Information on medicine, psychology.
- (x) Country legislation, policies and regulatory framework. All needed information is presented in the Official Monitor of the Republic of Moldova. Due to its quite high cost (annual subscribe - 1815 MD Lei, equivalent - about 170 US \$) most of public libraries, especially in rural area can't afford to subscribe it.
- (xi) Information on human rights.
- (xii) Offers of job opportunities. Unfortunately there is no content, or even e-content of job offers for population outside the Chisinau.
- (xiii) Access to main republican periodical editions. Nowadays due to poor financial situation of a great part of public libraries, especially in rural areas, they subscribe mainly the cheapest newspapers and magazines.

As well they mentioned a range of services that should be offered:

- (v) Access to computers and desirable access to Internet. Staff of public libraries stated that the number of users in these venues considerably increased once they begun to provide such services. Access to Internet provides new opportunities for users.
- (vi) Access to useful databases (economic agents, markets etc.).
- (vii) Access to e-governance services. In a few years in Moldova there was reached some success in this field and access to it of underserved communities would be a great achievement.
- (viii) Photocopying of desired information. Because most books are available in only one copy and these are demanded.

Source: Focus groups discussions and in-depth interviews with key informants, additional secondary data analysis.

3.3.1 Information sources

4.2b) What are the current sources for this kind of information in the country? Are these sources adequate (current, appropriate to the population, etc.) In sum, does the locally-relevant content exist?

- (i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.
- (ii) Indicate the sources of data for this assessment

The main information sources for this kind of information are: public libraries, NGOs, Internet Access Centers, both public and private, some specialized libraries. The main issue is that not all these venues provide useful and appropriate information and technologies. As it was mentioned above there are public libraries that adjusted very well their services to information needs experienced by underserved populations. There are such libraries, both in urban and rural areas, but their number is not at all significant for local needs.

Also there are NGOs of great importance for local population and especially for disadvantaged communities, such as: information and training in information technologies, equality of genders, prevention of HIV/AIDS, writing of projects, human rights, youth, volunteering, agriculture, prevention of human trafficking, institutional development of NGOs, social inclusion of disabled people etc.

However, these venues do not meet the necessities of underserved communities, especially in rural areas. There are no state programs on these subjects, but mostly programs of international organizations and donors.

As regards to e-content, since the implementation of National Strategy on Building Information Society – “E-Moldova” it has been developed. In the Strategy are stipulated seven most important domains: E-Governance, E-Education, E-Economy, E-Science, E-Culture, E-Health and Information Society Infrastructure. Despite of some positive results, yet it is in the incipient stage. As well due to low Internet penetration rate in Moldova, especially in rural areas, these attempts are not targeting the underserved communities.

Source: Focus groups discussions and in-depth interviews with key informants, additional secondary data analysis.

3.3.2 Key barriers to accessing the information that underserved communities need

Are the people who could benefit from this information getting access to it? Why or why not (e.g. content exists but not in the right language, print media exists but has not been distributed appropriately, digital media is available but people do not have access points, etc.)?

- (i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

As the number of public access venues that adjusted their services for underserved communities is quite insignificant for the country, not all people looking for such services could get access to it. In an advantaged position is the population living in localities, where such services are provided.

Also due to low Internet penetration rate in Moldova, insignificant number of public access to computers and Internet, especially in rural areas, access to e-content, digital media etc. diminishes the role of these sources for underserved communities to get access to it. Another issue is that usually underserved groups of population have not essential knowledge in using computer, and

other ICT facilities.

Source: Focus groups discussions and in-depth interviews with key informants, additional secondary data analysis.

3.3.3 Ways users experience different types of public access venues

Based on responses to the open question in user surveys, how do users experience different types of public access venues? Are there any trends or preferences for kinds of information, services or activities in one type of venue over another?

According to data collected through survey among users, the majority of respondents who are using library as a source of information, tend to use other public information venues for their information, such as other libraries, cybercafés, information centers etc.. At the same time the users among cybercafés and telecenters are likely to use only Internet as the main one. Nevertheless about 30% of them declared that they visit public libraries.

3.3.4 Inequity environment in the country

2-3 paragraphs

What does inequity look like in the country? Using the inequity variables described in section 2.2, provide a short overview of the main underserved groups, regions and/or other locally-appropriate segments of the population.

- (i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The main underserved groups in Moldova are:

(i) poor population, mostly living in rural areas and small towns with undeveloped infrastructure. From regional aspect, the most of the poor live in the Southern region. People with poor financial situation have limited access to information and communication services. They can't afford to buy computers, pay for Internet services and other ICT facilities due to their quite high costs.

(ii) people with lower educational level, as they are among those who are hit mainly by poverty and the most part live in rural areas. As well, usually those with higher education level have access to Internet at their work place, while those with lower education level have less chances to have access to computers and Internet at their workplaces.

(iii) elderly; the elderly are in a disadvantaged situation. Most of public libraries direct their fund book renewal towards youth (education, etc.). The information needs of the elderly are not much taken into consideration. As well due to low pension, most of them live in poverty.

(iv) rural population; In the Republic of Moldova the discrepancy between urban and rural areas is highly evident for almost all indicators. During the transition the most affected by poverty was rural population. Rural population has limited access to information and ICT facilities. Due to financial problems, in rural localities a significant number of public libraries was closed. Most of public places that offer Internet services are concentrated in cities, especially in Chisinau. The same situation is regarding the information and documentation centers, most of them are located in cities. The penetration rate of the fixed and mobile telephony is much lower in rural area than in urban area.

(v) Disabled persons; In the Republic of Moldova there is no special policy regarding the access to information of disabled persons. Nowadays only a few public libraries offer special services for this vulnerable social group.

3.3.5 Freedom of press and expression and the right to information

What is the overall perception of freedom of press, censorship and right to information in this country?

The mass media legislation in the Republic of Moldova is sufficiently liberal, in accordance with the spirit and norms established by the international conventions (such as the European Convention for human rights, etc.), and ratified by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova. The Moldovan Constitution stipulates, on one hand the freedom of expression and the right to information and on the other hand prohibits the censorship of mass media. It can be said that until now there existed a positive evolution of legislative nature - the adoption of the Constitution was followed by the elaboration of a series of laws to establish the specific legal framework for the functioning of diverse types of mass media – the Law of Press, the Law of Audiovisual, the Law of access to information – and at the same time, the amendment of some articles, which, in a certain way obstructed the freedom of expression.

Despite that Republic of Moldova has a good legislation it doesn't mean a good respect of it, there is still a long way to go until the access to information of public interest will be a matter of procedure and not a matter of mentality.

According to many experts this evolution was determined not certainly by the “goodwill” of those in power or by the availability of the political elite, but more exactly by the pressure on behalf of international organizations, in particular the Council of Europe, which formulated certain conditions for the Republic of Moldova, and also by the initiatives of different nongovernmental organizations that set their goal to fighting for the freedom of the press in the Republic of Moldova.

3.4 Charts: Information Needs, Users, and Uses

Based on the results of your research (especially user surveys and interviews with librarians and operators), complete the required data to chart the information needs of underserved communities using the following examples. Provide any explanatory comments as needed.

3.4.1.1 Users, by type of venue

Users profile (estimated proportion of users in each category, %)		Public Libraries				Cybercafes				Telecenters				NGOs			
		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
		General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	ICT use	General use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Gender	Male	29.0	32.8	68.6	31.4	65.4			30.5	25.7							
	Female	71.0	67.2	62.4	37.6	34.6			69.5	74.3							
Age	14 and under	7.5	13.0	43.6	35.0	41.9			3.5	1.2							
	15-35	58.5	45.8	50.0	57.3	51.7			62.3	54.5							
	36-60	26.0	35.9	5.1	7.7	6.4			24.8	34.8							
	61 and over	8.0	5.3	1.3	1.3	0.0			9.4	9.5							
Education level	No formal education	16.5	16.8	47.4	36.2	44.0			14.4	5.8							
	Only elementary	22.0	33.6	26.9	29.3	31.6			19.6	21.5							
	Up to high school	34.0	32.8	16.7	24.1	16.7			27.8	47.4							
	College or university	27.5	16.8	9.0	10.3	7.7			38.2	25.4							
Income bracket (approx)	High	3.0	2.3	6.4	4.3	5.1			9.7	5.2							
	Medium	56.0	55.0	60.3	65.8	68.4			65.2	50.4							
	Low	27.0	36.6	15.4	10.3	5.1			25.1	44.4							
Social status (approx)	High	7.5	4.6	9.6	8.5	9.8			10.1	4.2							
	Medium	68.0	74.8	59.6	62.4	62.8			76.8	80.4							

	Low	6.5	13.0	10.9	6.0	5.6		13.1	15.4
Caste (if appropriate)	Dominant								
	other								
	other								
	other								
Ethnicity (if appropriate)	Moldavian	75.0	74.0	74.2	75.2	72.5		70.2	77.4
	Ukrainian	4.0	2.3	1.3	5.1	2.6		5.1	4.7
	Russian	11.0	3.8	14.4	11.5	14.9		17.2	2.2
	Others (Gagauz, Bulgarian etc.)	10.0	19.9	10.1	8.2	10.0		7.5	15.7

Source: Users and operators surveys

Comments, including comments on other inequity variables.

3.4.1.2 Information People Seek, by type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Cybercafes				Telecenters				NGOs			
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	ICT use	General use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Education	58.0		57.3		25.6		34.2		35.9				60.2		25.2	
Health	29.0		44.3		7.7		12.8		10.7				32.3		24.5	
Agriculture	9.0		31.3		1.3		14.3		1.7				1.5		32.6	
Government services	6.0		13.7		11,5		10.3		12.8				24.2		14.2	
Entertainment	17.0		32.1		66.0		53.8		59.8				1.2		0.5	
News	34.5		47.3		29.5		26.5		27.8				2.3		1.4	
Personal	34.0		44.3		50.6		52.1		53.4				14.2		10.5	
Other	2.0		4.6		5.8		6.0		4.3				1.3		2.5	

Source: Users and operators surveys

Comments: (Include description of "other". Suggested headings based on frequently reported topics in other research and may vary across countries).

3.4.1.3 Uses of ICT, by type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Cybercafes				Telecenters				NGOs			
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	ICT use	General use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Email		58.1		55.0		46.2		51.3		47.4				54.3		25.6
Chat		11.5		20.0		35.3		39.3		36.8				2.3		1.5
Web browsing		63.5		70.0		59.6		63.2		66.7				58.9		52.8
Blogs & social networking		10.8		10.0		5.8		4.3		5.6				5.8		2.5
Commerce & business		8.1		20.0		5.8		9.4		8.1				27.5		20.4
Phone or webcam		4.1		10.0		14.1		16.2		12.0				1.5		1.2
Games		6.1		5.5		52.6		41.9		47.0				0.0		0.0
Other		3.4		4.5		2.6		1.3		1.3				1.3		1.3

Source: Users and operators surveys

Comments: (Include description of "other". Suggested headings not exhaustive, based on frequently reported topics in other research and may vary across countries).

3.4.1.4 Frequency of Use for each type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Cybercafes				Telecenters				NGOs			
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	ICT use	General use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
First visit	6.0		0.8		0.0		5.1		3.0				12.3		5.2	
Rarely (less than monthly)	16.5		10.7		8.3		11.1		11.1				19.2		25.2	
Occasional (about once a month)	24.0		22.9		15.4		18.8		20.9				32.7		30.7	
Regular (about 2-3 per month)	25.0		33.6		22.4		19.7		21.8				20.2		28.4	
Frequent (about once a week)	21.0		28.2		35.3		31.6		29.5				15.6		10.5	
Daily (about every day)	7.5		3.8		18.6		13.7		13.7				0.0		0.0	

Source: Users and operators surveys

Comments:

3.4.1.5 Barriers to use for each type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Cybercafes				Telecenters				NGOs			
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	ICT use	General use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Location, distance	12.0		13.7		34.2			33.3	38.2					25.2		14.2
Hours of Operation	13.5		10.7		36.1			35.9	41.2					10.5		19.8
Cost	5.2		1.5		49.7			52.1	53.6					1.2		1.2
Lack of skills/training	19.8		19.1		14.2			24.8	21.0					18.7		25.6
Not enough services	50.0		54.2		33.5			29.1	34.3					24.5		28.9
Not in right language	34.4		28.2		20.6			21.4	20.2					18.7		1.2
Not enough content	53.1		64.9		18.7			23.1	21.5					32.4		28.9
Other	5.2		6.9		8.4			11.1	8.6					2.3		1.5

Source: Users and operators surveys

Comments: (Include description of "other". Suggested headings not exhaustive, based on frequently reported topics in other research and may vary across countries).

"Other" includes users complains about staff working in these staff: incompetence, inadequate attitudes towards users etc.

3.4.2 Salient initiatives to help meet critical information needs by underserved communities

What are the most salient initiatives in the country (past, ongoing, or planned) that aim to meet the information needs of underserved communities in the country? How important are they? In what ways are they successful or not? Where can more information about them be found?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

3.4.2.1 Past initiatives:

The main initiatives in Moldova that aim to meet the information needs of underserved communities were implemented with financial support of international organizations, such as:

- (i) SOROS Foundation Programs for Public Library Development in the Republic of Moldova.
- (ii) Projects of different NGOs supported by International organizations and donors.

More information:

3.4.2.2 Ongoing initiatives:

(i) The Government of the Republic of Moldova is engaged in a sustained effort to promote economic growth and poverty reduction. This effort comprises the Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction Paper (EGPRSP) and EU – Republic of Moldova Action Plan, which sets the country's development path for the subsequent period and identifies the priority measures and actions to achieve these objectives. In December 2004, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova has approved the Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction Paper (EGPRSP) 2004-2006.

(ii) Implementation of National Strategy "E-Moldova" (2005). Building information society is supposed to further extend democratic freedoms and unconditional protection of human rights.

More information:

www.scers.md; www.e-moldova.md; www.un.md

3.4.2.3 Historical trends and opportunities to serve information needs

Based on the above, what is the general trend in the country in relation to provision of public access information services? Are there any important upcoming opportunities (for example, upcoming regulatory changes, infrastructure enhancements, etc) that can impact public access information (include services through libraries and other public information venues)?

i. If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

If until the year 2000 public access venues have known some development with technical and financial support of international organizations, then in the last years Government targets its state policy to enlarge its influences in the access to information sector. For example, the adoption (May 2000) of the law concerning the access to information, which stipulates that any person residing on the territory of the Republic of Moldova in a legal way can demand any information, any document from the public authorities/institutions, without being compelled to explain the interest towards this information, and that the denial to provide the requested information or documents in the whole or partially is possible only in

the case that these are a part of the limited number of exceptions strictly enumerated by the law.

According to the National Strategy "E-Moldova" (2005) building information society is supposed to further extend democratic freedoms and unconditional protection of human rights. Implementing provisions of this Strategy, the Republic of Moldova will exercise the right to communication and information as a fundamental right of any citizen, ensure universal access to information and knowledge to all social groups, support persons and organizations in accessing information and knowledge in all spheres of social life.

In the National Strategy on the Information Society E-Moldova (2005) is included a chapter on "e-culture", dealing with new forms of promoting culture through electronic media in different sectors of national culture, including libraries. Public Libraries could be transformed in Public Access Internet Points. It seems that Government of the Republic of Moldova did acknowledge the importance of digital TIC for improving socio-economic situation in the country, poverty reduction etc.

The first steps of E-Strategy implementation begun with equipment of all public / state institutions (ministries, departments, local public administrations etc.) with TIC facilities. At the present, according to available sources, other important steps have not been made. The main problem is no available funds.

It is worth mentioned that if existing public library system will be transformed in Public Access Internet Points, this would be a great achievement for our country and particularly for underserved communities.

Source: www.e-moldova.md; www.un.md

3.4.2.4 *Planned initiatives:*

The implementation of named above National Strategies: Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction Paper (EGPRSP) and National Strategy on the Information Society E-Moldova.

More information:

www.e-moldova.md; www.un.md

3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment

3.5.1 National and local economic environment

Describe the national and local economic environment and how it affects public access to information and communication in the country.

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Local and national economy environment is one of the main factors affecting national public libraries system. Once the public libraries are under the jurisdiction of local public authorities, these are financed from local budgets and only partly by Ministry of Culture. Financial assistance of public libraries varies considerably between counties, municipalities, etc. It depends on the available funds from local budget for public libraries. As most of localities, especially in rural areas, face severe socio-economic problems, local authorities have no possibilities to allocate considerable funds for public libraries. Public libraries for many years were not the main concern for the communities. Usually, local

authorities consider school libraries more important for their community. On the other hand, localities with prosperous economic agents contributing to local budget and receptive local authorities to information needs of local population, public libraries have received adequate local financing, even the equipment with ICT.

The same situation is at the national level. Social and economic crisis during the transition has caused drastic reduction of budget for public libraries. Thus, the development of public libraries system is directly dependent on local and national economic environment.

The same situation is concerning the outfit with ICT. Most of local public authorities can't afford to equip public libraries with ICT. As well for many years there was not a state program for implementing ICT in public libraries. It was such state programs but for school and university libraries, as these venues were and are considered as a priority for our Government.

Trends:

In the last few years in the Republic of Moldova are registering some signs of economic recovery, yet not so visible. Along with economic recovery the national allocations for public libraries have increased. Nonetheless it is by far not sufficient for public library system development. So, a further trend in public access venues, such as public library system, mostly depends on evolution of economic indicators.

NGOs sector mainly depends on available international funds and only partly by Government sources.

Source: www.scers.md; www.e-moldova.md; www.un.md

3.5.2 National and local policy (legal and regulatory) environment

Describe salient features of the policy and regulatory framework in the country (and if applicable, locally) that affect delivery and access to information (e.g. censorship, Wi-Fi bandwidth regulation, etc). What is your assessment of the general trend on this matter?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The Public Libraries are administered under the provision of The Law on Libraries (November 16, 1994) and operate in compliance with the Framework Regulation for Public Libraries Organization and Operation (March 2, 1999), and the Law on Local Public Administration (November 6 1998).

Basically the whole library system activity is based on The Law on Libraries (approved in 1994) that specifies the legal status of libraries and how they should operate. Law on Local Public Administration specify public libraries are under their jurisdiction and that local public authorities should annually allocate funds for these venues.

During the last years local experts have proposed a range of modification of this Law, but until now nothing was done. The proposed changes were submitted to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and refer to: introducing on new terms, new paid services, computerisation etc.

As regard to telecommunication sector, Moldova is recognised as having comprehensive legislation in the electronic communications sector, overseen by the National Regulatory Authority (ANRTI). Interconnection regulation is considered complete and in line with European legislation. There are no licensing restrictions on Wi-Fi in Moldova. There are currently eight Wi-Fi service providers in the country.

Trends:

No available information on salient trends for the next few years related to national and local policy

Source: no source of information

3.5.3 Regional and international policy (legal and regulatory) environment

Describe salient features of policy and regulatory framework in the region and internationally that affect the delivery of public access to information and communication in the country. What is your assessment of the general trend on this matter?

The Republic of Moldova is part of a number of international treaties on protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. In 1993 the Republic of Moldova adhered to the International Pact on Civil and Political Rights (IPCPR), which comprises provisions regarding freedom of expression and the right to information. Thus, the Republic of Moldova assumed the obligation to observe and to assure to every person the rights provided by the IPCRP. As a state-member of the Council of Europe and part to the Convention for Defending Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (in force for the Republic of Moldova from 12.09.1997), the Republic of Moldova has concrete obligations for ensuring freedom of expression and access to information.

Unanimously recognized principles and norms of international law, the ratified international treaties and those that the Republic of Moldova adhered to are a component part of the legal framework of the Republic of Moldova and become norms of its internal law.

