

Building the Caribbean ICT sector
Elements from and for a regional
perspective

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The Caribbean

- 25+ islands and territories,
 - small and bigger markets,
 - highest governments per capita rate
 - dependencies and non diversification
 - diverse and heterogeneous (languages, regimes, development levels, populations, legal systems, history)
 - centripetal trends (commerce, communication)
 - centrifuge trends (necessity)
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The processes impacting regional integration

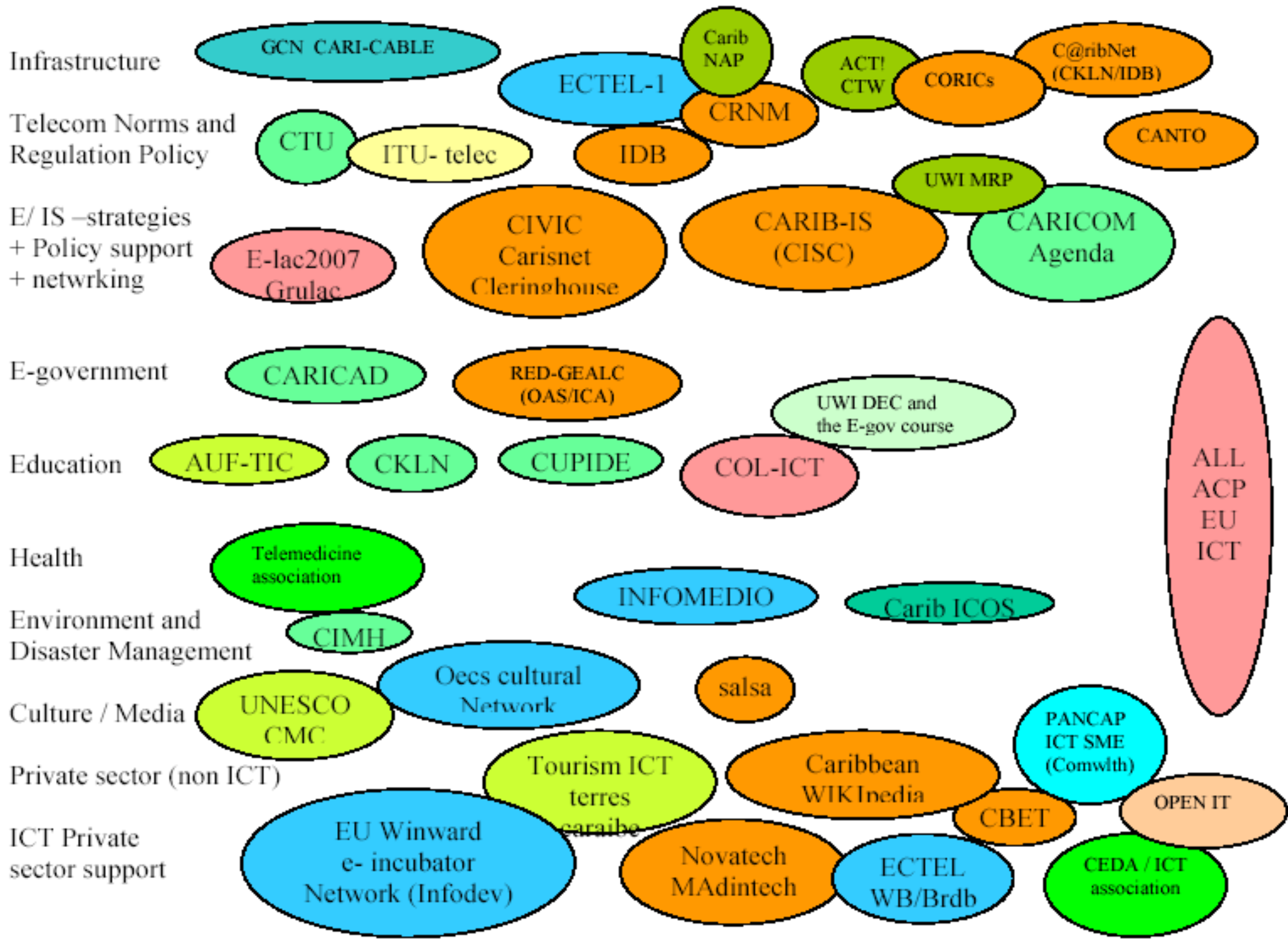
- Institutional/gov driven
 - CARIFORUM / CARICOM
 - OECS
 - AEC (wider)
 - commercial driven
 - CSME (and the DR-caricom FTA)
 - WTO commitments / GATS / ITA / services
 - EPA with Europe
 - FTAs (as DR-CAFTA)
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The Caribbean ICT/IS institutional context

