

ABSTRACT

**Mainstreaming ICT in small Caribbean states
A comparative analysis of the experiences of
Antigua & Barbuda, Saint Lucia and St. Kitts & Nevis: 1997 – 2006.**

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Many developing countries have in the past decade embarked on programmes and projects to increase their new information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure as a precursor to the establishment of new service industries. This approach is used as the first building block in the mainstreaming of ICTs in their countries, with other blocks being the training and education of citizens in the use of the technologies, the development of content for new digital media and the amendment of legislation to create the environment for the use of ICTs. Mainstreaming of ICTs is the systematic implementation of new legislation, establishment of the institutional framework, advocacy and training programmes in support of the full integration of ICTs into all aspects of social, economic and political life of a country.

This case study examines how ICTs have been introduced and integrated in selected aspects of the social, economic and political life of three small countries in the Caribbean – Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis and Saint Lucia. The activities and sectors which have been identified for examination and comparison are ICT regulatory and policy performance; e-readiness; ICT expansion; private sector ICT initiatives in tourism and financial sectors; and the formal education system.

The study examines the different legislative frameworks for the expansion of ICT infrastructure in the countries, the trends in the basic ICT indicators over a ten-year period and the political background to ICT policy formulation. It also explores some of the main factors which enabled or hindered integration and mainstreaming of ICTs.

The case study concludes with a discussion and comparative analysis of e-readiness, capacity building and planning for ICT; ICT advocacy and e-Government; and the role of telecommunications liberalization and regulatory reform on the planning for ICT in Small Island Developing States in the Caribbean.

Key Words: Embert Charles; Mainstreaming; ICT; Policy; E-Government; E-readiness; ICT indicators; Planning; Antigua and Barbuda; St. Kitts and Nevis; Saint Lucia.