As regards to libraries it could be mentioned that some issue are stipulated in the Ethic Code of Librarians from the Republic of Moldova. This document states that librarians support and promote policies regarding freedom of expression and the right to information, reflected in the following international documents: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Convention for Defending Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, UNESCO Public Libraries Manifesto, Green Charter regarding the role of librarians in modern society, etc.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Republic of Moldova as a country-member to the stability Pact for Electronic South-Eastern Europe (eSEE, 1992), signed the Declaration of Intention in June 2002 and assumed the responsibility to build Information Society based on principles stipulated in the UN Charter, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Okinawa 2000 Charter on Building a Global Information Society. These documents, as well as Moldova President's Decree No. 1743-III of March 19, 2004 and the Government Decision No. 632 of June 8, 2004 regarding the Policy of Building Information Society in the Republic of Moldova, were the concepts underlying formulation of the National Strategy on Building Information Society in the Republic of Moldova.

Trends:

Source:

3.6 Collaboration Practices and Opportunities Across Venues

Linkages and collaboration between different types of venues was identified as a **strong emerging theme in the preliminary analysis**. Please provide as much detail as possible to help understand existing and potential collaboration opportunities and linkages among and between public access venues, and how they can improve the quality and relevance of information access to underserved communities.

- i. Include reference to existing as well as potential collaboration opportunities.
- ii. If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

There is a good experience and practice in collaboration between the Public Institutions with International Organization that have representative in the Republic of Moldova. Thus, the E-Strategy was elaborated due to the support of United Nations Development Program. There is also established good collaboration with World Bank, SOROS Foundation etc.

The strategic development of the public library system was considered within the context of local, national and international cooperation. In order to improve staff training in the Republic of Moldova were invited trainers from different countries to Moldova. A good collaboration was established with librarians from the United States: the Library of Congress, ALA, Ohio State University, Wayne State University and more. US librarians organized, in Moldova, conferences, trainings, courses management courses, seminars. These had a great effect in mentality changing Moldovan librarians and also to the promotion of reform. Moldovan librarians gained a valuable experience from colleagues from other countries about the newest information in the field of librarianship.

Considerable inputs to Moldovan public library system development have had collaboration of local libraries with libraries from Romania. In the last decade Romania offered large donations of book funds, both for school, universities libraries and public libraries. It should be mentioned that in Moldova the matter of book funds donations are linked with local population cultural and ethnical composition. Thus, considerable donations of fund books are obtained by libraries from different diasporas, such as Russian, Bulgarian, Jewish and others.

As regards to collaboration between different public access venues, it should be mentioned the collaboration between some NGOs and public libraries by offering book funds, trainings etc. Especially this collaboration is extended in rural areas.

3.7 Buzz Factor: Public and Government Perceptions About What is “Cool”

The “buzz factor”, i.e., public and government perceptions about what is “cool” in relation to public access venues, where to invest resources, what places to hang out in, was identified as a **strong emerging theme in the preliminary analysis**. Please provide as much detail as possible to help understand how these perceptions about what is “cool” offer new opportunities or obstacles to strengthening public access information venues in the country.

In the past years public and Government are directed to TIC sector. With this purpose certain steps have been made, as elaboration of National Strategy “E-Moldova” (2005). The first steps of E-Strategy implementation begun with equipment of all public / state institutions (ministries, departments, local public administrations etc.) with TIC facilities.

Also for many years in Moldova is being implemented the National Program “Salt” having the main objective to supply all school libraries with ICT facilities. Considerable results have been obtained in this field.

These programs offer new opportunities for strengthening public access information venues in Moldova. For example, in the National Strategy on the Information Society E-Moldova (2005) is included a chapter on “e-culture”, dealing with new forms of promoting culture through electronic media in different sectors of national culture, including libraries. Public Libraries could be transformed in

Public Access Internet Points, especially in rural areas.

3.8 Legitimate Uses

The difference between “legitimate” or “non-trivial” uses of information in public access venues was identified as a **strong emerging theme in the preliminary analysis**. For example, uses of social networking spaces (Facebook and similar), blogs, chat, video games, as well as opportunities to download, install and run open source software applications in public access computers poses new challenges to traditional notions of “legitimate” information needs for development, and “trivial” uses of information for development... Please provide as much detail as possible to help understand how local definitions and restrictions based on what is “legitimate” or “non-trivial” information or communication practices offer new opportunities or barriers to public access information venues in the country.

There is no available information on this subject.

3.9 Shifting Media Landscape

The ever-changing media landscape and the new opportunities brought about by new media such as mobile phones, SMS, GPS, and even renewed roles for community radio open, was a **strong emerging theme in the preliminary analysis**. Please provide as much detail as possible to help understand how these new technologies and media offer new opportunities or barriers to public access information venues in the country.

3.9.1 Mobile phones

If appropriate, describe salient uses of mobile phones, text messaging, SMS and similar technologies, in relation to public access information venues and information needs of underserved communities.

Mobile telephony is developing rapidly in the Republic of Moldova, and the user base continues to grow. Indeed, mobile penetration overtook fixed line penetration for the first time in 2005. The number of mobile subscribers increased from 787,000 in 2004 to 1,090,000 by the end of 2005 and 1,194,500 in mid 2006. This represents a penetration rate of 35.2 percent.

3.9.2 Web 2.0 tools and use

If appropriate, describe any salient uses of Web 2.0 tools among users of ICT in public access venues. (Web 2.0 refers to evolution of web-based communities and hosted services, such as social-networking sites, wikis, blogs and others. [Wikipedia](#)).

3.9.3 Combination of different media

If appropriate, describe creative ways in which different media are being combined to meet information needs of underserved communities, and the ways they affect public access venues. Different media include community radio and TV, other print media, street theatre, songs, etc.

In Moldova there are different TV programs, Radio transmissions, specialised newspapers and magazines etc. aimed to meet informational of underserved communities. Remarkable examples are information on agricultural sector, rural development, medicine, environmental issues etc. Some newspapers, magazines, posters, etc. are provided free of charge for different social groups (i.e. agriculture, human trafficking, medicine, rural development, childhood etc.). Also, there are conducted information campaigns by combining different media. Usually these programs are run and sustained

financially by international organisations.

3.9.4 Other shifting media landscape examples

If appropriate, describe other new features and practices in the media landscape that affect public information venues and information needs of underserved communities.

This would be a good place to discuss innovative practices on content creation and production of new messages, media, information and knowledge that are not described elsewhere in this report.

3.10 Health Information Needs

This is an extra contribution to other research on health information needs going on at the University of Washington, based on willing respondents to last two questions on user surveys at the public access venues.

3.10.1 Sources of health information

Where are people most successful at locating useful health information for themselves or their family (% of respondents across all venues):

Community resource (e.g. herbal medicine store)	11.7
Internet at private location (e.g. home, friend's house)	15.6
Internet at public location (e.g. library, telecenter)	7.4
Clinic/hospital	17.9
Friends or family	14.4
Health worker	18.1
Public access venue (library, community center, etc)	14.0
Other (specify)	1.0

Comments:

3.10.2 Types of health information

What types of health information do they have the most difficulty finding (% of respondents across all venues)?

34.2	13.0	13.7	31.4	7.7
disease prevention	how to locate healthcare	child health information	remedies/drugs	Other

Comments:

4 Venue-Specific Assessments

Complete one full assessment for each type of venue studied in the country.

4.1 Venue 1: Public Libraries

4.1.1 Overall venue assessment

Provide a broad picture of the public access information landscape in this venue, informed by the results of this research.

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of public access information in this type of venue?

After the independence, Republic of Moldova inherited the Soviet public library system they once were part of: a strictly hierarchic structure directed by the center, characteristic for all former soviet republics. In each locality there were established public libraries. In cities, towns and in large villages there were separate public libraries for adults and children. The whole public library system was financed from the central budget.

Along with the reform tendencies emerged in the Republic of Moldova, the system of public libraries has undergone essential changes. During the period of transition, the public library system has considerably deteriorated, which caused a series of obstacles in the achievement of public access to information. Firstly, there has been changed the legally and regulatory framework on public libraries. According to the Law on Libraries (1994) and the Law on Local Public Administration (1998) public libraries have passed under the jurisdiction of local administrative authorities (mayoralities). At present local authorities are the main financial sources of the public libraries. Due to poor local budget, severe socio-economic problems, especially in rural areas, public libraries are not receiving essential funding for their good functioning. As a result, in most of rural localities public libraries for adults and children were merged, while others were closed. Furthermore due to lack of available funds, the offices of public libraries were not repaired for many years; the furniture is old and damaged and needs to be changed; public libraries, especially in rural areas, are functioning without heating during the winter; there are localities where public libraries are not even connected to electricity; salaries of librarians are low.

However, the most stringent problem of public libraries is that book collections and services were not developed according to nowadays demands. In Moldovan public libraries there is a gap between users expectation levels with provided services. The better situation is only in public libraries that have benefited from project, grants, programs provided by different international organisations, foundations etc. (SOROS Foundation, USAID, UNICEF etc.) and in localities with important local budget revenues (many prosperous economic agents etc.).

4.1.2 Access

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of ACCESS ecosystem in this type of venue (physical access, appropriate technology, affordability)?

Talking about the physical access it can be said that the situation in urban areas is better than in rural ones. Thus, the poorest localities don't have any access to information. Moreover there are problems with long term access and the insufficient work program of public libraries in rural areas. Regarding the Digital ICT services, village-city disparities are even deeper. Also, in the Republic of Moldova there is no special policy regarding the access to information for disabled persons. One of the major related problems is the fact that practically all public libraries that offer services for this category of population are located in Chisinau or in county centers, which reduces the chances of population from rural areas to benefit of these particular services.

Generally, technologies, services and information offered in Moldavian public libraries are not appropriate to the local population needs, especially for underserved communities. There is a huge gap between customer expectation levels and services. A big quantity of book funds can not be used any longer because of ideological or linguistic considerations. The funds allocated by local budgets are not enough for book fund renewal. Another problem is technical-material basis of public libraries that has deteriorated during the transition. Mostly of ICT services are offered only by urban public libraries.

In rural areas the mentality and consciousness of representatives of local public administration and the lack of necessary skills of workers is an important factor that affects access to public information and to international projects and grants. As it was mentioned before the available content in public libraries does not correspond with nowadays demands. The situation is better in public libraries where fund book was renewed from obtained grants.

In spite of structural weaknesses and a chronic lack of funds for renewal of book fund and maintaining infrastructure, public libraries are one of the main venues of public access to information in Moldova. In many localities these venues are the only institutions that offer public access to information without any restrictions and free of charge.

4.1.2.1 Physical access

Describe how accessible this venue is to various population segments, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c), especially the differences between urban and non-urban settings.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Considering that in Moldova there is a national network of public libraries covering more or less the entire territory of the republic, the physical access to this type of venue is satisfactory.

However, in our country persists a difference between urban and rural areas regarding the public access to information. Thus, if during the transition the number of public libraries in urban areas tended to be stable without significant decreasing, then in rural areas several public libraries were closed, most of public libraries for adults and children were merged. The situation in urban areas is better because the allocations from local budgets for public libraries are higher than in rural areas. The local budget in urban areas is formed by contribution of more economic agents; the infrastructure is more developed etc. In rural areas the main economic agents contributing to local budget are collective farms, or privatized "peasant farms" that usually are not competitive.

Rural localities with poor local budget can't afford to manage a public library and as a consequence these venues are closed or the allocations are really insignificant for their developing. Thus, the poorest localities don't have any access to information. The process of closing and liquidation of public libraries has significantly reduced the access to information of the poorest categories of population.

Also, there is a situation specific for Moldova when in one Mayoralty are included 2 or 3 villages. In this case there is only one public library, usually placed in the largest village. The population from other villages does not have access to a public library in their locality, but has to go many kilometers in order

to reach the nearest public library.

An extra problem related to access is hours of operation in many rural public libraries. Due to lack of available funds for salaries, librarians in some rural localities are working part-time (half of day or even less). This work program of public libraries is not at all sufficient for local users.

It should be mentioned that in the most disadvantaged situation are persons with disabilities. In the Republic of Moldova there is no special policy regarding the access to information of disabled persons. Nowadays only a few public libraries offer special services for this vulnerable social group. In spite that several attempts have been made to change the situation this is not far enough. One of the major related problems is the fact that practically all public libraries that offer services for this category of population are located in Chisinau or in county centers, which reduces the chances of population from rural areas to benefit of these particular services.

Regarding the Digital ICT services, village-city disparities are even deeper. Most of public libraries equipped with ICT are located in urban areas (Chisinau and most of county centers). Only a few rural public libraries offer ICT services for their users. Again, these are public libraries that benefited of financial aid from international organizations. Only in some localities public libraries were equipped with ICT from local budget.

4.1.2.2 Appropriate technology and services

Describe how appropriate the technologies, services and information offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

In general, technologies, services and information offered in Moldovan public libraries are not appropriate to the population. In Moldovan public libraries there is a huge gap between customer expectation levels and services.

Despite that quantitative characteristics of book funds in public libraries still exist (inherited from Soviet period), it could not be used any longer (from ideological or linguistic considerations – in the Republic of Moldova the Latin script was introduced in place of the Cyrillic one). According to experts estimation about 70-80% of provided information in public libraries, especially in rural areas, can be attributed to this category. Even if there may be valuable books, encyclopedias etc., the new generation can't read in Cyrillic script.

Under the Library Act and the Local Government Act, part of the budget must be spent on acquisitions, but chronic deficits make a real acquisition policy impossible. Accordingly, due to lack of available funds, book collections and services were not developed according to nowadays demand. The funds allocated by local budgets are not enough for book fund renewal. As well, because of infinitesimal funds, public libraries usually subscribe the cheapest newspapers and magazines, as rule local ones.

Thus, public libraries – especially those in rural areas – that are under local administration's jurisdiction, though rendering free services, do not have a book fund that can satisfy the increasing needs of readers, especially in the new domains dictated by transition to market economy (management, marketing, etc.).

It should be mentioned that under its Library Support Programme and in co-operation with various international organisations, the Soros Foundation has funded a series of programs to support the acquisition of various books and publications: foreign books, subscriptions to international journals, participation in different Projects. Unfortunately, not all public libraries obtained grants under that program.

Another problem is technical-material basis of public libraries that has deteriorated during the transition. The annual capital investments are absolutely insufficient. The lack of financial resources even for current repairs causes serious damages to public libraries offices, electricity and heat systems. During winter time, in many public libraries, especially in rural areas, there is registered an acute lack of fuel, frequent disconnections, inadequate sanitary conditions.

Regarding the ICT services, mostly of these services are offered by urban public libraries. However, there is a difference between Chisinau, the capital, and other cities of our republic. If in Chisinau, almost all public libraries offer ICT services for their users, then these services are not offered in all public libraries located in other cities.

Unfortunately, the number of public libraries in rural areas that offer ICT services for their users is insignificant.

Financing for the automation of library processes was provided, among others by the Soros Foundation – Moldova. During the years 1991-2000 the state did not support financially this program.

4.1.2.3 Affordability

Describe how affordable the technologies and services offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

According to their definition and status, public libraries offer their services (access to information) free of charge. Corresponding to IFLA, UNESCO manifesto, adopted in 1994 at Istanbul, library services, whichever they are, are free.

In the Republic of Moldova the majority of public libraries render services completely free of charge, while the others tend to lose their status as public libraries by introducing paid services, a fact that leads to the limitation of public access to information. The fees for those services are not affordable for all categories of population. The poor can't afford to pay for these services.

4.1.2.4 Fees for services

What fees or other requirements exist in order to access and use the information in the venues? (registration, user fees, restrictions to certain populations)

If there are fees: What do these fees buy?

Some public libraries offer book rental for a fee:

Indicate amount in local currency: it varies between 3 and 10 LEI

Equivalent in US Dollars: 0,3 – 1 \$

Date of estimate 7 July 2008

and local currency name Moldovan Leu

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

Usually the paid services are for ICT services: access to Internet, printing, copies / multiplication. For example, there are public libraries where access to Internet per hour costs 5 – 7 Lei (0,5 – 0,7 \$).

4.1.2.5 Geographic distribution

What is the distribution of the venues in terms of their geographic location?

Complement any details not already included in section

The network of public libraries covers the entire territory of the Republic of Moldova. As of 1 January 2007, Moldova had a national network of public libraries consisting of a total of 1391 public libraries, 1223 in rural areas and 168 in urban areas.

Administratively Moldova is divided in 32 counties, municipality Chisinau and TAU Gagauzia. In each county there are urban and rural public libraries.

4.1.2.5.1 Map

If available, insert a map that displays the geographic distribution of this type of venue in the country (expand to the size you need).



Description of map:

No available map.

4.1.2.6 Other factors affecting access

Other factors that affect equitable access to public information in this type of venue, not covered above?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

One important factor that affects equitable access to public information in this type of venue: the mentality and consciousness of representatives of local public administration (Mayors, town and village Councilors). Due to the fact that public libraries are under the jurisdiction of local public authorities, they are directly dependent on them. If the mayor and local council realize the importance of the public library for the community and are receptive to the information needs of local population, then the allocations for public libraries are higher. Otherwise the public libraries are not developing as necessary and accordingly affect the equitable access to public information. Despite that school libraries offer access to information only for their pupils, there is a tendency in Moldova to allocate more funds for school libraries as are considered by authorities more important for community.

Another important factor is that most of librarians, especially in rural areas, don't have necessary skills for fundraising and writing Project Proposals for different international organisations. Most of librarians employed in rural libraries studied in the soviet period, when was centralised public system and were other requirements. Obviously, these public libraries have a lower chance to benefit from projects, grants etc.

Additionally, in order to get a grant in some project proposals conditions are stipulated the financial contributions of local community. In the situation when poverty is widespread in rural areas, this condition is almost impossible to achieve.

As well, there are situations when rural public libraries can't be equipped with ICT because their

technical-material basis is deteriorated (damaged offices, no electricity etc.) and there is no security assured. Additionally, local authorities just can't afford to pay for functioning and maintaining of ICT. This implies higher costs for electricity, Internet, security etc.

4.1.3 Capacity and relevance

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of CAPACITY ecosystem in this type of venue (human capacity, locally relevant content, integration into daily routines, socio-cultural factors, trust in technology, social appropriation of technology)?

Some experts argue that human potential of the public library system is deteriorating since the transition to market economy. In the past years, there has been registered an aging of the library staff, especially in rural areas. The number of young specialists employed by public libraries is insignificant.

Due to the low salaries and the lack of librarians, many employees of the public library system do not have required professional training, are not acquainted with the new technologies, etc.

On the other hand many public libraries still exist due to the “patriotism” of library staff. They are active, are seeking for grants, new collaboration opportunities etc.

4.1.3.1 Staff size

How many people work in a typical facility for this type of venue? (full time-equivalent employees or contractors; describe any significant variations; i.e., large, medium and small libraries in the country)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

In the public libraries network are employed 3411 people. The majority of them are librarians, 2495 out of them are employed full time. Number of librarians or library staff depends on the number of visitors and on room space. In rural area, where are small public libraries, usually is only one librarian who fulfils all necessary activities in library (e.g. housemaid, because there are no such units in libraries, also specialist in bibliography and in cultural events organization). In urban public libraries (county centres), which are considered medium, are employed 12-14 people. Number of employed people in public libraries located in Chisinau varies between 10 and 20. Only in the largest library - National Library of the Republic of Moldova the staff consists of 200 employees.

In large public libraries equipped with ICT are employed specialists in this field. In rural public libraries equipped with ICT, due to the lack of funds for salary, there are no such specialists.

4.1.3.2 Staff training

What is the overall capacity of the staff (i.e., librarians, telecentres operators) to help users access and use public access to information and communication services offered in this venue? Differentiate by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

(ii) For Public Libraries, indicate if Library School training is available and/or required for librarians.

The overall capacity of the staff to help users access and use public access to information and communication services offered in Moldovan public libraries is relatively satisfactory. The situation in

urban areas in this respect is better than in rural areas.

The employed staff is formed in accordance with available funds from local budget for salaries. Because the allocations from rural local budget are not sufficient for salaries, there are localities, where librarians are working half of a day or even less.