- Policy / Information society
 - Caricom (+DR) the CISC (start in April 07)
 - post WSIS - eLAC 2007, GRULAC
 - Telecommunications and regulation
 - CTU
 - ECTEL (OECS)
 - CROSQ
 - CANTO / OCCUR
 - Internet / Network - Governance:
 - ICANN / LACnic / WGIG,
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***Regional projects with public and
international support***





Elements of a Regional Diagnostic



Caribbean Divides

- Lagging (seems) behind other regions (adoption)
 - Regional Divides: richer countries ahead (but sometimes niches of creativity in the poorer)
 - National Divides: urban/rural and in towns (access - use - benefits)
 - Along the lines on the socio-economic divides
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Institutional Frameworks

- Few have national IS/ICT vision, strategies, and action plans
 - Few countries have IS/ICTs coordination units
 - Few have multi-stakeholder consultation or participation
 - No regional mechanism for coordination – no one is in charge
 - No/little voice in international negotiations and forums (WTO FTLA EPA ITU etc)
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• *Low ICT adoption*

- Embryonic e-government
 - Experimental e-Health
 - little SME adoption (big businesses yes)
 - Insignificant e-commerce, (opportunities emerging digital culture, ethnic foods, crafts)
 - Growing e-education but whole education needs a change
 - Limited citizens use/empowerment (chat, buy and email)
 - ➔ Little social/economic impacts on the majority people lives (indeed cultural)
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Access and technologies

- Most countries telecomm costs are high
- Competition only in cellular telephony
- Problems with de facto monopolies and regulation capacity
- Telecenters and cyber cafes spreading but still large uncovered areas
- High cost of Hard and Software
- Little Software development



• *ICT Industry*

- Quite limited
 - Mostly Installation and maintenance –software resellers
 - Few call centers (low end) – some big failures – BPO trends
 - Even clone assembling declines
 - Some small local solutions developments
 - Few islands have advanced know how
 - Problems to pay proprietary licenses
 - Few open source initiatives
 - Limited by expensive costs, regulations, HR and investment capacity
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Legal E-frameworks

- Need for frameworks and law and regulations in data protection, electronic transactions, digital signature, computer misuse, Intellectual Property etc.
 - Only one country seems to has the complete set
 - Regulation of new technologies (VOIP. WIFI etc) problematic
 - Inhibiting obsolete indirect legislation (typewriter)
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IS Monitoring

- Many studies / repeated / focused
- Few valuable sources IS progress / social impact
- No observatories nor national nor regional



Skills

- Many Training initiatives in the basics use segment
 - Little capacity to develop, design and implement ICT4D / strategic adoption (how to integrate ICT in organisations)
 - Brain drain “headache” / chicken and egg
 - Non-Sustainable jobs and positions
 - Some keep them interested and up to date
 - Many Loops
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Awareness

