

By Jan Piotowski, All Africa.

Geneva — An online tool that can help developing countries plan and implement information and communications technology (ICT) projects could cut failure rates and costs, the latter by up to 80 per cent, a conference has heard.

The Strategic Planning, Architecture, Control and Education (SPACE) platform - currently in 'beta' test' - generates country-specific business and management plans, together with administrative, technological and legal recommendations, according to Amjad Umar, chief executive of NGE Solutions, the company behind the tool. It also cuts the planning process from months to a few hours.



Screenshot from the SPACE homepage (Source: [TechPresident](#) )

Governments and individuals in developing nations often lack the capacity to plan ICT projects, Umar told SciDev.Net during the High-level Segment of the UN Economic and Social Council meeting in Geneva last week (1-4 July).

"In developing countries, failure rates are very high - around 85 per cent - partly because they

don't know what is involved in planning and managing ICT projects," he says.

The high fees of ICT consultants also lock out large parts of the population, including local governments, from the knowledge needed to fill this gap, he adds.

SPACE is an open access platform with a knowledge base that combines information on sectors including education, healthcare, agriculture and economic development with ways to build ICT systems such as broadband access, mobile computing and social networks for these sectors. It allows factors on a country to be included. The platform also takes into account specific considerations for the different requirements of 150 countries.

It also offers project management advice, business simulations and, through an experiences repository, aims to build up best practice examples.

By specifying the requirements and goals of their project with step-by-step instructions, users can quickly generate a plan for implementation, says Umar.

A few similar tools exist, he adds, but they focus only on the planning stages and do not contain sector knowledge.

SPACE is suitable for large- or small-scale projects in both the private and public sectors. Examples include an ICT training centre in Nigeria, an ICT village in Nepal and an entrepreneur in South Sudan who has set up his own consultancy, says Umar. [Read more...](#)