According to the Law of Libraries, in order to be hired as a librarian, there is required a Library School. However, mostly in large public libraries the librarians have library degree, while in rural area this is not compulsory (as librarians can work teachers, accountants etc.). According to official data about 46% of public librarians hold a university degree in library science that can be now obtained only at the State University of Moldova (Library and Information Assistance Department).

Additionally, librarians are trained by National Library of the Republic of Moldova. There are also some other trainings for librarians offered by the SOROS Foundation's "Vocational Training Programme for Librarians" run with the help of the Regional Programme for Libraries of the Institute for an Open Society in Budapest. The Soros Foundation also provides in-service training at a Management School for librarians. Obviously not all librarians have benefited from these trainings.

4.1.3.3 Services offered

What kind of services does this type of venue offer to the public? (i.e., access to books, magazines; meeting and conference rooms; audio/video programs, computers, Internet, other). Include Digital ICT services if offered.

<i>Services Offered</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1. Access to books	Is provided in all public libraries, but the book fund is different. In urban public libraries book fund is richer.
2. Access to newspapers	Is provided in all public libraries, but urban public libraries offer to users access to more newspapers
3. Access to magazines	Is provided in all public libraries, but urban public libraries offer to users access to more magazines
4. Access to computer	It is not provided in all public libraries.
5. Access to internet	It is not provided in all public libraries. In some public libraries access to Internet is not free.
6. Access to printer	It is not provided in all public libraries. Almost in all public libraries these services are not free.
7. Access to Xerox	It is not provided in all public libraries. Almost in all public libraries these services are not free.
8. Access to audio/video programs	It is not provided in all public libraries.

9. Access to data bases

It is not provided in all public libraries.

10.

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

At present public libraries are open to everybody and contain a universal collection, including the basic range of reference collection and diverse non-fiction and fiction books. According to the content of their collections public libraries represent a mixture of public and school (sometimes university) libraries.

There is a difference in the services offered by different public libraries. Firstly according to their size and status (National, municipal, county, urban and rural) - larger public libraries offer more services to population; they have a richer fund book. The book donations usually are going to larger public libraries or to school and university libraries.

Also there is a difference according to their location (urban / rural). There is an uneven development of libraries in Moldova, where the capital city, Chisinau, retains most of the funding, technical equipment, and expertise to the detriment of the rest of the country; thus the discrepancies between the urban and the rural areas is growing ever deeper. Public libraries in rural areas that are under the local administration's jurisdiction, though rendering free services, do not have a book fund that can satisfy the increasing needs of readers.

Many public libraries in rural areas, where poor families cannot even cover all the expenses needed for clothes, footwear, food, etc. are not heated in the cold period of the year, and some of them are closed down.

4.1.3.4 Programs for underserved communities

Describe if this venue has programs specifically intended to reach underserved communities, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Despite that there are not state programs specifically intended to reach underserved communities, certain efforts have been done in the related fields. All the programs for underserved communities were implemented with financial support of international organizations (SOROS Foundation, UNICEF, USAID etc.).

4.1.3.5 Relevant content

What type of locally relevant content is available? What else is needed? Who is doing it?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Available Content:

Universal collection, including the basic range of reference collection and a diverse non-fiction and fiction books; newspapers and magazines, data bases, information from Internet (hard copies).

As it was mentioned before the available content in public libraries does not correspond with nowadays demands. The situation is better in public libraries where fund book was renewed from obtained grants.

With extremely limited access to Internet resources, users are required to rely on the library for education. Textbooks are in short supply and the public library serves as one of the principal place for

users to gain access to written materials.

Other Content Needed:

Most of public libraries staff who participated in discussions remarked that in the actual situation of the public libraries all information would be welcomed and useful for their users. However, the main topics are:

- (xiv) Literature for school program, as the great part of public libraries users are pupils, especially in rural areas. Children from poor families cannot afford to buy books, that is why they are coming in public libraries where the access to information is free.
- (xv) Information in agricultural sector: new technologies, markets, consultations, information about prices for products, possibilities for buying seeds etc.
- (xvi) Information on medicine, psychology.
- (xvii) Country legislation, policies and regulatory framework. All needed information is presented in the Official Monitor of the Republic of Moldova. Due to its quite high cost (annual subscribe - 1815 MD Lei, equivalent - about 170 US \$) most of public libraries, especially in rural areas can't afford to subscribe it.
- (xviii) Information on human rights.
- (xix) Offers of job opportunities. Unfortunately there is no content, or even e-content of job offers for population outside the Chisinau.
- (xx) Access to main republican periodical editions. Nowadays due to poor financial situation of a great part of public libraries, especially in rural areas, they subscribe mainly the cheapest newspapers and magazines.

Also they mentioned a range of services that should be offered:

- (ix) Access to computers and desirable access to Internet. Staff of public libraries stated that the number of users in these venues considerably increased once they begun to provide such services. Access to Internet provides new opportunities for users.
- (x) Access to useful databases (economic agents, markets etc.).
- (xi) Access to e-governance services. In a few years in Moldova was reached some success in this field and access to it of underserved communities would be a great achievement.
- (xii) Photocopying of desired information. Because most books are available in only one copy and these are demanded.

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

In order to improve the situation of public libraries, librarians are seeking for donations, grants and contributions of local economic agents; tend to establish new collaborations with other public access venues, such as NGOs.

Source: *Focus groups discussions.*

4.1.3.6 Services and information available in local languages

Describe the availability of services and contents relevant to human development that are available in **local languages** in this type of venue? (i.e., info on health, education, government services, etc)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The language question in Moldova is directly linked to the country's population structure and their geographic distribution. Ukrainians and Russians are the two largest minorities. The Gagauz, a Christian Turkic minority, make up a small percentage of the population and live primarily in Gagauzia in the south of the country.

The content of public libraries is available in spoken languages in the area. In cities the content is available in two languages (Romanian and Russian).

4.1.3.7 Types of uses

What do people USE the venues for (most frequent kinds of information and services people seek in them, activities they carry out in them)?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Refer to section 3.4 Charts: Information Needs and complement here as needed.

4.1.3.8 Number, type, and frequency of users

Refer to section 3.4 Charts: Information Needs. Complement here as needed.

4.1.3.9 Users Capacity to use information and services offered

What is the overall capacity of the users to take advantage of public access to information and communication resources, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Due to decreasing of the number of librarians in public libraries the overall capacity of users to take advantage of public libraries diminished.

4.1.3.10 Training courses for users

Describe training courses offered to the public at this venue, and if they offer some kind of testing and certification.

Training courses: no training courses

ICT specific training courses: In some public libraries, equipped with ICT there are training courses offered to the public, but with no certification.

4.1.3.11 Integration into daily routines

How easy is it for users to integrate the information and services offered in this type of venue into their daily lives? (offer concrete solutions to their needs and problems, make it easier to solve them at this venue than in other places)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Public libraries are one of the main venues offering access to information for all population, without restrictions. In many localities, especially in rural areas, those are the only institutions offering such service that is why for local population is easier to solve their problems in this venue.

As regards to offering concrete solutions for the needs and problems of the local population, it depends on the provided information and ICT services in these venues. For instance if in a concrete public library the fund book, information was renewed in the last years, then this venue can satisfy the information needs of the local community. Otherwise public libraries are transformed in deposits of old books.

The situation is much better in the public libraries equipped with ICT and connection to Internet. These public libraries offer more solutions for their users: access to data bases, Internet etc.

4.1.3.12 Users perceptions about the venue

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the venue (not necessarily its specific services, but the venue itself: i.e., what do people generally think about libraries? Are they places that are “cool” or “only for elites” etc?), differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)? This includes perception by people who do not use the venue...

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The general perception of the population about public libraries is directly proportional to the services provided in these venues. If public libraries have not developed much during the transition, these are seen as old and useless institutions. And contrary if these venues are offering new and useful information, ICT services, the population has a better perception about them. This influences the number of their users as well.

People who do not use public libraries consider these venues more for pupils and well-educated persons, intellectuals.

It should be mentioned the perception of local public authorities about public libraries. Because they have to allocate every year funds for public libraries, in many cases they are considering these venues as a “burden” for them. Most of rural areas, and some urban areas, especially in the South region of the republic, face severe socio-economic problems. Obviously, in this situation public libraries are not seen as the main priority for community.

4.1.3.13 Social appropriation of information and generation of new knowledge

What activities, products and services are users undertaking that exhibit new levels of social appropriation of technologies and generation of knowledge? For example, how are users generating and disseminating new knowledge, products and services through their use of this venue? (see category 13 in Real Access Framework for Social Appropriation of Technology).

If relevant, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Public libraries offer access to information that exhibit generation of knowledge. During the transition public libraries tended to update their collections with recent materials especially in the fields that contribute to the transition of the country to the market economy and the fields that foster the creation of institutions based on democratic values of freedom of speech and the free access to information. Also public libraries that have computers offer to users access to different catalogues, national and international data bases etc.

4.1.3.14 Trust, safety, and privacy

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the safety, security and privacy (TRUST) of the information and services offered in this venue?

The TRUST of information and services offered in public libraries is determined by their level of development. The level of TRUST is higher in public libraries that correspond with nowadays demands, offer various services etc. There is not much TRUST in public libraries that have not developed and are in deplorable state.

4.1.3.15 Gaps and opportunities in information and services offered

What other information gaps and opportunities exist, which are not being met? (other information/services people need that are not being met there and could be offered, especially through Digital ICT services)

First of all, public libraries in rural areas where they were closed due to lack of available funds should be reopened. As it was mentioned before this led to the fact that the poorest localities don't have any access to information.

As for the rest of public libraries there are many information gaps and opportunities, which are not being met yet in the Republic of Moldova. There are many public libraries, especially in rural areas that desperately need to renew the entire book fund, as these have not received necessary contributions, donations.

Without an adequate funding public libraries in the Republic of Moldova (the ones that will manage to survive) have a long way to go until their services are updated and improved.

4.1.4 Enabling environment

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of the ENVIRONMENT ecosystem in this type of venue (local economy, national economy, legal and regulatory framework, political will and public support, regional and international context)?

The activity of public libraries has been affected, as all other activities in the country, by the worsening economic condition. Moldovan public libraries are mostly founded and financed by local communities and partly by the Ministry of Culture. According to The Law on Libraries the local administrative authorities must ensure annually a library budget, because they are the main financial sources of the public libraries. But the financial assistance of public libraries varies considerably between counties, municipalities, etc. Provided financial support goes mainly to staff salaries, some to collection development, renovation and then comes library automation, equipment, Internet connection, etc. With the support of different national and international organizations (such as Moldova Soros Foundation and OSI Budapest) were performed a lot of tasks that improved library development in the last years.

The economic crisis and unwillingness of the authorities to take actions in the field hamper the development of libraries, which eventually leads to the violation of the right of access to information. The State, public authorities take no pain and contribute no money to develop libraries and do not support them as a fundamental cultural service provided to the public. Only in the few last years, the Government tend to increase the allocations for these venues.

4.1.4.1 Local and national economy

Describe the local and national economic environment and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Local and national economy environment is one of the main factors affecting national public libraries system. Once the public libraries are under the jurisdiction of local public authorities, these are financed from local budgets and only partly by the Ministry of Culture. Financial assistance of public libraries varies considerably between counties, municipalities, etc. It depends on the available funds from local budget for public libraries. As most of localities, especially in rural areas, face severe socio-economic problems, local authorities have no possibilities to allocate considerable funds for public libraries. Public libraries for many years were not the main concern for the communities. Usually, local authorities consider school libraries more important for their community. On the other hand, localities with prosperous economic agents contributing to local budget and receptive local authorities to information needs of local population, public libraries have received adequate local financing, even the equipment with ICT.

The same situation is at the national level. Social and economic crisis during the transition has caused drastic reduction of budget for public libraries. Thus, the development of public libraries system is directly dependent on local and national economic environment.

The same situation is concerning the outfit with ICT. Most of local public authorities can't afford to equip public libraries with ICT. Also for many years there was not a state program for implementing ICT in public libraries. There were such state programs, but for school and university libraries, as these venues were and are considered as a priority for our Government.

4.1.4.2 Legal and regulatory framework

Describe the legal and regulatory framework and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The Public Libraries are administered under the provision of The Law on Libraries (November 16, 1994) and operate in compliance with the Framework Regulation for Public Libraries Organization and Operation (March 2, 1999), and the Law on Local Public Administration (November 6 1998).

Basically the whole library system activity is based on The Law on Libraries (approved in 1994) that specifies the legal status of libraries and how they should operate. Law on Local Public Administration specify that public libraries are under their jurisdiction and that local public authorities should annually allocate funds for these venues.

Many local experts argue that the Law on Public Libraries is not supportive to nowadays demands. In 1994 there were no electronic catalogue, no electronic data bases, there was no such imperatives to the access to information. Accordingly in the stipulated Law on Libraries there are no such terms as Information Society, Knowledge Society, Communication Society, E-culture, E-library, etc. However in our republic in the past years have appeared Virtual Libraries, as well there are libraries that offer ICT services etc..

During the last years local experts have proposed a range of modification of this Law, but until now nothing was done. The proposed changes were submitted to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and refer to: introducing on new terms, new paid services, computerisation etc.

Another issue is that there is no control how Local Public Authorities execute the requirements on public libraries stipulated in the Law on Local Public Administration. Many librarians complained that local authorities approve at the end of the year what amount of money will be spend for public library, but during the year they can reduce the amount declaring that there is need of money for more important local problems. It was proposed to stipulate in the Law that local authorities can't change the approved expenditures from the budget.

During the last couple of years, considerable efforts have been made in order to develop adequate national legislation regarding the TIC. Unfortunately with no references to public libraries. As it was mentioned before there were no state policies on computerization of public libraries in the last decade.

Only in the past years there have been registered some efforts in this filed. Thus in the National Strategy on the Information Society E-Moldova (2005) there are formulated short-term and long-term goals that includes: to adapt the cultural legal framework to the envisaged e-culture services; to create a national digital library; to ensure full access of the population to the e-culture services by integrating the national information systems of libraries, museums, archives, theatres, publishing houses and other cultural institutions and their integration into the European and World information systems.

4.1.4.3 Political will and public support

What is the level of political will and public support for this type of venue? (refer to and complement section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The level of political will and public support for public libraries system in Moldova is unsatisfactory and inadequate to its needs. This fact has had a very negative impact on public libraries. On the other hand the inadequate political will for public libraries is dictated by poor socio-economic situation in the country. Main Government objectives are: to improve the social-economic situation, reduce poverty etc. It seems that authorities don't perceive that public libraries also can contribute to realization of these objectives by offering public access to information, which in turn offers concrete solutions for solving community problems.

Even if the public libraries network is subordinated to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, on their site www.turism.gov.md there is no available information about public libraries. The main Ministry's target is developing of tourism in Moldova; improve the image of our country in the world etc.

4.1.4.4 Organization and networking

Describe if the facilities in this type of venue organized in any network, association or other collective body? (i.e., national public library system, telecentre franchise or network, etc)?

Public libraries are organized in a network and professional association. As of 1 January 2007, Moldova had a national network of public libraries consisting of a total of 1391 public libraries, 1223 in rural areas and 168 in urban areas. Professional management, coordination is performed by the National Library Science Board under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Association of librarians from the Republic of Moldova was founded in 1991.

In every county, operates a county library that is in charge of organizing, coordinating and developing libraries in the county. Traditionally the county library consists of a main library and often one or more branches. County libraries act as the territorial superstructure undertaking management consultancy and joint projects for the libraries in the region. All public libraries are accountable locally to Departments of Culture within the County Councils or to city, town, or community Cultural Boards within Mayoralty as appropriate.

4.1.4.5 Partnerships

Describe notable public-private partnerships in support of this type of venue.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

There are no notable public-private partnerships in support of public libraries. There are examples when economic agents offered some allocations for renewing book collections, subscription for newspapers and magazines, computers, etc. This is irregularly and could be enumerated only some examples.

The most important for Moldovan public libraries system is public-public partnership. It should be mentioned the contribution of SOROS Foundation, other international organizations. As well there are notable partnerships between public libraries and local NGOs (donation of books, periodicals, trainings etc.).

Regarding the ICT is the same situation: almost all libraries were equipped with ICT due to financial support of SOROS Foundation.

4.1.4.6 Other environment factors

Other factors in the environment that affect access and use of information in this kind of venue, not covered above?

4.1.5 For publicly funded venues only: Revenue streams

This section is meant specifically for publicly-funded venues (public libraries, national connectivity programs, etc).

4.1.5.1 Budget

What is the total budget for this public access venue system (applies especially for libraries, answer for other venues if applicable and if available)?

Total Budget for Fiscal Year 9 804 400 Lei

Local currency name Leu amount (local currency) 9.85

Approx. equivalent in USD 995 370 based on exchange rate of National Bank of Moldova on date 08.07.08.

According to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism annual report for 2006, the amount listed above includes the allocations for salaries, fund books, periodicals, also for renovation of buildings, equipment and administration costs. Until 2003 all allocations were mostly for salaries. Only in the last few years the allocations also include other items.

According the official requirements stipulated by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the allocations from local budgets should be 6 Lei (0,6 \$) per person (2007). This tax / tariff is changing every year. Correspondingly the required allocations for public libraries is equal to 6 Lei (0,6 \$) * to number of population inhabiting each locality. Mostly these allocations are covering the salaries for librarians, subscriptions for some periodicals, and very little goes to fund book collection.

4.1.5.2 Relative size of budget

How large (or small) is this budget in relation to other funding streams? (this is a way to show, in financial terms, how much the government cares about information and public access as compared to a variety of other issues in the country).

Relative Size of Budget for same year	Total budget (local currency)	Comments
Total national budget	10918,8 millions	
Education	1391,1 millions	
Health	1579,1 millions	
Public libraries	9,8 millions	

Other Comments:

The amounts listed above clearly show the political will for public libraries.

4.1.5.3 Sources of funding

What are the sources of funding for this public access venue system?

Sources of funding:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Government sources:	40	
International donors:	45	
National donors:	10	
User fees/services:	5	
Other (name)		
Other (name)		
Other (name)		

Other Comments:

It is quite difficult to provide a broad picture of the sources of funding for public libraries. The situation varies considerably between public libraries. There are public libraries, especially in rural areas that strictly depend on Government sources (local budgets). In urban areas, especially in Chisinau, the contributions of international donors are much higher. As well not all public libraries offer paid services.

4.1.5.4 Paths and flows of resources

How do resources get allocated and disbursed to the actual venues? For the principal funders, and especially for the public sources, what is the flow of funds? How are the funds raised (what tax stream), what path do the tax streams flow before they get to the specific venues? Who makes decisions about this funding?

As it was mentioned public libraries are under the jurisdiction of local public administration and they are

the main source of financing from local budget. Local budget is formed by the contributions of local economic agents. The local public councils take the decision about the funding of public venues according to stipulated requirements. The council approves the categories of cost: for salary, book fund, renovation etc. But, many librarians complained that they may change the allocations during the year. At the national level the allocations for public library system is approved by Parliament.

4.1.5.5 Fees and cost recovery

Describe if there are user fees or any other type of cost recovery. How does it affect service delivery and usage?

Due to poor financial situation, public libraries tend to provide paid services for users. For example, because there are no available funds for covering the cost of Internet, public libraries provide these services for a cost to their users.

4.1.5.6 Cost categories

What are the main cost categories in the operation of this kind of venue? (% of total annual budget)
If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Cost Categories for Operation:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Staff (salaries, benefits)	50	
Building infrastructure	20	
Utilities	10	
Staff Training	0	
Computers/technology	5	
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
Total	100%	

Other Comments:

4.1.5.7 Recent changes and future trends

Describe any recent changes and anticipated future trends in the funding and revenue streams for this type of venue in the country. Have funding levels risen or decreased dramatically over the past few years? What is

the outlook for the foreseeable future?

There is a state programme, run jointly by the Ministry of Telecommunications and the Soros Foundation, to computerize libraries and build up local and inter-regional networks with shared catalogues, linking them to the National Library's central catalogue, and later making them accessible via Internet.