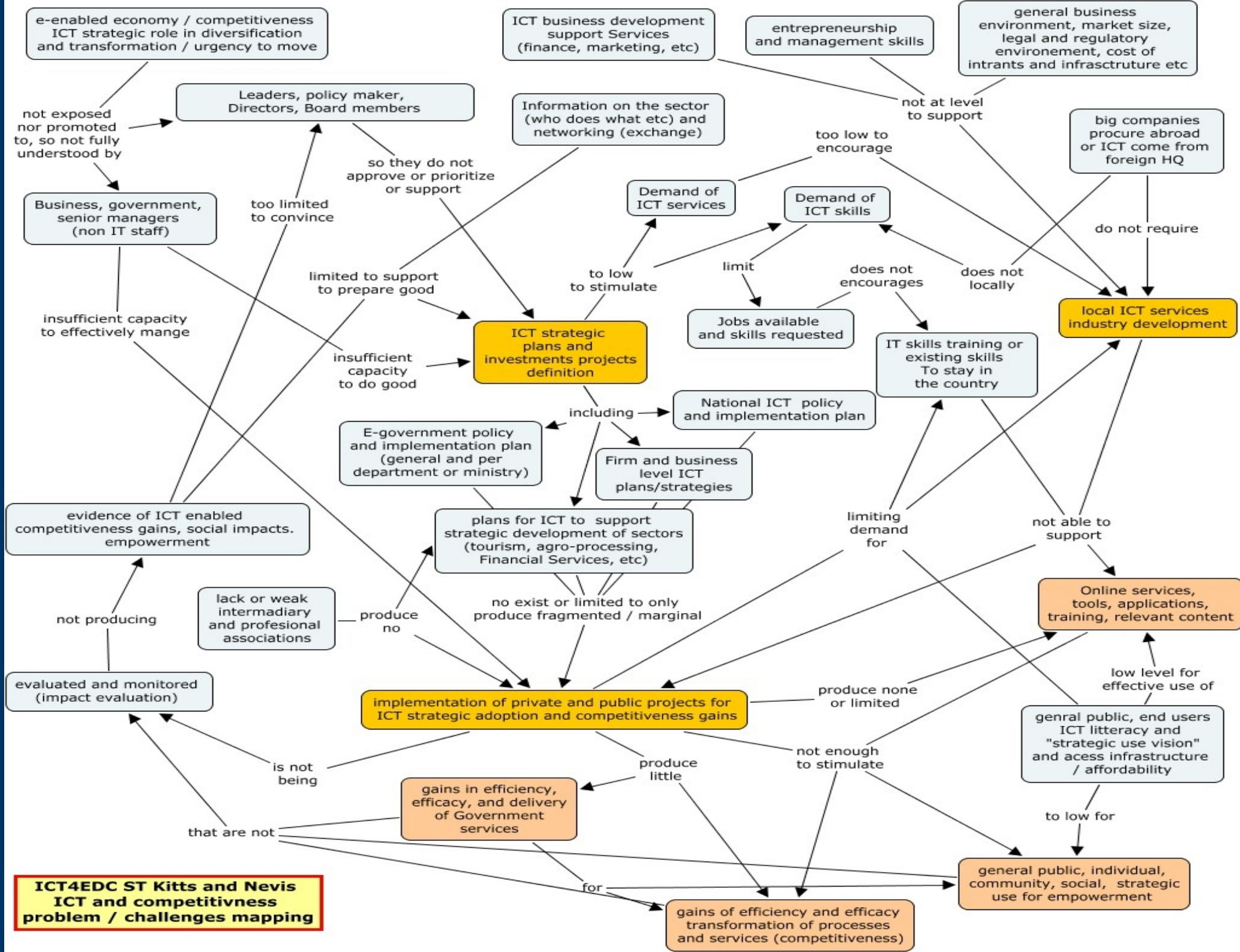
- Hype and fun - All want to do it
- But few “know-how” to mainstream ICT in sectors, to design and implement adoption process and strategies
- Stronger “we need to eat first” voices
- Low understanding = low policy/budget Support



Case study

The ICT services sector and the and adoption of ICTs for diversification, competetiveness and a knowledge base economy in a small Caribbean island.





The complex problematic

- lack of understanding awareness and ICT management capacity ---> no IT strategic implementation / reengineering (in .Gov Edu .Com . Org) --> NO DEMAND--> No Investment --> no captive HR/skills --> no ICT sector development
 - + non enabling framework (costs, HR, finance access, legal and regulatory framework)
 - + entrepreneurship and “businessisation”
 - + size and regional isolation – lack of networks
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Long list of needed actions

- Policies that stimulate both offer and demand
 - Harmonized regional enabling background/regulations, and regional policies
 - Professionalize businesses
 - HR Capacity dev and Retention
 - Financing and access to financial markets
 - Reengineering and transforming organizations
 - Regional Alliances and partnership to supply market
 - Open source opportunities for local creativity
 - Support Network: requested by partners and IO
 - Access and Community access
 - Statistics and observatories
 - among other....
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Building a Caribbean ICT sector

- Get together, partner to address national/regional markets: B2B partnerships and regional ICT organizations and I.O. network/marketplace
 - Advocate for regionally coordination of national sounds policies
 - that stimulate demand and capacity for national/regional ICT services offer,
 - taking advantage of the regional/commercial integration processes
 - CDE and Pro-Invest have support available for enterprises, projects, intermediary organisations.
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Thank You!

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