

# Information Network Village (INVIL) project

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**Organisation:** Ministry of Security and Public Administration

**Country:** Korea

**Level of government:** Central government

**Sector:** General public services

**Type:** Digital, Public Service

**Launched in:** 2001

**Overall development time:**

13 years.

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# Description

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The Information Network Village (INVIL) aims at enabling rural communities to become self-sufficient through the provision of high speed internet access. This reduces the digital divide between urban and rural areas. Through INVIL networks, rural communities are encouraged to exploit the possibilities of e-commerce for their products to foster sustainable growth in their regions. The INVIL networks incorporate participatory management systems and also contribute to the social integration of immigrants. Each community that takes part in INVIL is provided with ICT infrastructure, training and a Community Information Centre.

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## Why the innovation was developed

When INVIL was started in the 1990s, rural isolation was at its peak as a result of rapid industrialisation, starting in the 1970s. Innovation in ICTs further exacerbated the urban-rural information divide. Globalisation and market liberalisation through the WTO, the Uruguay Round, and Free Trade Areas opened the Korean market to imported agricultural products. This development created a vicious circle with domestic growers of agricultural products losing in competitiveness, leading to the impoverishment of rural communities. The INVIL was initiated to provide IT infrastructure to rural villages and educate inhabitants on how to use it for the generation of revenues.

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## Objectives

Improve access, Improve social equity, Increase citizen engagement, Support economic growth

- Establish self-supporting rural communities.
  - Overcome the urban-rural digital divide through ICT infrastructure in rural areas and training of local inhabitants.
  - Create higher income and quality of life in a sustainable way for rural citizens.
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## Main beneficiaries

Businesses, Civil Society, General population, Low-income groups

500 000 inhabitants of rural areas have signed up for the INVIL project as of 2001, resulting in 361 rural INVIL communities.

# Results

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## Service quality

### Accessibility:

361 rural communities and 500 000 individual rural residents have access to high speed internet and INVIL support.

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## Other improvements

KRW 41.2 billion e-commerce income in 2012.



# Development

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## Design

To achieve the goal of building 'free-standing and self-sufficient communities,' the central government initiated the INVIL project as a standard model for implementing ICT infrastructure in rural communities in 2001. Solidarity, residents' willingness to take part in the program, and a detailed plan for improvement were the key criteria considered by the government when selecting target communities.

Design time: five months.

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## Testing

25 communities were taking part in an INVIL pilot project in 2001.

Testing time: one months.

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## Implementation

### Tools used:

- ICT technologies such as high speed network, INVIL portal, e-commerce, smart devices were used to establish information network village infrastructure.
- An Information Network Village Steering Committee was established for encouraging autonomous management by the residents and a structured operation system was set up through Central Council where all the community members take part.

### Resources used:

- Network creation budget:
  - Initial stage of INVIL: KRW 0.3 billion for building high speed Internet networks, Community Information Centres, and the provision of PCs to rural citizens.
  - Current stage: KRW 0.2 billion as PC ownership in rural areas has increased.
- Operation budget:
  - Funds by the central government for education, consulting, central system and website maintenance: USD 33 million.
  - Funds by local governments and communities for costs to run community information centres and manager's wages.
- Other costs for INVIL-related events such as 'Leader's festival for the INVIL' and a farmers' market called 'INVIL festa' that is held every year for public relations purposes.
- Additional resources provided by colleges contributing to the educational activities of INVIL.
- E-bay Korea supports INVIL with a special offers for sales and promotion of INVIL products.

Implementation time: six months.

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## Diffusion

By 2013, a total of 361 INVIL villages were created through 13th phases:

- year 1 (2001): 21
- year 2: 72
- year 3: 75
- years 4/5: 86
- year 6: 26
- year 7: 34
- year 8: 30
- year 9: 12
- year 10: 4
- year 11 (2011): 4

Diffusion time: 12 years.

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## Challenges and solutions



- A conflict among stakeholders (central & local governments, central council, communities etc.) is the key challenge that we have had throughout the whole project.
  - For that matter, we are trying to create more opportunities to communicate with each other by hosting various events, such as the 'Leader's festival for the INVIL' and 'INVIL festa' to strengthen governance systems and build mutual trust.
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## Partnerships

### Local governments

Other Public Sector

Local governments: screen business proposals from the communities and recommend candidates to the central government (including provincial finance); support the development of local digital contents; and provide training for village residents and administrative matters.

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### INVIL Central Council and Central operation agency

Private sector

- INVIL Central Council represented by community leaders: leads INVIL operation and management.
  - Central operation agency: supports the operation for every village's management of the main website.
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### INVIL members (residents of villages)

Civil Society

INVIL members (residents of villages): compose the operation committee itself, develop their business model, operate the community information centre and website etc.

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## Lessons Learned

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### Lessons Learned

- While other public policies have centered on 'giving people fish,' the INVIL initiative was tailored by the approach of 'teaching people how to fish.' What we learned is that public policy designed to promote growth in marginalised regions involves huge amounts of investment to build facilities and other hardware resources. Yet, the approach of 'giving people fish' deprives them of the opportunity to learn how to fish and reduces their willingness, and even their awareness, of the need to fish.
  - Through the INVIL initiative, the Ministry has also learned that continued investment and management based on a long-term vision is the key to its success. It requires much perseverance and investment over the long term to fundamentally change people's awareness and establish a foundation for sustainable growth.
  - Success also requires consistency in the role of the central government and excellent collaboration between the local governments and the communities.
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### Conditions for success

Public-private partnership and sustainable growth.

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