In the National Strategy on the Information Society E-Moldova (2005) is included a chapter on "e-culture", dealing with new forms of promoting culture through electronic media in different sectors of national culture, including libraries. Public Libraries could be transformed in Public Access Internet Points. It seems that Government of the Republic of Moldova did acknowledge the importance of digital TIC for improving socio-economic situation in the country, poverty reduction etc.

4.1.6 Case example for public libraries

Provide a short descriptions and commentary for each type of venue, offering a realistic sense of what the venue looks and feels like in its day to day operation, the kind of people who visit, and the kind of services they receive. Also, the case example indicates what makes the case unique or what features are commonly shared with other venues. A photo and short quotes will make it even more real.



Insert Case Example and Photo here.

www.azi.md, August 16, 2006

Number of libraries in Moldova diminishes, but number of readers grows up

There are 1389 public libraries in Moldova, Their book-stacks numbers 17.5 million copies that is by 1.7% less than in 2004. More than 87% of libraries are in rural areas. According to Liubov Stoianova of

the National Bureau for Statistics, for the last four years 11 public libraries were opened, but their number is smaller than during the Soviet period.

Though the financing of libraries is insufficient and their book-stacks are replenished slowly, the number of visits is constantly growing. 10.2 million people visited libraries in 2005 that is by 3% higher than in 2004.

The technical condition of most libraries is unsatisfactory, with 26 of them being in a state of emergency, and with 367 calling for capital repair.

The number of culture institutions: clubs, culture houses, concert halls has dropped considerably since 1995.

Stoianova remarked that the National Bureau for Statistics issued a book highlighted "Cultura Moldovei 2005" ("Moldova's Culture 2005"), which reflects the access of the population to the cultural values. The edition contains the data on the number museums, theaters, cinema and concert halls and their conditions. It is envisaged that such books will be issued regularly - once in three years.

5 Venue-Specific Assessments

5.2 Venue 2: Internet cafes

5.2.1 Overall venue assessment

Provide a broad picture of the public access information landscape in this venue, informed by the results of this research.

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of public access information in this type of venue?

In the last years the number of Internet cafes has increased. According to available data in 2007 in the Republic of Moldova were registered 474 internet cafés. Still Internet cafes remain mainly concentrated in urban areas, especially the capital city, where infrastructure allows easier connection and broadband connection. In rural areas there are less Internet cafes, in many localities the only possibility to gain access to Internet is in the office of the local administration and in a few cases there is no possibility at all.

Though there are more Internet cafes, there is a decrease of 7.5% in the use of computers in them (44.7% of users). However compared with the year 2006, in 2007 the number of computer users has increased more than two times. This may be explain by the fact that more users buy computers at home or use them at work. If in 2006 the number of computers per 100 households was 15.3 than in 2007 it reached 20.8 computers.

This kind of venue attains to private sector. Some years ago it was a profitable business. There were less computers in households, so, pupils, students and those who needed access to Internet or just needed a computer went to the Internet Cafes. Also they used other services as scanning, printing etc.

In Moldova the internet cafés are not organized in any network, association or other collective body. In some sources there is stipulated the Association of Private Operators, but there was not possible to get some information about it.

5.2.2 Access

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of ACCESS ecosystem in this type of venue (physical access, appropriate technology, affordability)?

Access to Internet cafes in urban areas is quite easy however not affordable to everyone. Prices per hour vary and are constantly increasing. As a matter of fact people who have computers connected to the Internet at home can mostly afford to go to the Internet cafes, but they do not need it, the majority of the others cannot afford it, so they have no access at all. Usually the latter are the ones who cannot use a computer. Usually the users of Internet cafes are young; they use e-mail, online messaging, relax playing games, search different information etc. Most of elder people do not know how to use a computer and usually they do not feel the necessity to use them. In rural areas Internet cafes are rare and they are mostly used by children for computer games, some of these cafes are not even connected to the Internet. In urban areas Internet cafes usually work 24 hours and are closed only a few hours per week for maintenance work. The situation is quite different in rural areas where Internet cafes work only a few hours per day usually in the evening when children are free from school. Elder people in

rural areas do not use computers, because they have no computer literacy and they claim they do not need it.

5.2.2.1 Physical access

Describe how accessible this venue is to various population segments, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c), especially the differences between urban and non-urban settings.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

In urban areas Internet cafes may be found almost everywhere and it is easy to find them. Usually they have high speed connections and offer a lot of services related to information technologies. In rural areas there is either one Internet cafe usually located somewhere near the center of a locality or there is none at all. The rural Internet cafes do not offer many types of services; in fact sometimes all they offer is just the possibility to use a computer, but no Internet.

5.2.2.2 Appropriate technology and services

Describe how appropriate the technologies, services and information offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Technologies available in Internet cafes vary greatly from urban to rural areas: in towns users may benefit of a large spectrum of services, besides the possibility to simply use a computer they offer such services as Internet navigation using broadband connections of various types, scanning, printing, use of live video chats, burning CDs, DVDs, computer games, some of them also provide photocopying services. In rural areas usually there are no broadband connections and the cafes offer Internet through Dial-Up, computer games, some of them also offer printing and scanning services. However as rural users are not that frequent many Internet cafes from such areas offer limited services like the possibility to use a computer and computer games. Some of these establishments even have no Internet connection at all.

5.2.2.3 Affordability

Describe how affordable the technologies and services offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The Internet cafes are really affordable only for a small part of population usually from urban areas. They are acquainted with the way of using a computer and can afford to pay for the services, however not all population from towns can afford it, some of them because the prices are too high for them others because they cannot use a computer. The constant visitors in urban areas are young people and sometimes middle-aged persons; the elderly have no use for computers.

In rural areas only a minority uses the services of Internet cafes, if there are any, but no one can really afford using them frequently. The most common users are children who visit Internet cafes to play computer games.

There are few Internet cafes which try to maintain an adequate atmosphere in the office. Of course these are placed in municipalities. But the most of internet cafes are more interested in the number of users, than in quality of services; that is why most of them are always full, and noisy. Many users come to play games, and sometimes there are no such accessories as ear phones in order to make their

games individual and to not disturb other users.

5.2.2.4 Fees for services

What fees or other requirements exist in order to access and use the information in the venues? (registration, user fees, restrictions to certain populations)

If there are fees: What do these fees buy?

One hour to have access to internet costs in average MDL 8 (\$0.6), which for some categories of population is too much. If the user wants to stay more than 3 hours, these establishments usually reduce the price with each hour of use. There are also different fees for printing (usually MDL 0.5; \$ 0.05 per page, sometimes MDL 1; \$0.1), photocopying (MDL 0.3; \$0.03 per page), scanning, for using a web cam. In spite of all mentioned above this venues are solicited.

Indicate amount in local currency

Equivalent in US Dollars:

Date of estimate

and local currency name

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

The main difference in urban and rural Internet cafes is that in an urban one, the owners try to introduce more services in order to get a bigger profit. In rural Internet cafes sometimes there is no Internet and there are no additional services, because the equipment is very expensive.

5.2.2.5 Geographic distribution

What is the distribution of the venues in terms of their geographic location?

Complement any details not already included in section

Internet cafes are irregularly distributed geographically; they are more concentrated in the capital city and the area around it and very dispersed in rural areas.

5.2.2.5.1 Map

If available, insert a map that displays the geographic distribution of this type of venue in the country (expand to the size you need).



Description of map:

No map available

5.2.2.6 Other factors affecting access

Other factors that affect equitable access to public information in this type of venue, not covered above?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Internet cafes are included in the private sector. It is a kind of small business. The owners of Internet cafés make expenses in order to obtain as large profits as possible later. Their target public is everyone who can use a computer and affords it, however they try to attract youth more than anyone else because they usually spend more money on such services.

5.2.3 Capacity and relevance

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of CAPACITY ecosystem in this type of venue (human capacity, locally relevant content, integration into daily routines, socio-cultural factors, trust in technology, social appropriation of technology)?

Most of urban Internet cafes are equipped with 8-10 computers all connected in a network with broadband connection to the Internet, with a large range of accessories (microphones, headphones, webcam) and software. The offer includes: technical services, text editing, scanning, printing etc.

In rural areas usually there are up to 5-6 computers (there are also rural Internet cafes with only 2 or 3 computers) also connected in a network sometimes with a few accessories (usually the owners cannot afford these). The offer is quite scarce, usually computer games and Internet (using Dial-Up connection), if any.

Given the above mentioned differences between rural and urban Internet cafes it is easy to understand that in urban areas the use of technology and trust in it is much higher than in rural ones.

5.2.3.1 Staff size

How many people work in a typical facility for this type of venue? (full time-equivalent employees or contractors; describe any significant variations, i.e., large, medium and small libraries in the country)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

In urban areas there are usually from 2 to 4 employed operators who work in shifts, sometimes the owner is one of them. In rural areas mostly the owner is the only operator, and there are no employees.

5.2.3.2 Staff training

What is the overall capacity of the staff (i.e., librarians, telecentres operators) to help users access and use public access to information and communication services offered in this venue? Differentiate by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

(iii) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

(iv) For Public Libraries, indicate if Library School training is available and/or required for librarians.

In Moldova there are many skilled and passionate young operators, who work in such units, even with a modest salary, only to have the opportunity to go in for the hobby. Operators are usually ready to help the visitors. They recommend sites, directories, provide technical assistance etc.

5.2.3.3 Services offered

What kind of services does this type of venue offer to the public? (i.e., access to books, magazines; meeting and conference rooms; audio/video programs, computers, Internet, other). Include Digital ICT services if offered.

Services Offered

Comments

11.	Access to computers	This is the main service which is offered in Internet cafes.
12.	Access to Internet	Not all units are connected to the Internet (in rural areas)
13.	Scanning	Usually establishments from urban areas provide such services
14.	Printing	Most of establishments provide this service
15.	Photocopying	Usually urban Internet cafes provide this service
16.	Access to video chats	Some urban Internet cafes provide this service

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

In urban areas there are more services than in rural areas. This is due to expensive equipment and demands of users.

5.2.3.4 Programs for underserved communities

Describe if this venue has programs specifically intended to reach underserved communities, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Internet cafes are part of the private sector and they usually do not have such programs, unless they are contracted by NGOs or some state institutions.

5.2.3.5 Relevant content

What type of locally relevant content is available? What else is needed? Who is doing it?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Available Content:

In urban areas all content existing in Internet, plus additional services mentioned elsewhere.

In rural areas mostly games, in some cases also Internet

Other Content Needed:

In rural areas are required most of services.

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

As it is a private sector, there are no local initiatives. Everyone treat Internet cafés as business, as a procedure to get money.

Source:

5.2.3.6 Services and information available in local languages

Describe the availability of services and contents relevant to human development that are available in **local languages** in this type of venue? (i.e., info on health, education, government services, etc)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Operators usually speak both Romanian and Russian. Depending on the region they might also speak Ukrainian, Bulgarian and Gagauz.

All the rest is the information available on the Internet.

5.2.3.7 Types of uses

What do people USE the venues for (most frequent kinds of information and services people seek in them, activities they carry out in them)?

(ii) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Refer to section

The most of times users go to Internet cafes to play computer games or browse the Internet. Some users search for different kinds of information ranging from homework to personal interests.

5.2.3.8 Number, type, and frequency of users

Refer to section. Complement here as needed.

5.2.3.9 Users capacity to use information and services offered

What is the overall capacity of the users to take advantage of public access to information and communication resources, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Usually younger persons are more capable of taking advantage of the services offered by Internet cafes, either because they learn how to use computers at school or from personal interest. They are constant users of these venues. Elder persons take no interest in using computers at all, they do so only if necessary for their jobs, but they seldom use Internet cafes.

5.2.3.10 Training courses for users

Describe training courses offered to the public at this venue, and if they offer some kind of testing and certification.

Training courses: There are no courses for users in this venue.

ICT specific training courses: There are no courses for users in this venue

5.2.3.11 Integration into daily routines

How easy is it for users to integrate the information and services offered in this type of venue into their daily lives? (offer concrete solutions to their needs and problems, make it easier to solve them at this venue than in other places)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

For young people in urban areas this is nothing special, some of them go to Internet cafes several times every day, they sometimes stay at night. In rural areas people do not have the time and are not even interested in going to Internet cafes, maybe with the exception of children who often go to play computer games.

5.2.3.12 Users perceptions about the venue

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the venue (not necessarily its specific services, but the venue itself: i.e., what do people generally think about libraries? Are they places that are “cool” or “only for elites” etc?), differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)? This includes perception by people who do not use the venue...

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

For the young population, especially pupils and students these are the most important places to find different kinds of information or simply to pass time. For middle-aged persons it is a possibility to use e-mail from time to time to communicate with their relatives from abroad or sometimes to search for information. The elderly consider them useless as many of their children or grandchildren spend money on games.

5.2.3.13 Social appropriation of information and generation of new knowledge

What activities, products and services are users undertaking that exhibit new levels of social appropriation of technologies and generation of knowledge? For example, how are users generating and disseminating new knowledge, products and services through their use of this venue? (see category 13 in Real Access Framework for Social Appropriation of Technology).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Those who use computers think of Internet cafes as something indispensable that can be used to complete their knowledge; they have the opportunity to create personal web pages, keep informed, and can communicate with relatives, friends etc. They usually keep in touch with each other and disseminate among them whatever information they find out.

5.2.3.14 Trust, safety, and privacy

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the safety, security and privacy (TRUST) of the information and services offered in this venue?

The general opinion about the safety of the information and services offered in internet café is not very positive. There were many cases of thefts, burglaries etc. But these facts do not usually worry much their constant users and this kind of business is not affected much by it. Most users find the services and information from these venues trustworthy.

5.2.3.15 Gaps and opportunities in information and services offered

What other information gaps and opportunities exist, which are not being met? (other information/services people need that are not being met there and could be offered, especially through Digital ICT services)

In rural areas sometimes there is no Internet, printer or scanner.

In urban areas most of Internet cafes have a full range of services.

5.2.4 Enabling environment

2 – 3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of the ENVIRONMENT ecosystem in this type of venue (local economy, national economy, legal and regulatory framework, political will and public support, regional and international context)?

5.2.4.1 Local and national economy

Describe the local and national economic environment and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Internet cafes belong to the private sector and only contribute to the state budget through taxes and sometimes occasional services. They facilitate getting information of any type at any time however they are used only by a small part of the population.

5.2.4.2 Legal and regulatory framework

Describe the legal and regulatory framework and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

A new draft Law on Electronic Communications to update the 1995 (amended in 2001) Telecommunications Law was discussed in the Government and submitted to the Parliament for approval. The draft Law on Electronic Communications has attracted a wide range of criticism from operators. The Association of Private Operators recently addressed its concerns to the Parliamentary Committee for Budget and Finance expressing the view that the draft would result in the competitive situation in the country to deteriorate. One of the key concerns is the reduction in the powers of the NRA proposed by the current draft, in particular due to the continuation of dependence of ANRTI on the Government, The following are the three main concerns expressed by the Association of Private Operators regarding the new Law: 1. Licensing regime. The Law does not alter the current rules on licensing and does not expand the range of services requiring only authorizations. 2. ANRTI independence from the Government:

a) Nomination of ANRTI Board. The new draft stipulates nomination of the Board of directors by the Government, thereby making it heavily dependent on the Government

b) Annual budget approval by the Government

c) ANRTI must consult with SMP operators and government before tariffs are approved. The Association believes that this creates undue barriers to the development of a rebalanced, competitive market. The Association and other new entrants in the market are also concerned with some definitions in the draft law and suggested reverting to those contained in the EU communications framework. ANRTI has its own concerns about the new Law, in particular the proposal that the power for SMP designation would be given to the National Competition Authority. This, ANRTI believes, would make it practically impossible to insure fair competition. This has prompted ANRTI to prepare an alternative draft legislative package which was partially taken into consideration by the Government. In the revised Government proposal, SMP designation is to be within ANRTI's remit. Meanwhile, competitive operators complain that ANRTI is not energetic enough in defending their interests under existing legislation.

In 2007 the most solicited sphere of activity was informatics. ANRTI issued 914 licenses for this domain. From the whole list of this branch, economic agents prefer services of soft elaboration, services of data transport, IP telephony, and informatics services in public units (Internet cafes). In 2007 the number of those who offer such services increased with 77, so there are already more than 500 Internet cafes in Moldova. More than 300 of it are in municipalities, and other are in counties and villages. This is a directive of constant increasing of Internet access request in all Moldova's regions.

5.2.4.3 Political will and public support

What is the level of political will and public support for this type of venue? (refer to and complement section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Though Government claims to be supportive of developing an informational society they do not involve much in this domain leaving it all to economic agents interested in it. The population, especially the youth are very supportive of this kind of venue and approve of most activities performed by them. As it is mainly a private business many beginners in business, especially young look upon it as a chance to accumulate financial resources in an easier way.

5.2.4.4 Organization and networking

Describe if the facilities in this type of venue organized in any network, association or other collective body? (i.e., national public library system, telecentre franchise or network, etc)?

Internet café owners mostly from the capital city have attempted to organize themselves in an Internet Club Association to promote their interests and to fight against what they perceive to be excessive state control.

Rural Internet cafes usually do not form any kinds of organizational networks.

5.2.4.5 Partnerships

Describe notable public-private partnerships in support of this type of venue.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

There is no long term partnership with this type of venue. Occasionally they are contracted by NGOs for providing some services.

5.2.4.6 Other environment factors

Other factors in the environment that affect access and use of information in this kind of venue, not covered above?

5.2.5 For publicly funded venues only: Revenue streams

This section is meant specifically for publicly-funded venues (public libraries, national connectivity programs, etc).

5.2.5.1 Budget

What is the total budget for this public access venue system (applies especially for libraries, answer for other venues if applicable and if available)?

Total Budget for Fiscal Year

Local currency name amount (local currency)

Approx. equivalent in USD based on exchange rate of on date .

5.2.5.2 Relative size of budget

How large (or small) is this budget in relation to other funding streams? (this is a way to show, in financial terms, how much the government cares about information and public access as compared to a variety of other issues in the country).

Relative Size of Budget for same year	Total budget (local currency)	Comments
Total national budget		
Education		
Other (name)		
Public libraries		

Other Comments:

5.2.5.3 Sources of funding

What are the sources of funding for this public access venue system?

Sources of funding:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Government sources:		
International donors:		
National donors:		
User fees/services:	100	only

Other Comments:

Internet cafés are self-managed institutions, so they do not receive money from nobody. They work according to their own profit from services.

5.2.5.4 Paths and flows of resources

How do resources get allocated and disbursed to the actual venues? For the principal funders, and especially for the public sources, what is the flow of funds? How are the funds raised (what tax stream), what path do the tax streams flow before they get to the specific venues? Who makes decisions about this funding?

All depends on the owners of these establishments.

5.2.5.5 Fees and cost recovery

Describe if there are user fees or any other type of cost recovery. How does it affect service delivery and usage?

Fees per hour are not as high as to ensure full profit that is why most of Internet café owners try to invest in equipment. To recover the costs this unit should work 24 hours. Especially in rural areas it is not profitable at all, that is why there are few units connected to the Internet, with 5-6 computers and with low taxes (only to recover consumables).

5.2.5.6 Cost categories

What are the main cost categories in the operation of this kind of venue? (% of total annual budget)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Cost Categories for Operation:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Staff (salaries, benefits)		
Building infrastructure		
Utilities		
Staff Training		
Computers/technology		

Other Comments:

5.2.5.7 Recent changes and future trends

Describe any recent changes and anticipated future trends in the funding and revenue streams for this type of venue in the country. Have funding levels risen or decreased dramatically over the past few years? What is the outlook for the foreseeable future?

According to available data on September 2007 there were 727,700 Internet users in Moldova, with overall population 3,815,677, this means that only 19,5 % of population of Moldova have Internet access, broadband users are even less - 21,800, most of them are from Chisinau. On the 1.03 2004 there were 183 Internet Cafe registered only in Chisinau, however in later years that number decreased as computers and Internet became much cheaper. The most used package is Moldtelecom's "MaxDSL ECO" 4/3 Mbit/sec service. At the moment the overall throughput of all external internet channels owned by Moldtelecom is 4.4 Gbit/s.

5.2.6 Case example for venue 2: Venue Name

Provide a short descriptions and commentary for each type of venue, offering a realistic sense of what the venue looks and feels like in its day to day operation, the kind of people who visit, and the kind of services they receive. Also, the case example indicates what makes the case unique or what features are commonly shared with other venues. A photo and short quotes will make it even more real.

Insert Case Example and Photo here.

5.3 Internet is more accessible in villages

The number of centers of public access to the Internet opened in raional centers and villages of the republic increased in the first 9 months of the current year, in a higher rhythm than those in the urban areas, a report of the National Regulatory Agency in Telecommunications and Informatics (ANRTI) shows.

According to a press-communiqué of the Agency, in the respective period, the national authority for regulations in the domain authorized 75 companies to offer informatics' services in public places. These companies already started offering their services in 120 centers, placed in 82 localities, of which 80 – in raional centers and villages.

In the same period, "Moldtelecom" JSC opened 46 centers of public access to the Internet in 37 localities of the republic.

In nine months of the last year, economic agents that obtained licenses for this type of activity opened 103 centers for providing informational services, of which 62 are placed in the municipalities of Chisinau and Balti, and 41 – in villages and raional centers.

In 2002-2006, 470 license owners, authorized to provide informational services in public centers, have been registered at ANRTI. These services are offered in 511 buildings, among which 334 are placed in the municipalities of Chisinau and Balti, and 177 in raional centers and villages. The greatest number of centers of public access to Internet was opened in Drochia, Ialoveni, Anenii Noi, Falesti, Soroca, Nisporeni and Edinet raions. Usually in villages these centers function in the buildings of local houses of culture, schools, lyceums and libraries. License owners have on average 7-10 computers each. In villages the most common is the dial up internet connection provided by "Moldtelecom".

Experts from ANRTI explain these evolutions by the rapid increase of the demand for internet services, including rural localities. Another cause is the launching of convenient and attractive offers for the

users. According to the cited source, positive tendencies on this segment of the market as well as the actions organized by authorities in order to implement The National Strategy for Building the Informational Society will reduce the so-called “digital gap” between the city and the village, a fact that will allow the villagers to benefit from all the advantages of the access to Internet for communication, studies and business.

Source: www.azi.md, October 17, 2006

6 Venue-Specific Assessments (cont.)

6.3 Venue 3: Telecenters

6.3.1 Overall venue assessment

Provide a broad picture of the public access information landscape in this venue, informed by the results of this research.

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of public access information in this type of venue?

The state company "Moldtelecom" was created at April, 1st, 1993 as a result of restructuring of the telecommunication sector of Republic of Moldova. On January, 5, 1999 the state company "Moldtelecom" was reorganized into Joint Stock Company, the State being the unique stockholder. In the Republic of Moldova there are 39 branch offices. The branch offices are not established as juridical persons, but they operate on a self-supporting basis allowing them to ensure reliable operation of telecommunications networks and provide services at affordable prices.

The Telecommunication Centers are organized in a National Network located in the administrative centers of Moldova. The whole package of up-to-date services like videotelephony, videoconference, IP-telephony, ADSL Internet access etc. is offered only in Central Chisinau Municipal Telecommunications Division.

After the first two years of complete liberalization of telecommunications and informatics market, the year 2006 has become part of Moldova's communications history as the year when the tendency of communications market increased significantly.

According to available data, the number of subscribers to access services to broadband Internet at fixed points increased in the first quarter of the current year, compared with the corresponding period last year, more than two times and reached figure of 56.6 thousand.

In the same period, the number of subscribers to services to access the Internet through dial-up at fixed points (ordinary telephone line) decreased by 12.2% from 63.9 thousand in the first quarter of 2007 at 56.1 thousand, in the same quarter of 2008. It is for the first time in the brief history of Moldovan electronic communications when the number of subscribers to the Internet's broadband has exceeded that of subscribers to the Internet through dial-up. This may be explained by launching new attractive offers by service providers access to broadband Internet customers and the migration of dial-up Internet's high-speed. During the same period, turnover of providers of data transport services and Internet access increased by 32.7%. After the turnover, leadership position in this market segment has been maintained by JSC MOLDTELECOM, with a market share of 62%.

6.3.2 Access

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of ACCESS ecosystem in this type of venue (physical access, appropriate technology, affordability)?

6.3.2.1 Physical access

Describe how accessible this venue is to various population segments, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c), especially the differences between urban and non-urban settings.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Almost everyone may use the services of Moldtelecom. This venue is spread over the cities of the country, and that is why rural population has to move to the nearest city to access it. In every Moldtelecom center there are 2-3 computers for public access, and it is not enough for a county. Also, in some counties there are already Internet cafés, and those people who accessed Internet from Moldtelecom, visit that kind of venue.

Also, not in every county the Moldtelecom office is well placed. In Taraclia, it is too far from the center of the city and it is rather difficult to come up there.

6.3.2.2 Appropriate technology and services

Describe how appropriate the technologies, services and information offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Generally the information and services provided by Telecommunication Centers are appropriate for population. On the other hand the package of up-to-date services like videotelephony, videoconference, IP-telephony, ADSL Internet access etc. is offered only in Central Chisinau Municipal Telecommunications Division as in other counties these services are not used by local population. The main cause is the quite high costs for them and second is that people are not trained in using such services.

6.3.2.3 Affordability

Describe how affordable the technologies and services offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The taxes for offered services are quite high and population living in poverty can't benefit of them. Also, because people are not related with using other services than telephony and in some cases Internet, Telecenters became day by day less solicited in such services as videotelephony, videoconference, etc. To improve the usage of public Internet, Moldtelecom extended its time table to 24 hours per day. But this implies also the extension of staff, so it was not for a long time, because of insufficient sources for this. Now, it is a tendency to stop public access to the Internet in Moldtelecom offices. Another cause of this tendency is that some of local schools, libraries have the necessary equipment, and that is why the number of users of public Internet in Moldtelecom decreased.

6.3.2.4 Fees for services

What fees or other requirements exist in order to access and use the information in the venues? (registration, user fees, restrictions to certain populations)

If there are fees: What do these fees buy?

Because this venue is a semi-restrained one, they decide by themselves how to manage their accounts

The Moldtelecom staff informs the population without charge about: the state of telephone account; the order of installation, re-registering of a telephone station; the addresses of Payment Collection Centers; the information about "coded access" service, Additional Services, Internet services and related service packages; tariff for any service provided by Moldtelecom, etc.

The fee for Public Internet is 7 MDL per hour (0.7 US Dollars). If the user stays more than 3 hours, he pays less getting a discount.

It is not profitable for this venue, that is why there are units that cancelled the service of Public Internet.

Indicate amount in local currency 7 Moldavian Lei

Equivalent in US Dollars: 0.7

Date of estimate 08.07.08.

and local currency name Moldavian leu

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

In all Moldtelecom Centers the fees are the same.

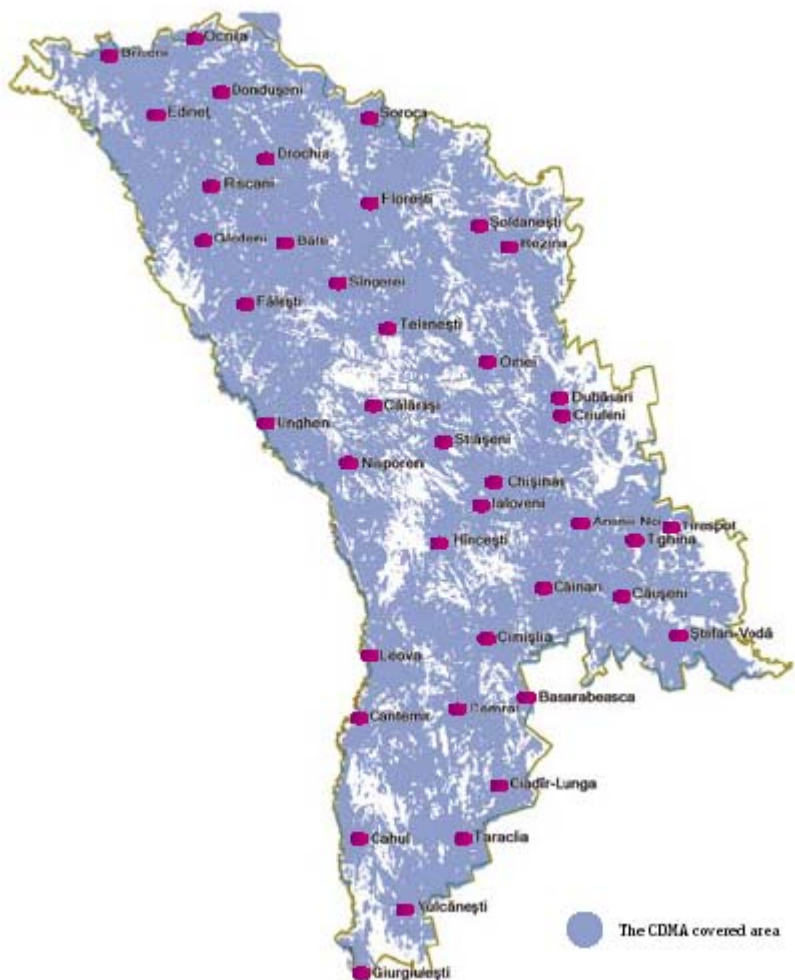
6.3.2.5 Geographic distribution

What is the distribution of the venues in terms of their geographic location?

Complement any details not already included in section **2.1: Venue Selection**.

6.3.2.5.1 Map

If available, insert a map that displays the geographic distribution of this type of venue in the country (expand to the size you need).



Description of map:

The Moldtelecom offices are spread over the republic. Every county has one office. In Chisinau there are 3 offices. Because it is not profitable to offer public access to Internet, there is a tendency to exclude this kind of service.

6.3.2.6 Other factors affecting access

Other factors that affect equitable access to public information in this type of venue, not covered above?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

6.3.3 Capacity and relevance

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of CAPACITY ecosystem in this type of venue (human capacity, locally relevant content, integration into daily routines, socio-cultural factors, trust in technology, social appropriation of technology)?

As an Internet provider, Moldtelecom proposes convenient tariff plans for citizens. Day by day the number of people who have Internet at home is higher. Especially it is increasing the number of

subscribers from rural areas, because usually it is the unique source of Internet there.

6.3.3.1 Staff size

How many people work in a typical facility for this type of venue? (full time-equivalent employees or contractors; describe any significant variations, i.e., large, medium and small libraries in the country)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

In a typical Telecommunication Center work 10-15 employees, and 3-5 of them are operators. There are some variations: in Moldtelecom offices located in municipalities Chisinau and Balti and in TAU Gagauzia the number of staff is bigger than in the rest of Telecommunication Centers.

During the last 2 years Moldtelecom extended its services, offering convenient Internet packages for population. This was the reason of public Internet to become useless. This year some of Moldtelecom centers renounced to public Internet.

6.3.3.2 Staff training

What is the overall capacity of the staff (i.e., librarians, telecentres operators) to help users access and use public access to information and communication services offered in this venue? Differentiate by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

(v) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

(vi) For Public Libraries, indicate if Library School training is available and/or required for librarians.

In all offices there is the necessary number of personnel that helps users to use information & communication services offered in this venue. One of the problems is that in counties there are a lot of operators who are not trained in Internet services, or even if they are trained, it is an elementary knowledge. So there were introduced ICT services, but the policy of personnel was not reviewed.

6.3.3.3 Services offered

What kind of services does this type of venue offer to the public? (i.e., access to books, magazines; meeting and conference rooms; audio/video programs, computers, Internet, other). Include Digital ICT services if offered.

Services Offered

Comments

1. Crossnet

is addressed to companies that need data or voice transport services

2. Wireless Crossnet

permits the realization of VPN network from any point covered by CDMA, with a single price, not taking into account the volume of data supplied.

3. ISDN BRI

gives the possibility of simultaneous voice and data communication, using the same telephonic line. The main advantages of the service are: performance of voice conversation, 2 call lines, high speed of the Internet network. The service is particularly oriented to corporative subscribers.

4. Internet Dial-up

There are two types available:
1. Personal Internet. Designed for users who have telephone lines and computer with modem. Requires monthly subscription.

	2. Total Internet. Designed for users who have telephone lines and computers with modem. Available 24 hours a day, without subscription, advance payment, connection or contract payment. Access is available at any point in the republic and has a unique tariff per minute.
5. Dedicate Internet	requested by economic agents. Provides Internet connection via hired circuits (dedicated lines).
6. Public Internet	Available in Moldtelecom Public Offices throughout the territory of the republic.
7. Videotelephony	brings a new aspect to traditional telephonic communication. Offers the possibility to have direct visual contact with the speaker. Functional on national and international levels. Available in Chisinau and Balti municipalities, as well as in all other district centers.
8. Free Phone	free calls for callers. The expenditures for the telephone calls are on the account of the receiver.
9. MaxDSL	Launched in April 2005 over the Republic of Moldova, is a broadband service based on ADSL technology. It offers the possibility of connecting to the "Internet" network with a speed ranging from 128 Kbps to 1024 Kbps. This service offers a balance between optimal price and quality, and for this reason, is widely used for Internet access in the majority of developed countries. The number of subscribers of „Moldtelecom“, J.S.C.'s MaxDSL service is high. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Moldova named „MaxDSL“ the „Commercial Brand of the Year 2005“.

6.3.3.4 Programs for underserved communities

Describe if this venue has programs specifically intended to reach underserved communities, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Moldtelocom offers reduction for the call fee for disabled persons, for those who fought in the Second World War, those people who participated in the work of liquidation of the damage from CAE Chernobyl. They benefit of all discounts on packages provided by the law in force.

6.3.3.5 Relevant content

What type of locally relevant content is available? What else is needed? Who is doing it?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Available Content:

Public access to the Internet

Other Content Needed:

Information about employment in republic, because there is such content on the Internet, but it refers only to jobs in municipality or abroad. Another needed content with free access is the Official Gazette. To subscribe for it is too expensive and if it would be posted permanently on Internet it would be very useful .

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

Source:

6.3.3.6 Services and information available in local languages

Describe the availability of services and contents relevant to human development that are available in **local languages** in this type of venue? (i.e., info on health, education, government services, etc)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

All kinds of information can be found on the Internet. All information is in local languages. In the south region there is a problem with publicity, and announcements. All of these are in Romanian, and local population can not understand their message.

6.3.3.7 Types of uses

What do people USE the venues for (most frequent kinds of information and services people seek in them, activities they carry out in them)?

(iii) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Refer to section **3.4 Charts: Information Needs** and complement here as needed.

People who come to Moldtelecom for accessing Internet in their offices are pupils, students and most of them do not have Internet at home. Unlike Internet cafes, Moldtelecom offices have introduced restrictions for games. That is why the computers are used especially for web browsing, e-mail, chat. Moldtelecom Internet offices are used also for taping, for preparing home work or presentations.

This year Moldtelecom reduced public access to the Internet because it is not profitable for it.

6.3.3.8 Number, type, and frequency of users

Refer to section **3.4 Charts: Information Needs**. Complement here as needed.

In municipalities users are pupils and students. They may come to this venue once or may become trustily users. It depends on the existence of other similar venues around. In counties most of users are pupils. Usually, they come regularly to Moldtelecom. These users are hanging around this venue, till they get to have a computer at home. The conditions for work are better than in Internet cafés, but there is a restriction for games. We must mention that it is a policy of Moldtelecom to select their users.

6.3.3.9 Users capacity to use information and services offered

What is the overall capacity of the users to take advantage of public access to information and communication resources, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The urban population where these are located benefits most by the information and services offered by Telecommunication Centers, and less the population from rural areas. Company "Moldtelecom" is a Joined Stock Company, the State being the unique stockholder. It is quite difficult to get information about their number of users etc. Some of their data show that company's client database has achieved the number of 1 004 182 customers (2007).

6.3.3.10 Training Courses for Users

Describe training courses offered to the public at this venue, and if they offer some kind of testing and certification.

Training courses: There are no trainings for users in Moldtelecom offices. The service of Public Internet offers 2-4 computers in counties.

ICT specific training courses:

6.3.3.11 Integration into daily routines

How easy is it for users to integrate the information and services offered in this type of venue into their daily lives? (offer concrete solutions to their needs and problems, make it easier to solve them at this venue than in other places)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Moldtelecom offers up-to-date services like videotelephony, videoconference, IP-telephony, ADSL Internet access etc. that offer new possibilities to solve population needs and problems. These services are mostly used by persons that have family members, relatives etc. abroad and these are a new opportunity to communicate with them.

6.3.3.12 Users perceptions about the venue

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the venue (not necessarily its specific services, but the venue itself: i.e., what do people generally think about libraries? Are they places that are "cool" or "only for elites" etc?), differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)? This includes perception by people who do not use the venue.

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

As Moldtelecom branches offer useful services for population in the ICT field, their social value is important. General opinion of the population about Telecommunication Centers is not positive, as it is a monopolist enterprise on the market of informatics and the taxes for its services are quite high. But lately it offers attractive Domestic Internet packages. As we mentioned, the number of rural subscribers considerably increased.

6.3.3.13 Social appropriation of information and generation of new knowledge

What activities, products and services are users undertaking that exhibit new levels of social appropriation of technologies and generation of knowledge? For example, how are users generating and disseminating new knowledge, products and services through their use of this venue? (see category 13 in Real Access Framework for Social Appropriation of Technology).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Moldtelecom offers access to the Internet that exhibits new levels of social appropriation of technologies and generation of knowledge. The problem is that offices are only in centers of the counties, and they are rather few for users request. For rural population is difficult to move to those offices. Also there are a few places of work for such a big institution.

6.3.3.14 Trust, safety, and privacy

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the safety, security and privacy (TRUST) of the information and services offered in this venue?

General opinion about Telecom is that the prices they are offering are too high for most of the population. They are the monopolist in this sector in Moldova and they dictate the prices.

6.3.3.15 Gaps and opportunities in information and services offered

What other information gaps and opportunities exist, which are not being met? (other information/services people need that are not being met there and could be offered, especially through Digital ICT services)

To develop and implement special programs for underserved communities and make easier the access to their services for rural population.

6.3.4 Enabling environment

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of the ENVIRONMENT ecosystem in this type of venue (local economy, national economy, legal and regulatory framework, political will and public support, regional and international context)?

The national environment is supportive for this type of venue, as it is a company the state is the unique stockholder. They are monopolist on the country market in this filed. But the environment is not supportive for other private companies that want to extend their services on the market.

6.3.4.1 Local and national economy

Describe the local and national economic environment and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section **3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment**, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

According to available information the biggest amount - 983,3 million lei – was invested by JSC MOLDTELECOM in fixed and mobile telephony, as well as in data transport. The turnover of this market increased, compared with 2005, by 50,4% and amounted to 196,22 million lei, of which 88,43% made the revenues obtained from data transport and Internet access service providing. In terms of turnover, as of December 31, 2006 the leader on this market, was JSC MOLDTELECOM with 43,93. The number of broadband connections in 2006 increased by 105, 9% and totaled 438,2 thousand. The number of subscribers that accessed the Internet via Dial-Up increased in 2006 by 41,8%, from 50,7 thousand to 71,9 thousand, mainly due to the extension of Dial-Up Internet access in rural areas and due to more affordable tariffs. In comparison with European countries, the penetration rate of broadband connections in the Republic of Moldova is very low. In Denmark, for instance, it is 26,5%,

while in Moldova –only 0,64%. It is evident that this type of Internet connections is not yet widely used, which leaves high potential for development.

6.3.4.2 Legal and regulatory framework

Describe the legal and regulatory framework and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section **3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment**, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Because Moldtelecom is a semi-restricted institution, it decides by itself, which are the opportunities to introduce or to exclude a kind of service.

6.3.4.3 Political will and public support

What is the level of political will and public support for this type of venue? (refer to and complement section **3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment**, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

describe

6.3.4.4 Organization and networking

Describe if the facilities in this type of venue organized in any network, association or other collective body? (i.e., national public library system, telecentre franchise or network, etc)?

In order to "increase the level of use of the Internet, providing on-line services to citizens and training in the use of computers" under MDI subdivisions have been created and activates six points of public access to the Internet. S.A. Moldtelecom has 40 Public Centers with access to the Internet with a capacity of 160 seats allocated in all regional centers of the Republic of Moldova. This year there is a tendency to stop offering public internet because it is not profitable for the company, also there are not so many users requesting that kind of service because of the fees.

6.3.4.5 Partnerships

Describe notable public-private partnerships in support of this type of venue.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Moldtelecom has also Internet packages for private organizations. The tariff plan is convenient for both of them.

6.3.4.6 Other environment factors

Other factors in the environment that affect access and use of information in this kind of venue, not covered above?

6.3.5 For publicly funded venues only: Revenue streams

This section is meant specifically for publicly-funded venues (public libraries, national connectivity programs, etc).

6.3.5.1 Budget

What is the total budget for this public access venue system (applies especially for libraries, answer for other venues if applicable and if available)?

Total Budget for Fiscal Year fiscal year

Local currency name amount (local currency)

Approx. equivalent in USD based on exchange rate of on date .

6.3.5.2 Relative size of budget

How large (or small) is this budget in relation to other funding streams? (this is a way to show, in financial terms, how much the government cares about information and public access as compared to a variety of other issues in the country).

Relative Size of Budget for same year	Total budget (local currency)	Comments
Total national budget		
Education		
Other (name)		
Public libraries		

Other Comments:

6.3.5.3 Sources of funding

What are the sources of funding for this public access venue system?

Sources of funding:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Government sources:		
International donors:		
National donors:		
User fees/services:		
Other (name)		

Other (name)

Other (name)

Other Comments:

6.3.5.4 Paths and flows of resources

How do resources get allocated and disbursed to the actual venues? For the principal funders, and especially for the public sources, what is the flow of funds? How are the funds raised (what tax stream), what path do the tax streams flow before they get to the specific venues? Who makes decisions about this funding?

6.3.5.5 Fees and cost recovery

Describe if there are user fees or any other type of cost recovery. How does it affect service delivery and usage?

Fees provided by Moldtelecom on Public access to the Internet are not sufficient to recover money for computers, equipment, salaries for the staff, etc. That is why this service is not offered anymore.

6.3.5.6 Cost categories

What are the main cost categories in the operation of this kind of venue? (% of total annual budget)
If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Cost Categories for Operation:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Staff (salaries, benefits)		
Building infrastructure		
Utilities		
Staff Training		
Computers/technology		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
Total	100%	

Other Comments:

6.3.5.7 Recent changes and future trends

Describe any recent changes and anticipated future trends in the funding and revenue streams for this type of venue in the country. Have funding levels risen or decreased dramatically over the past few years? What is the outlook for the foreseeable future?

From 1 June 2008, Moldtelecom launched its new bid for MaxDSL pre-university education institutions included in the Salt (Salt MaxDSL bid), state enterprises and institutions financed from the state budget and local budgets (MaxDSL Gov bid). It will include MaxDSL Jump 3 tariff plans, which will be available in Chisinau, district centers and rural areas connected to the network of data transmission through optical fiber.

6.3.6 Case example for venue 3: Venue Name

Provide a short descriptions and commentary for each type of venue, offering a realistic sense of what the venue looks and feels like in its day to day operation, the kind of people who visit, and the kind of services they receive. Also, the case example indicates what makes the case unique or what features are commonly shared with other venues. A photo and short quotes will make it even more real.

Insert Case Example and Photo here.

THE TELECOMMUNICATION SECTOR IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

The restructuring of the telecommunication sector in the Republic of Moldova was carried out in accordance with international trends initiated in 1993. That year the former Ministry of Communications and Informatics separated the postal network from telecommunications and the

policy and regulatory functions from those of operation. The national operator in providing telecommunication services became the new organized State Enterprise Moldtelecom.

The regulation of telecommunications in the Republic of Moldova was carried out in accordance with the Telecommunication Law adopted in 1995 and modified in 1996, 1998 and 2000. The last modification stipulates the creation of an Independent Regulation Authority. Thus, the National Agency for Regulation in Telecommunication and Informatics (NARTI) was recently created.

Through the foundation of the mentioned Agency sector politics have been separated from the telecommunication market regulatory functions. Simultaneously, the legal and regulatory framework has been improved. A law on computer science has already been elaborated and adopted by Parliament. A draft law on electronic signatures, a law on the protection of individuals with respect to automated personal data processing and a draft law on Government Policy in the telecommunication sector has also been elaborated. Regulations on providing cellular mobile telephony services have been adopted and published. A new National Plan on numbering was recently adopted by the Ministry of Transport and Communications to provide a step towards preparing the Moldavian telecommunication market for activity in competitive conditions.

At present, the only operator of fixed public telecommunication services is Moldtelecom, which was reorganized in January 1999 in a Joint Stock Company. Moldtelecom provides fixed public

services to almost 600 000 clients among which 75% are subscribers of urban networks and 25% of rural networks. Telephone density per 100 inhabitants is 15.3 units and the level of digitalization of commutation systems is about 30%. The construction of optic fibre backbone is at the final stage, which interconnects all telecommunications centres up to the level of the sector and which will provide for high capacity and reliability of the national backbone and access to trunks as international importance - TET, TEL, KAFOS, etc. In 1998 Moldtelecom also began to provide ISDN services. According to obligations, since the Republic of Moldova joined WTO, JSC Moldtelecom will be monopolist over international telephony up to 31 December 2003.

The Government of the Republic of Moldova considers that the privatization of JSC Moldtelecom is one of the most important steps towards carrying out its objectives in this sector. The first initiative of Moldtelecom's privatization took place in 1997, but the investment tender was cancelled. Also the selection of consulting banks was cancelled at the end of 1999, beginning 2000.

In accordance with the Individual Law on the Privatization of Moldtelecom the selection of one strategic partner is stipulated, to whom 51% of company stock will be offered. The privatization is planned for next year.

6.4 Venue 4:

6.4.1 Overall venue assessment

Provide a broad picture of the public access information landscape in this venue, informed by the results of this research.

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of public access information in this type of venue?

The associative sector in Moldova has considerably developed in the last decade, yet in an uneven way. There is a difference between the development of the associative sector in Chisinau, where NGOs have a larger access to information, work with more donors and are more experienced, and the development of the associative sector in the rural communities or in the small towns that are situated far from the capital of the country, where the associative sector is developing more slowly. Most of the non-government organizations involved in activities with significant social impact were created and are being supported mostly by foreign donors.

The main problem of Moldavian NGOs is financial sustainability. So far, neither the government nor the private sector provides real financial assistance to the NGOs. The majority of these organizations that finished their activity have done so mainly because of lack of funding. There are no government procurement opportunities for non-profit providers of services. The NGOs have the right to act as economic agents with the condition that the profit from such an activity would be used exclusively for its statutory goals.

The majority of participants at the study consider that the associative sector from Moldova is in a process of development. Representatives of public organizations have noticed in the last few years a certain increase of registered NGOs, of the quality in activity of many nongovernmental organizations, of efficiency and impact of the implemented projects. However, the associative sector hasn't expended its potential yet. There are just a few constant and efficient NGOs.

6.4.2 Access

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of ACCESS ecosystem in this type of venue (physical access, appropriate technology, affordability)?

At the beginning, NGOs appeared in the central part of the country, especially in Chisinau. The reason is easily understood, given that the life blood of non-governmental organizations, namely information about culture, politics and economics, is centered there. Because this lure has concentrated development of NGOs in Chisinau, the seeds of civil society have not been sown widely in the regions.

According to the data of study, civil society in Moldova is evolving into distinct categories of organizations. One consists of a few well known and advanced NGOs primarily based in the capital city. These organizations have strong organizational capacities, sound financial management systems, diverse sources of funding, strong memberships, positive public images, and abilities to interact with international donors. The other and largest category of NGOs consists of those with limited organizational capacities and that depend on donor support.

The technical equipment of nongovernmental institutions in Moldova is insufficient and the poorest situation is registered at local level. According to the study conducted by Centre Contact in 2008, only 40.8% of the local organizations are equipped with computers and 29.2% have photocopiers. 36.7% of local NGOs possess printers and 38% have access to the Internet. At national level the situation is much better. Over eight institutions out of ten are equipped with computers and more than a half with photocopiers. Two thirds of organizations have printers and three fourths have access to the Internet.

The gaps between rural and urban space reduced on this issue, but are still significant. Almost a quarter of NGOs have no equipment and a half of them do not have access to Internet.

6.4.2.1 Physical access

Describe how accessible this venue is to various population segments, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c), especially the differences between urban and non-urban settings.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The main problem in making these venues best physically accessible is to find a suitable workplace, office. In the city these are very expensive and are bought from personal sources or are hired. Normally, local authorities should involve in office assurance. An example is the Center „La Castania” from Straseni, it activates in favor of old people, asylum, they conduct lessons of English there. Plausible is that local administrative authorities offered them a house for 99 years. That center assured some necessities and offered new jobs for unemployed people. Civil community also is to give some durable alternatives. Another chapter should be the transparency of public funds usage.

6.4.2.2 Appropriate technology and services

Describe how appropriate the technologies, services and information offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

A comparative analysis regarding the insurance of NGOs with technical resources allows claiming that the situation evolved positively during the last five years. According to the above mentioned study, if in 2001 only 23% of organizations had a telephone, presently this is the percentage of organizations which do not have such means of communication. The proportion of organizations equipped with computers increased from 12% to 61,5%, half of the NGOs have access to Internet and posses a

printer, while five years ago only one out of ten organizations had such equipment.

The NGOs in Moldova work in very different fields. The nowadays existing NGOs are involved in almost all possible domains, but analyzing the situation on quantitative terms we find out that almost a half of organizations work in the social or educational field.

The important share of nongovernmental organizations from the sector of education is due mostly to associations of parents and teachers from schools. 14.1% of the total of organizations from the study are NGOs that contribute to communitarian development, carrying out projects of rehabilitation and extension of the local infrastructure.

As regards the office, NGOs from rural areas mostly have an office offered free of charge by the local public administration, school or by an economic agent. Each third rural organization has an office in property. NGOs from urban areas have an office situated in rented space (30.6%) in a space offered free of charge by a public or private institution (25.2%) or in the dwelling of a member of the organization (24.8).

According to the survey data, conducted by Contact Center the Moldavian NGOs provide the following services: Social Services (35%), Trainings (21%), Cultural activities (1%), Human Rights (5%), Environment (4%), Civil society (2%), Information (11%), Social protection (7%).

6.4.2.3 Affordability

Describe how affordable the technologies and services offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The NGOs in Moldova offer mostly free of charge services, which can be explained by the lack of a durable tradition in offering services by the NGOs, by the manner of perception of the term “nonprofit organization”, which at first sight would suggest the offering of services free of charge and the excessive dependence on foreign donors. From the total number of NGOs that provide services the majority offer services in the social domain. It involves measures and actions realized to respond to individual, familial or group social needs in order to prevent and pass over situations of difficulty, vulnerability or dependence to preserve autonomy and protection of the person, to prevent marginalization and social exclusion, to promote social inclusion and to increase quality of life.

These are followed by the services of training in a variety of fields: information technologies, equality of genders, prevention of HIV/AIDS, writing of projects, human rights, youth, volunteering, agriculture, prevention of human trafficking, institutional development of NGOs, and social inclusion of disabled people.

On the third place are the services of information: placing information on websites, public awareness, opportunities and strategies for youth, information technologies, migration, Council of Europe policies, legal and practical aspects on migration, financing programs, juridical information, information on NGO development opportunities, and public awareness on different problems.

Consulting services are based on writing projects, organization management, juridical consulting, medical consulting, consulting on information technology, consulting on elaboration of local and central policies etc.

The study shows that more than 37 NGOs already provide charged services. A third of the budget of the Center CONTACT comes from the revenue generated by economic activities. The Association of Agricultural Manufacturers obtains more than a half of its budget from membership and service fees.

Some NGOs from Moldova are already very active in selling products and services. The types of products and services that are presently charged include: training and development of abilities,

expanding of technical services (consulting in agriculture), studies and analysis of policies, monitoring and evaluation. The mentioned products and services represent mostly abilities and skills that are underdeveloped within the civil society from Moldova and which few organization posses. These services may include the sale of some products as training material or publications.

6.4.2.4 Fees for services

What fees or other requirements exist in order to access and use the information in the venues? (registration, user fees, restrictions to certain populations)

If there are fees: What do these fees buy?

Generally the services provided by NGOs are free of charge. However due to their poor financial sustainability some of them provide services based on fee tax. Community centers created due to Soros Foundation in the beginning offered also free internet services, still they were supported by Soros, but there was a special fee for games. Some centers perceive financial durability in games. In Glodeni there is a fruitful center, which organizes book-keeping trainings. There is a center „Habitat” which organize trainings on book-keeping and English language, the Center from Stefan Voda has such a service as instant photo making. In Drochia and Riscani these centers do transcriptions of VHS cassettes on CD. The library from Crihana Veche every month publishes a Cultural Calendar and when there is a cultural activity in the village, or in the country, they send an electronic booklet. In Ialoveni one of these centers performs Training for Young Mothers. Another interesting project which will start in 2008 sponsored by UNDP and Soros Foundation is the possibility to fill up declarations in electronic way. There is an alternative to practice Workshops, Call Centers. These services could bring financial durability to the centers.

In general, the legal framework classifies any organization that charges a fee for its services as a for-profit entity, subjecting it to tax, accounting and other requirements. As a result, NGOs are reluctant to engage in economic activities, and prefer to establish separate businesses that are not involved with their nonprofit missions. Those that provide services for a fee charge different amounts, depending on the service and the need of funding of the organization.

Indicate amount in local currency

Equivalent in US Dollars:

Date of estimate

and local currency name

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

6.4.2.5 Geographic distribution

What is the distribution of the venues in terms of their geographic location?

Complement any details not already included in section 2.1: Venue Selection.

Nongovernmental organizations are mostly concentrated in urban areas and in the center region of the country, obviously here is located the capital where are 90% of NGOs that operate on national level. NGOs that operate on national level are practically exclusively placed in urban areas (98.1%), as well

as the regional ones (88.6%) though at a smaller extent. Local organizations are distributed equally in urban and rural areas.

The problems related to NGO viability are followed by the inequalities regarding geographic coverage, and more exact regarding penetration into territory.

The explanation of the phenomenon of “centrism” and “urbanism” may be found in the concentration of resources and infrastructure like cultural, political and economic centers that have specialists in different fields, in urban areas and especially in the capital city. Also in Chisinau there is a larger access to different types of information, which constitutes an advantage for the activity of NGOs.

6.4.2.5.1 Map

If available, insert a map that displays the geographic distribution of this type of venue in the country (expand to the size you need).



Description of map:

No map available

6.4.2.6 Other factors affecting access

Other factors that affect equitable access to public information in this type of venue, not covered above?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

In some situations the beneficiaries who are not eligible to have access to free of charge services express their disagreement with the offer of free of charge services to some categories considering themselves “discriminated”. Another situation regards the overall public: sometimes when they receive a product (a book, booklet or information bulletin) they neglect them.

Unfortunately the local public administration continues to look upon NGOs as “devourers of benefits” or without apprehending their input at the development of communities. There are multiple cases when the local public authorities treat NGOs as “concurrence” when they propose initiatives to provide some quality social services (as an example, social assistance for elderly or disabled people, children without parent surveillance). However this is not only the fault of the local public administration, but also of the NGOs which are not yet sufficiently persuasive and perseverant in the relation with the local administration and community.

In the conditions of the Republic of Moldova, characterized by a lack of tradition in providing services by NGOs and collaboration between NGOs and local public administration and lack of coherent and realist strategies of development at national level and strategies of support from donors, it is complicated the realization of innovatory approaches because each initiative confronts barriers of administrative and bureaucratic character, followed by financial barriers.

The development of market economy generated among the beneficiaries the idea that everything has a price, that is why some beneficiaries question the quality of services because they are offered free of charge.

Offering continuously services to make up for the overwhelming demand of services NGOs risk to completely exhaust their material and technical resources, eventually getting to completely close the

organization.

All the above mentioned factors have a negative effect on the accessibility of this type of organizations.

6.4.3 Capacity and relevance

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of CAPACITY ecosystem in this type of venue (human capacity, locally relevant content, integration into daily routines, socio-cultural factors, trust in technology, social appropriation of technology)?

According to the study the majority of NGOs work on volunteering base. One of 10 NGOs has 10 people engaged, and 5 NGOs afford themselves to enroll more than 20 persons. Main staff consists of 2-3 persons (director, vice director and book-keeper). If there are some more activities additional staff is hired.

All information Centers are working on the rule of demand and supply. Pupils and students cope very well. All centers offer them the access and some instructions. There are problems for adults, who are not able to create an e-mail or to look for information.

There are also discrepancies of age. For the youth Internet is a necessity. For adults this became a necessity only in some cases, some transfers, weather etc. For those who are older than 50 it is a strange domain. Their alternative is TV. Welcomed for Moldova would be a programme of training adult people. There is a good example – the Bulgarian Program „click with grandmother”. Grandsons come with their grandparents to the internet-cafe or to some centers and there is also the factor of socialization. It is a good practice of communication between generations. Plausible for Moldova is heeling with webcam for improving the communication.

A phenomenon which is remarkable at this moment is that the user belongs to a Community Center. A tendency is the extension of Intranet services. If someone from this community will hold information, we may appoint a convention of mutual offering of information; in this way all community members could have access to wide spread information of all members. This is a developed network of intranet.

6.4.3.1 Staff size

How many people work in a typical facility for this type of venue? (full time-equivalent employees or contractors; describe any significant variations, i.e., large, medium and small libraries in the country)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The majority of NGOs work on volunteering base. According to the study more than a half of NGOs have no employees and the share of those that have up to five employees is about a fourth of the total number. Only each tenth organization has between 10 and 20 employees and each twenty fifth allows to hire 20 persons. The total number of employees in the 446 organizations that were questioned is of 1942 persons, and that of volunteers is 11945. Each organization in average has 4.4% employees and 27.3% volunteers. The share of employees in an organization diminished. This can be explained by the evolution in the last years of the organizations that work on corporation benefit in the domains of youth, social and agriculture, but also by the boost registered in the domain of communitarian development, where organizations work for the solution of communitarian problems and the absolute majority of them has no employees.

The problem of employee deficit is characteristic for only a relatively small part of organizations. This makes us believe that only a half of the NGOs that have no employees, in fact do not have such need.

It may be because of the specifics of their activities or the activities performed are carried out successfully by volunteers or members of the organization.

This situation is a problem only to 7.7% of the organizations without employees, though they desperately need them and for other 11.5% that also have no employees but need them only at some extent. This is either because the activities they carry out do not ensure sufficient financing for personnel or there is an insufficiency of qualified specialists in rural areas.

6.4.3.2 Staff training

What is the overall capacity of the staff (i.e., librarians, telecentres operators) to help users access and use public access to information and communication services offered in this venue? Differentiate by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

(vii) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

(viii) For Public Libraries, indicate if Library School training is available and/or required for librarians.

The personnel of NGOs is relatively well trained. Half of the members from NGOs have higher education. In the case of organizations with employees the percent of university degree holders is of 56.7%. Another situation is in the case of volunteers. In NGOs with volunteers the share of persons with higher education is only 38,6%, but here must be mentioned that students represent a significant part of volunteers. There is also an obvious contrast between rural and urban areas regarding higher education. There are 20% less persons with higher education.

Members of more than a half NGOs benefited of training in the development of organizational skills during 2005-2006. NGOs from rural areas benefited at the same extent as those from urban areas in the last years. On the other hand in the opinion of NGOs the sector has pronounced needs in training in all domains. However 57% of NGOs consider they need training in fundraising and development of financial resources. Other 45% need training in techniques of involvement and support from citizens.

In the opinion of different NGO members the educational system from Moldova does not satisfy entirely the necessities of training specialists for the nongovernmental sector or those who will work in other sectors including public domain, but will have to collaborate with NGOs. As a result after graduation public clerks have a segmented and distorted image on the sector. Only the students from some faculties have the opportunity to obtain knowledge necessary for the activity in the associative sector. At the same time there examples when local authorities use the potential of NGOs for the training of their own collaborators, financing partially or entirely such courses.

6.4.3.3 Services offered

What kind of services does this type of venue offer to the public? (i.e., access to books, magazines; meeting and conference rooms; audio/video programs, computers, Internet, other). Include Digital ICT services if offered.

Services Offered

Comments

17. Social services

It involves measures and actions realized to respond to individual, familial or group social needs in order to prevent and pass over situations of difficulty, vulnerability or dependence to preserve autonomy and protection of the person, to prevent marginalization and social exclusion, to promote social inclusion and to increase quality of life.

18.	Trainings	It includes a variety of fields: information technologies, equality of genders, prevention of HIV/AIDS, writing of projects, human rights, youth, volunteering, agriculture, prevention of human trafficking, institutional development of NGOs, and social inclusion of disabled people.
19.	Cultural activities	Promotion of national cultural values and traditions, organization of festivals
20.	Human rights	It mostly involves informing and educating the population to get to know their rights and highlighting cases of violation of such rights.
21.	The environment	They propose measures to counteract pollution, protection of environment etc.
22.	Civil society	Trainings of social involvement, decision making.
23.	Information	Placement of information on websites, public awareness, opportunities and strategies for youth, information technologies, migration, Council of Europe policies, legal and practical aspects on migration, financing programs, juridical information, information on NGO development opportunities, public awareness on different problems.
24.	Social protection	Caring for elderly and disabled people, children without parental surveillance, help for unemployed.
25.	Consulting	These services are based on writing projects, organization management, juridical consulting, medical consulting, consulting on information technology, consulting on elaboration of local and central policies etc.
26.		
<p>Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:</p>		
<p><i>6.4.3.4 Programs for underserved communities</i></p> <p>Describe if this venue has programs specifically intended to reach underserved communities, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).</p> <p>If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.</p>		
<p>There are special programs for insurance of rights of disabled people, offering services to vulnerable families. There are special days, hours for offering services or assistance to these categories of visitors, the access to computers, to information. But before coming, they make an appointment.</p>		

6.4.3.5 Relevant content

What type of locally relevant content is available? What else is needed? Who is doing it?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Available Content:

It is mostly concentrated on education due to the significant share of associations of parents and teachers in schools. 14,1% from the total of organizations are NGOs that contribute to communitarian development carrying out projects of rehabilitation and extension of local infrastructures.

Each tenth NGO works in the field of human rights and other 7.4% in the field of youth. Preoccupation for environment is the field of activity for 6.5% of organizations and 4.3% are interested in economical development. Mass media is a preoccupation for 3.4% of NGOs.

There are some domains where the presence of NGOs is quite modest such as European integration, art and culture, science, sport, health, consumer rights, religion, local public administration.

Other Content Needed:

It is necessary to make centers to be professional. Centers should look for necessities, in order to be able to offer possibilities. It should appropriate those who are abroad with those who remain. A good information Center should make people's lives easier. It should offer a diversified demand service.

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

Source:

6.4.3.6 Services and information available in local languages

Describe the availability of services and contents relevant to human development that are available in **local languages** in this type of venue? (i.e., info on health, education, government services, etc)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Most information from NGOs is available in two languages (Romanian and Russian). Depending on the ethnic consistency of the population in the region where the NGO carries out its activities information may also be available in Gagauz, Bulgarian, Ukrainian.

6.4.3.7 Types of uses

What do people USE the venues for (most frequent kinds of information and services people seek in them, activities they carry out in them)?

(iv) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Refer to section 3.4 Charts: Information Needs and complement here as needed.

It depends on the specifics of the organization. People mostly need information or consulting from NGOs.

6.4.3.8 Number, type, and frequency of users

Refer to section 3.4 Charts: Information Needs. Complement here as needed.

6.4.3.9 Users capacity to use information and services offered

What is the overall capacity of the users to take advantage of public access to information and communication resources, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The majority of NGOs have services for all appropriate communities. Students, teachers, librarians visit them, but still there is a lot of people who do not ever enter there.

6.4.3.10 Training courses for users

Describe training courses offered to the public at this venue, and if they offer some kind of testing and certification.

Training courses: there are about 10 centers which have license for book-keeping services and English language trainings. Most of them offer testing, but only a few give certification.

ICT specific training courses:

6.4.3.11 Integration into daily routines

How easy is it for users to integrate the information and services offered in this type of venue into their daily lives? (offer concrete solutions to their needs and problems, make it easier to solve them at this venue than in other places)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

It depends on criteria of age. For the youth Internet is a necessity. For adults this became a necessity only in some cases, some transfers, weather etc. For those who are older than 50 it is a strange domain. Their alternative is TV. Welcomed for Moldova would be a programme of training adult people. There is a good example the Bulgarian Programme „click with grandmother”. Grandsons come with their grandparents to the internet cafe or to some centers and here also is the factor of socialization. It is a good practice of communication between generations. Plausible for Moldova is heeling with webcam for improving communication.

6.4.3.12 Users perceptions about the venue

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the venue (not necessarily its specific services, but the venue itself, i.e., what do people generally think about libraries? Are they places that are “cool” or “only for elites” etc?), differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)? This includes perception by people who do not use the venue...

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Civil society in Moldova remains in a mid- transition stage of development. The public does not have a clear understanding of what an NGO is, which undermines the overall perception of NGOs. In addition, many local organizations are created at the request of donors interested in funding specific projects.

The public considers such organizations “artificial.” Such organizations are not sustainable; once the funding ends, so does the organization. The government is formally supportive of NGO initiatives, but does not hesitate to take advantage of and credit for projects successfully completed by NGOs. In order to avoid arbitrary tax inspections, for-profit businesses prefer to maintain a low profile and avoid formal relationships with NGOs. Generally, NGOs do not make public their activities or promote their public image. Few organizations have developed strong relationships with the media which would ensure they receive more positive coverage. This includes NGO coalitions with high-profiles, such as those that engage in anti-corruption, environmental protection, and associations of farmers, as well as some of the leading NGOs such as IDIS-Viitorul, Contact Center, Credo, and others. Overall, the national media lacks enthusiasm for NGO activities. When they do provide coverage, media outlets prefer to cover “hot-topics” which tend to have a negative impact on the public images of individual NGOs and the NGO sector in general. Local media, however, is somewhat more objective and not as biased.

Information Centers have a good image due to their activity, they cover some necessities in point of community and personal interest.

6.4.3.13 Social appropriation of information and generation of new knowledge

What activities, products and services are users undertaking that exhibit new levels of social appropriation of technologies and generation of knowledge? For example, how are users generating and disseminating new knowledge, products and services through their use of this venue? (see category 13 in Real Access Framework for Social Appropriation of Technology).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

A phenomenon which is remarkable at this moment are the users who belong to Community Centers. A tendency is extension of Intranet services. If someone from this community will hold some information, we may appoint a convention of mutual offering of information; in this way all community members can have access to widespread information from all members. This is a developed network of Intranet.

6.4.3.14 Trust, safety, and privacy

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the safety, security and privacy (TRUST) of the information and services offered in this venue?

In rural areas it is easier and safer to build trust, because in many cases people know each other. Civil society in Moldova remains in a mid-transition stage of development. The public does not have a clear understanding of what an NGO is, which undermines the overall perception of NGOs. In addition, many local organizations are created at the request of donors interested in funding specific projects. The public considers such organizations “artificial.” Such organizations are not sustainable; once the funding ends, so does the organization. The government is formally supportive of NGO initiatives, but does not hesitate to take advantage of and credit for projects successfully completed by NGOs. In order to avoid arbitrary tax inspections, for-profit businesses prefer to maintain a low profile and avoid formal relationships with NGOs. NGOs have yet to develop a formal Code of Ethics, despite numerous debates. The leading NGOs, including Contact Center, CREDO, Transparency International, and others, however, are transparent in their operations, and publish their financial information and activity reports.

6.4.3.15 Gaps and opportunities in information and services offered

What other information gaps and opportunities exist, which are not being met? (other information/services people need that are not being met there and could be offered, especially through Digital ICT services)

It is necessary to make centers professional. Centers should look for necessities, in order to be able to offer possibilities. It should appropriate those who are abroad with those who remain. A good information Center should make people's lives easier. It should offer a diversified demanded service.

6.4.4 Enabling environment

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of the ENVIRONMENT ecosystem in this type of venue (local economy, national economy, legal and regulatory framework, political will and public support, regional and international context)?

The state generally protects the rights of the independent civil sector. Registration is relatively easy, and there is no excessive bureaucratic pressure on NGOs. The main problem for NGOs is a lack of resources for institutional development. The low number of active NGOs is due primarily to the lack of a tradition of civic activism in Moldova, as well as the comparatively negligible support that NGOs receive from private donors in Moldova. Few businesspeople support civil society, and even the low level of domestic support goes mainly into charity rather than activities with greater political salience. Foreign donors remain by far the biggest financial supporters of civil society in Moldova. Any improvement of the present legislative framework, as well as the implementation of the above discussed normative documentation, would provide first of all the possibility to use the enormous potential of the citizens' associations, along with the possibility to solve a number of social problems which the state bodies are currently unable to deal with.

6.4.4.1 Local and national economy

Describe the local and national economic environment and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The biggest problem for NGOs is financial sustainability. So far, neither the government nor the private sector provides real financial assistance to the NGOs. The majority of these organizations that finished their activity have done so mainly because of lack of funding. There are no government procurement opportunities for non-profit providers of services. The NGOs have the right to act as economic agents with the condition that the profit from such an activity would be used exclusively for its statutory goals. After ten years of democratization in Moldova, one can come to the conclusion that a strong civil society is impossible in a nation that has no middle-class, where the rich have no sense of *noblesse oblige* and the poor are too tired, disillusioned and powerless to act.

Moldovan civil society is hardly vibrant or active. On one hand, civil society has relatively benign conditions for development. On the other hand, Moldovan civil society remains largely locked into inertia of passivity and institutional weakness. In 2006, cooperation between governmental institutions and NGOs improved and developed. In the previous year, a number of state institutions, primarily the Parliament and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, declared their intention to institutionalize cooperation with civil society, and at the end of 2005, the Parliament adopted a Concept of Cooperation with Civil Society, which was developed together with the Information Bureau of the Council of Europe in Chisinau. Under this framework of cooperation, NGOs have the possibility to provide direct input in the legislative process in a number of ways. First, expert councils of civil society activists have been created to advise parliamentary commissions. Second, the Parliament publishes on its Web site all

draft laws, and NGOs have 15 days to provide feedback. The Parliament is obliged to inform NGOs which suggestions were accepted or not. Third, the framework provides for the possibility of ad hoc meetings and hearings on concrete issues where the Parliament receives input from NGOs. Access to information from most public institutions is still highly problematic in Moldova, despite a 2000 Law on Access to Information stating that public institutions should provide citizens with information within 15 days of a request, if the information is not classified. Acces-Info, an NGO campaign for transparency and access to information, found that in 2006, only 9 percent of town halls, 24 percent of local police offices, and 25 percent of courts responded to requests for information. In the capital, Chisinau, public institutions have been more open, with 82 percent of ministries and state agencies providing required information

The financial viability of NGOs is limited in large part by Moldova's weak economy. NGOs generally lack funding for their activities and rely primarily on international donors for financial support. Other sources of funding, including fees for services, state support, and income from economic activities, remain low, but are increasing. The leading NGOs are more active in diversifying their funding sources. Over 37 NGO social service organizations provide fee-based services. One-third of the Contact Center's budget, for example, is covered by income generated from economic activities. The Association of Agricultural Producers generates more than 50% of income by providing fee-based services and collecting membership fees. The network of Social Integration Centers for young women and youth, which is run by local NGOs, receives a substantial amount of its support from the local government. Agroinform, a network of 27 local centers, however, supports its activities by charging fees for their services. The Moldovan Network of Legal Clinics receives half of its support from local universities. The National Association of Farmers collects two-thirds of its overall budget from a European foundation grant.

Despite these examples, fundraising and domestic philanthropy are poorly developed due in part to the absence of a culture of philanthropy and a shortage of social responsibility. Though the local governments are in a difficult financial situation, they provide modest support for local NGO activities. The national government is able to provide more substantial funding, but does not do so. The Ministry of Ecology, Construction and Territory Development provides small grants to environmental organizations every year, and the national government also created the National Ecological Fund, which continues to allocate one-half million MDL (US \$39,901) in grants to NGOs.

6.4.4.2 Legal and regulatory framework

Describe the legal and regulatory framework and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

As it appears on paper, the legal framework is generally progressive and consistent with European and international best practices. Many provisions, however, contain unclear phrasing that the government has failed to implement effectively. Vague terminology and inconsistency in the laws and regulations permit government officials to apply the legal framework, including provisions governing registration, taxation, the provision of goods and services for fees, and others, in an arbitrary manner.

NGOs often have an insufficient understanding of the legal framework and as a result are often exposed to harassment by the government. The limited number of attorneys familiar with NGO law generally works for legal organizations based in Chisinau. The Center for Non-Commercial Law, an offshoot of Contact, a national NGO assistance and information organization, offers the most NGO legal services. Its limited number of trained attorneys does not allow it to meet the growing demand for legal services. When legal services are available from other sources, NGOs are often unable to afford them.

The legal framework permits NGOs to engage in economic activities, but fails to create clear rules for them to do so.

6.4.4.3 Political will and public support

What is the level of political will and public support for this type of venue? (refer to and complement section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

In general, the process of registering an NGO is clear. The government, however, deliberately delays registration indicating a growing tendency of complicating and formalizing the registration process, especially at the national level. In past years, the registration process involved greater communication between government officials and the applicant organizations. Now, once an organization submits its application, it may wait a long time only to have its application rejected without a stated reason. NGO registration is much easier at the local level, as community organizations are often formed by local public officials. Though the government pledges fair and equal treatment for civil society organizations, administrative impediments and harassment by government employees are common. A letter from the General Prosecutor's Office (# 25/41623 as of November 17, 2006) tried to legitimize this approach by requiring that prosecutors closely examine an organization's registration documents, its by-laws, its planned activities, and its funding sources. The NGO sector, however, united around the issue and pressured the government to withdraw the letter and other restrictive policies. Government officials are instead using a disguised approach. Under the pretext of financial regulation, tax police and law enforcement officials interfere with NGO activities. Generally, the more active an organization is, the more likely it is to be harassed by the government.

6.4.4.4 Organization and networking

Describe if the facilities in this type of venue organized in any network, association or other collective body? (i.e., national public library system, telecentre franchise or network, etc)?

An attempt to organise the NGOs in a network was done by CONTACT Centre. CONTACT Centre offers information services, trainings, consultations to non-governmental organizations, promoting programs, directed to consolidate organizational capacities of the NGOs. The CONTACT Centre is mostly oriented to NGO's needs, which are at initial point, perceiving the importance of social life support in province.

Thus, since 1999 CONTACT Centre developed a data base with Moldovan NGOs structured by field of activity. However, this is not a requirement for NGOs. NGOs are invited to submit information to Contact about their activity, but it is up to them to register in this data base or not. At the moment in Contact data base are registered 404 NGOs.

As well due to recent state policies for rural area development, Contact center launched a project: Coalition for the Rural Economic Development. This organization consists of 44 NGOs from villages.

6.4.4.5 Partnerships

Describe notable public-private partnerships in support of this type of venue.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Many of the Moldovan non-governmental organizations make important efforts in order to be recognized as a force within society, being capable to contribute to the development of a democratic and prosperous society. It seems that this aspect was highly achieved by the non-governmental

organizations operating in the field of environmental protection and human rights. Others, especially those operating in the field of the economy, were less successful, partly because they are not regarded as formations capable of economic rehabilitation of the country.

The youth non-governmental organizations promoted systematically the concept of collaboration and that of partnership with the state institutions at the local and national levels. During the first years of existence of the associative sector, the governmental institutions in the field of the youth played an important role as mentors for the newly appeared youth organizations, the latter depending on and often serving departmental interests. Later this practice diminished, the organizations of youth becoming partners of dialogue. The youth organizations are now invited to participate in the elaboration and analysis of youth programs, and partnership activities are being implemented. The year 1997 marked the institutionalization of the collaboration between the governmental and non-governmental organizations of youth. The partnership becomes a principle of activity: governmental decisions establish advisory councils of parity at the national and local levels, used by the representatives of youth organizations to participate in the decision making process in the field of the youth. Areas of collaboration between youth organizations and government include:

Information

By providing a circuit of information on democratic values in the field of the youth, youth organizations contributed to the change of the vision and the following acceptance of the European practice as the main principle in the process of elaboration and implementation of governmental programs of public interest in the field of the youth.

Consulting

The institutions responsible for promoting the policy of youth, consulted the NGOs in the process of elaboration of youth policy and youth legislation.

Expert examination

The associative community of youth has participated in the analysis of the projects of governmental decisions and programs which concerns the issues of the youth:

- I. The project law regarding the basis of the youth policy in the Republic of Moldova was elaborated in collaboration between the associative community and the state structures in the field of the youth.
- II. The representatives of the associative community participated in the elaboration of the accreditation methodology of the nongovernmental organizations of youth and in providing subsidies on a competitive and transparency basis. In order to achieve this desideratum, there has been taken the decision to form a committee of accreditation of organizations and selection of projects financed from public funds.

Actually the majority of state programs and of the governmental decisions are of non-governmental origin. The youth organizations regularly provide requests, solutions and suggestions for the problems existing in this field.

Training

Youth NGOs actively participated in the formation and re-training of local administration office workers who are responsible for working with the youth. Collaboration of NGOs with state institutions has increased in recent years, yet does not satisfy all the necessities of the democratic practice. Only the MEYS is presently in close collaboration with the associative community, possessing an institutionalized framework of partnership. However, the continuation and development of a solid and efficient partnership require the re-evaluation of the collaborative practice.

At the present moment, it is true that the dialogue between NGOs operating in the field of the

environment and the authorities at different levels has improved, although slowly. On the one hand, in October 1996 a Memorandum was signed, which stipulated the collaboration, first of all informational, between MEM and the Department for Environmental Protection. On the other hand, this kind of collaboration with the governmental sector failed to be extended to other ministries, mostly due to their leadership that continues the old mentality according to which they were not able to surpass the stage of a society's existence in which the public organizations were founded or fostered by the state.

Yet undoubtedly the capacity of self-affirmation of the environmental NGOs exists (the real non-governmental organizations, not the fictitious ones), but at present, there is a need to overcome the constraints from the incomplete legislative framework, or from the incapacity of some governmental structures to accept the role of the NGOs operating in the field of the environment have to play in a civil society which is democratically oriented. Also, the rejection of the non-governmental sector by the state administration is due to the existence in the third sector of the "ghost" NGOs, whose presence is useless and is nothing but a continuous expectation of money and indications from the state. Until their inactivity and involvement in activities alien to environmental protection don't put an end to their existence, these pseudo-NGOs will continue to damage the process of a normal dialogue between the non-governmental and governmental sectors, especially by compromising the former in front of the latter.

6.4.4.6 Other environment factors

Other factors in the environment that affect access and use of information in this kind of venue, not covered above?

6.4.5 For publicly funded venues only: Revenue streams

This section is meant specifically for publicly-funded venues (public libraries, national connectivity programs, etc).

6.4.5.1 Budget

What is the total budget for this public access venue system (applies especially for libraries, answer for other venues if applicable and if available)?

Total Budget for Fiscal Year: No available data

Local currency name amount (local currency)

Approx. equivalent in USD based on exchange rate of on date .

6.4.5.2 Relative size of budget

How large (or small) is this budget in relation to other funding streams? (this is a way to show, in financial terms, how much the government cares about information and public access as compared to a variety of other issues in the country).

Relative Size of Budget	Total budget	Comments
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for same year	(local currency)
Total national budget	
Education	
Other (name)	
Public libraries	

Other Comments:

describe

6.4.5.3 Sources of funding

What are the sources of funding for this public access venue system?

Sources of funding:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Government sources:	5	<p>The contribution offered by the Government is usually in form of tax relief, subventions and direct financing which also includes grants for different purposes and payment for services.</p> <p>The contribution of local authorities comprises direct contracting of NGO for providing certain services, offering of financial support for implementing state programs and offer of office space for the activities of the NGOs.</p>
International donors:	47	<p>In Moldova there are only a few partnerships between NGOs and the private sector. Most of these partnerships are supported by donor agencies with considerable financial support from abroad such as the World Bank, <i>Citizen Participation Program</i>, IREX, USAID.</p>
National donors:	10	<p>National donors are mostly economic agents which support NGOs by the following actions:</p>

		contracting NGOs for some services, donate sums of money, sponsor NGO activities, sends specialists, offer material support (equipment, office etc.), grants (in case collaborators of the company work as volunteers in the NGO), provide training for the members of NGOs.
User fees/services:	22	Paid by the members of the NGO for membership and/or by users of NGO services.
Other (name)		
Other (name)		
Other (name)		

Other Comments:

6.4.5.4 Paths and flows of resources

How do resources get allocated and disbursed to the actual venues? For the principal funders, and especially for the public sources, what is the flow of funds? How are the funds raised (what tax stream), what path do the tax streams flow before they get to the specific venues? Who makes decisions about this funding?

Obtaining funds is a problem of maximum importance for NGOs. Financial resources of NGOs come from different sources, the greatest proportion belongs to foreign donors, and in small organizations membership fees are an important source for the budget. The degree of transparency of NGOs is directly proportional with the size of budgets. In the case of large budgets transparency is higher; organizations with small budgets are less transparent. This is because NGOs with significant budgets have to perform financial audit. From this point of view NGOs with budgets within \$5,000 – 10,000 are less transparent.

The main sources of financing are the funds from donors in form of grants and income from charged services. Money from foreign donors represents almost a half of the total financings. Grants and contracts from donors form the largest part of budgets for the national and regional NGOs, while in local ones their share is almost equal to the sums paid by members as membership fees.

Another source for the forming of budgets represents the contribution of citizens and economic agents. The sources from economic activities compatible with the mission of the NGO and the funds allocated from the local budget by authorities for contracting the services provided by the NGOs are insignificant. Among the main reasons for modest NGO economic activities are legal discordances regarding NGO economic activities, especially carrying out nonprofit activities, the treatment applied to these organizations by fiscal authorities as subjects of entrepreneurship, the low level of knowledge of accounting standards specific to the activity of NGOs, insufficient cooperation with the private sector and state institutions, which could acquire some services of the NGOs. To these is added the small

power of acquisition of the citizens. Some aspects cited here is caused by insufficient information detained by citizens and the private sector regarding activities carried out by NGOs and their specifics, the lack of transparence in the activity of NGOs and poor cooperation with mass media. The other difficulties are consequence of insignificant cooperation between NGOs and the local and central public authorities.

6.4.5.5 Fees and cost recovery

Describe if there are user fees or any other type of cost recovery. How does it affect service delivery and usage?

The largest share in cost recovery of NGOs is supported by financing institutions, followed by income from fees. The public administration is situated on the third place, followed by the business environment.

6.4.5.6 Cost categories

What are the main cost categories in the operation of this kind of venue? (% of total annual budget)
If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Cost Categories for Operation:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Staff (salaries, benefits)		
Building infrastructure		
Utilities		
Staff Training		
Computers/technology		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
Total	100%	

Other Comments:

6.4.5.7 Recent changes and future trends

Describe any recent changes and anticipated future trends in the funding and revenue streams for this type of venue in the country. Have funding levels risen or decreased dramatically over the past few years? What is

the outlook for the foreseeable future?

As the government makes an effort to strengthen its ties to EU institutions and international donors, relations between the government and the NGO sector have become less adversarial. Civil society, for example, has a more equal voice in its dialogue with officials, and government officials understand that civil society may have a constructive and valuable role in promoting political and economic development. In 2006, Parliament passed the Concept of Cooperation to formalize its relations with NGOs and promote open and ongoing consultations with NGO representatives, primarily concerning lawmaking activities. These positive developments in the political culture have resulted in a new attitude towards NGOs, which in turn promoted a new process for civic participation. For example, 26 organizations formed the Anti-Corruption Alliance of NGOs, reflecting the public's concern for monitoring government activities and curbing corruption. In addition, an ad hoc working group made up of seven leading public policy organizations provided comments on the draft legislation concerning public finance and decentralization of local governance. At the local level, community organizations increased their activities in building local constituencies and partnering with public authorities on common projects.

6.4.6 Case example for venue 4: NGOs

Provide a short descriptions and commentary for each type of venue, offering a realistic sense of what the venue looks and feels like in its day to day operation, the kind of people who visit, and the kind of services they receive. Also, the case example indicates what makes the case unique or what features are commonly shared with other venues. A photo and short quotes will make it even more real.

Insert Case Example and Photo here.



"Eco Ialoveni" Public Association is a non-government, non-profit organization founded in 1999 by a group of students from the ecology and environment protection faculty of the State University of Moldova, under the leadership of Grigore Marandici and Alexandru Castraşan.

The association is registered with the Ialoveni Rayon Executive Committee under No.12 of 31 March 1999. Before registration, the association had 7 members - all of them University students.

Carrying out environmental activities for some time, the association members came to realize that the environmental problems were not the only ones to resolve, while their solution was tightly connected by social and economic problems faced by the localities. This is why the association modified its directions of activity, focusing mainly on the development of Ialoveni rayon localities resulting from several social, cultural, and ecological activities and programs.

To accomplish the association goals it was important to involve the public authorities and citizens in the resolution of existing problems, and cooperation with other organizations, structures, and institutions. The association organizes the most of its activities jointly with its partners and we believe that cooperation is a very important factor in the development of localities.

To date, the organization membership joins persons of various ages and specialties, students, teachers, philosophy doctors in ecological and medical sciences. There are over 30 active members carrying out activities aimed at sustainable community development and preserving Terra's treasures for the future generations.

In 2000, the Association implemented the project "AQUAE FONTIS" (Spring water), funded by the Regional Environmental Center Moldova. The water quality from springs and wells situated within the animal breeding zones of Chisinau County was tested within this project. This activity resulted in publication of a flier with the same title, which included an analysis of water quality in the wells covered by the project and reasons for their pollution. The presentation of this flier was made within the round table discussion on the topic "The state of underground waters in Chişinău County and Chişinău Municipality", organized within the same project. The round table discussion was attended by representatives of other NGOs from the republic, specialists in environmental issues from the State University of Moldova, State University of Medicine and Pharmaceutics "N. Testemiţeanu", State Ecological Inspectorate, Judet Center for Preventive Medicine, civil society and mass media representatives. The flier was distributed for free to various enterprises, organizations, and libraries. The results of the project included publication of 2 articles in the local press and 2 mentions by the students participating in the project implementation at scientific conferences held within the State University of Moldova.

7 Access Factors and Strategic Recommendations

7.1 Summary of Lessons in Country

7.1.1 Information needs

What are the most critical information needs by underserved communities that are currently not being adequately met by public access to information and communication venues?

The most critical information needs by underserved communities that are currently not being adequately met by public access to information and communication venues: (i) country legislation, policies and regulatory framework; (ii) Access to e-governance services; (iii) Information in agriculture sector: new technologies, markets, consultations, information about prices for products, possibilities for buying seeds etc.; (iv) offers of job opportunities.

7.1.2 Where people go

Where do people go for public access to information and communication in the country, especially underserved communities?

Usually people go for public access to information and communication in public libraries and cybercafés. Public libraries still remain the main venues that offer their services free of charge and with no restrictions to public. In some rural localities these are the only venue that offers such kind of services. Only a few of them provide special programs for underserved communities.

Cyber cafes and telecenters are mostly used by young people, especially pupils and students who are looking for information for their education, jobs etc. Sometimes these are also used by middle-aged persons, who are also searching for some kind of information or are using chats to communicate with their relatives from abroad.

Most of NGOs are created with the aim to provide services for underserved communities (poor people, unemployed, elderly etc.). However most of them are concentrated in urban areas and in the center region of the country, obviously here is the capital where are 90% of NGOs that operate on national level. NGOs that operate on national level are practically exclusively placed in urban areas (98.1%), as well as the regional ones (88.6%) though at a smaller extent. Local organizations are distributed equally in urban and rural areas.

7.1.3 How access, capacity, and environment affects public access

How do access, capacity and environment affect public access to information and communication venues in the country? (Refer to details under access, capacity and environment in research design document).

Local and national economy environment is one of the main factors affecting public access to information and communication venues in Moldova. Due to severe economic problems that Moldova is facing in the last decade, there has not been an adequate financing of these venues, or better saying a lack of it. This led to the worsening of situation in public library system.

7.1.4 Role of ICT

What is the role of ICT in public access to information and communication? What untapped opportunities exist?

Role of ICT is very significant in public access to information and communication. The number of users in public libraries where such services are available considerable increased. Also increased the trust of people in these venues. ICT offer new opportunities for population, such as access to needed information and possibility to communicate with friends; relatives etc., especially with those working abroad, as Moldova became a *migrant society*.

More public libraries should be equipped with ICT, especially in small towns and rural areas, as these are in a disadvantaged situation.

7.2 Success Factors and Recommendations

7.2.1 Where to invest resources

How could additional resources (money, people, time, knowledge) be best used to strengthen public access to information and communication venues and practices in the country? (i.e., solutions that would make it more accessible, affordable, appropriate?)

Additional resources should be used for development of public library system with main focus on rural libraries, as these are in a most disadvantaged situation. First of all should be renewed their book fund according to local needs (legislative and regulatory framework; agricultural sector, education, job opportunities etc.). It would be a great achievement if public libraries are equipped with ICT facilities and adjust them to Internet Public Access Points.

Special programs for underserved communities should be developed, implemented and their implementation permanently monitored. A special attention should be given to disabled persons, poor, unemployed and elderly.

7.2.2 Key success factors

What are the key success factors for public access to information and communication to meet information needs of the population, especially underserved communities, and especially through digital ICT?

It would be a great achievement if public libraries are equipped with ICT facilities and adjust them to Internet Public Access Points.

To motivate private economic agents to extend ICT services in rural areas and provide services for other underserved communities by adopting adequate legislation.

7.2.3 Role of ICT

How can public access to information and communication venues in the country be strengthened to offer more meaningful and equitable access to information, especially using digital ICT?

It would be a great achievement if public libraries are equipped with ICT facilities and adjust them to Internet Public Access Points.

To motivate private economic agents to extend ICT services in rural areas and provide services for

other underserved communities by adopting adequate legislation.

7.2.4 Top ten recommendations

What are the Top Ten recommendations for public access to information and communication venues in your country? Make sure you include policy recommendations as part of them.

1. Modify the existing legislative framework of library system by adapting it to nowadays demands – this recommendation came from In-depth interviews conducted with informants from Public Library System. Almost all informants related that the Law on Public Libraries (adopted in 1994) and with some minor modifications afterwards is not supportive to nowadays demands. In 1994 there were no electronic catalogue, there were no electronic data bases, there was no these imperatives to the access to information. Accordingly in the stipulated Law on Libraries there are no such terms as Information Society, Knowledge Society, Communication Society, E-culture, E-library, etc.
2. Conduct trainings with staff of public access venues on fundraising, elaborating project proposals and other important issues related to development of public information system – this recommendation came from In-depth interviews conducted with key informants. Most of librarians, especially in rural areas, don't have necessary skills for fundraising and writing Project Proposals for different funding organisations. Most of librarians employed in rural libraries studied in the soviet period, when was centralised public system and were other requirements. Obviously, these public libraries have a lower chance to benefit from projects, grants etc.
3. Provide public libraries with ICT facilities and adjust them to Internet Public Access Points – this recommendation came from qualitative and quantitative studies. All participants mentioned that public libraries should be provided with ICT facilities and connection to Internet. In situation when the book fund is old and not enough, this would be new opportunities for public libraries users, especially in rural areas, to find necessary information. It was mentioned an increase in the number of users and their trust in these venues where such services exists;
4. Provide legislative and regulatory framework for motivating local economic agents to sponsor and sustain the public access venues - this recommendation came from In-depth interviews conducted with key informants. It was mentioned that economic agents are not motivated to develop their ICT services, especially in rural areas, because these services are not affordable for a great part of population. In order to improve the situation, the Legislative could adopt a Law or decisions to motivate them – i.e. exempt from income taxes, provide financial aid etc.
5. Diversify the sources of financing for public information system by creating a Common Fund, which would create opportunities for the development of these venues - this recommendation came from In-depth interviews conducted with key informants. During the discussions it was revealed that the available funds are not fairly divided – if the locality/ county is well economically developed, accordingly they receive more funds for developing of public libraries and vice-versa the poorer is locality / county is the less funds they receive. That's was proposed to create a Common Fund and to redistribute the funds proportionally and according to local needs. As well these refer to funds from international organisations, donors etc.
6. Conduct an information campaign among local public administration about the importance of public access venues for undeserved communities - this recommendation came from In-depth interviews conducted with key informants. Due to the fact that public libraries are

under the jurisdiction of local public authorities, they are directly dependent on them. If the mayor and local council realize the importance of the public library for the community and are receptive to the information needs of local population, then the allocations for public libraries are higher. Otherwise the public libraries are not developing as necessary and accordingly affect the equitable access to public information. So, the public local administration should be informed about the information needs of underserved population and how this could help to improve their situation.

7. Provide legislative and regulatory framework for motivating local economic agents in rural areas and provide special programs for underserved communities – this recommendation came from In-depth interviews conducted with key informants. It was revealed that economic agents should be motivated to expand their services in rural areas to implement specific programs for underserved communities – i.e. information in agriculture sector: new technologies, markets, consultations, information about prices for products, possibilities for buying seeds etc.; conduct trainings, workshops with farmers; for unemployed – to conduct trainings, workshops with this category of population etc.; for disabled persons etc.
8. Create a commission at the central level that will monitor the fund allocations for public libraries – this recommendation came from In-depth interviews conducted with key informants. According to legislation, Local Public Authorities should annually allocate funds for these venues. However there is no control how Local Public Authorities execute the requirements on public libraries stipulated in the Law on Local Public Administration. Many librarians complained that local authorities approve at the end of the year what amount of money will be spend for public library, but during the year they can reduce the amount declaring that there is need of money for more important local problems.
9. Design specific training programmes in the use of ICTs in order to meet the educational needs of public access venues staff. Training of information professionals should focus not only on new methods and techniques for the development and provision of information and communication services, but also on relevant management skills to ensure the best use of technologies.
10. Ensure nation-wide coordination of ICT implementation process in cultural institutions – this is a general recommendation from qualitative studies. Taking into consideration that in Moldova recently was adopted the Strategy on Building Information Society “E-Moldova” , it is necessary to coordinate and monitor its implementation, especially in rural areas. It is important also to implement e-culture chapter (public libraries) – transform these venues in Public Access Internet Points.

8 Appendices

Please attach on the next pages any other relevant information, resources or materials that can help understand public access information venues in the country.

8.1 List of Countries Included in the Research

Algeria
Argentina
Bangladesh
Brazil
Colombia
Costa Rica
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
Egypt
Georgia
Honduras
Indonesia
Kazakhstan
Kyrgyzstan
Malaysia
Moldova
Mongolia
Namibia
Nepal
Peru
Philippines
South Africa
Sri Lanka
Turkey
Uganda

8.2 Overview of Research Design

The Center for Information & Society (CIS), in partnership with the Information School of the University of Washington, has as part of its core mission the investigation of how inequities in our global society can be reduced through improved access to information and communication technologies (ICT). As part of its research activities, CIS has brought together interdisciplinary teams of researchers to examine the needs, readiness and success factors for public access to information and communication venues through digital ICTs in 24 countries around the world.

Project Goal:

- Understand information needs, and opportunities to strengthen institutions that offer public access to information and communication, especially to underserved communities, and especially through the use of digital ICT: What are the needs, barriers, opportunities and success factors for public access to information and communication to help human development in countries around the world? For the purpose of this study, research is primarily focused on Libraries and Other institutional venues for which access to information has a significant role. This research includes understanding venues where digital ICT is currently offered, *and* also where ICT is not currently offered but there is potential and strong institutional support to include ICT (for example, some public libraries where digital ICT services are currently not offered, but there would be strong interest in offering them).

Libraries include public libraries and other types of libraries that are open to the public. **Other venues** include national initiatives that offer public access to information, either with ICTs (telecentres, cybercafés and the like) or without ICTs (post offices, community centers and similar) and are of significant importance in local contexts.

Project Purpose:

- Inform policy and funding decisions: Inform funders and government decision makers about future program direction and funding allocations
- Contribute to public knowledge: Disseminate results of in-depth country and comparative analyses, including research design and analytical models

To inform project design, CIS adapted the Real Access framework (Bridges.org), analyzing public access to information and communication through a total of 14 research categories grouped under the dimensions of **Access, Capacity & Relevance** and **Enabling Environments**. Adaptation was done in consultation with research partners around the world for the purposes of this study.

The implementation of this project is organized as a two-phase process:

Phase 1: Nov 07 – Feb 15, 2008

During Phase 1, a **Draft Country Report** will be prepared by local research teams in each country. The Draft Country Report includes a Country Profile, a Country Assessment and an early draft of Lessons & Recommendations.

The *Country Profile* is a collection of 50 general descriptive data points drawn from readily accessible sources; CIS pre-populates the reports for each country, and offers them for validation and comments by local teams. Country Profiles provide primarily statistical data that is intended to offer a quick snapshot of each country, including geography, political environment, demographics, economy, education and ICT infrastructure.

Using a common approach to define research processes, local teams will conduct initial fieldwork to inform a *Country Assessment*. The Country Assessment includes both a scan of information needs, especially for underserved communities; and an assessment of public access to information and

communication venues (with or without digital ICT services) and their environment, resulting in a better understanding of gaps, opportunities, and readiness of public access to information initiatives in each country.

During Phase 1, each country team will also complete an early draft of *Success Factors and Recommendations* focused on strengthening public access to information in the country, and identify potential themes and issues for further study in Phase 2.

Phase 1b: Feb 15-Mar 15, 2008

During this period, CIS will conduct a preliminary comparative analysis based on the Draft Country Reports from all participating countries, and suggest feedback and guidance for Phase 2 of the study. The comparative analysis will look for salient trends, emergent themes, patterns, and threads across regions. During this period, next steps will be determined for in-depth country research for Phase 2.

Phase 2: March 2008 – August 15, 2008

Phase 2 will involve a deeper assessment of public access to information and ICTs across all 24 countries. In particular, CIS is interested in deeper probing of the emerging themes and scenarios identified in Phase 1. A **Final Country Report** will include high level analysis, success factors and recommendations to strengthen public access to information and ICTs in each country. Final comparative analysis across countries, with analytical models and scenarios, will be completed by CIS after receiving the Final Country Reports.

Findings will be disseminated publically through reports, academic publications, conferences and consortiums. Each country team is expected to produce at least one publishable paper on their research and findings, plus additional papers emerging out of the comparative analysis and global findings. Publications will be part of the public domain, with the CIS web site, partners' sites, and other publication channels to be identified.

8.3 Annotated Country Profile (Form 2)

Attach here an updated copy of the annotated Country Profile (Form 2).

8.4 Other Appendices

Attach other appendices here, as needed.