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**TOWARDS A GLOBAL K-NET:
SETTING-UP THE SUB-REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE
FOR A WORLD BRAIN¹**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Establishing a *Global Knowledge Network or Global K-Net* is now providing the logical closure to globalization, networking, and informatization trends, the long-term goal being the evolution of a so-called “world brain.” Employing Bill Gates’ “digital nervous system” metaphor, a world brain requires an infrastructure in the same manner as an ordinary brain requires a network of neurons to function. The World Wide Web has become the *de facto* backbone of this infrastructure. However, the immense differences in bandwidth and interconnectivity among regions and countries within regions have so far prevented the formation of such a Global K-Net. Interventions should be made to effectively bridge this Digital Divide through the appropriate technology. This paper describes a super-project that establishes the infrastructure for Southeast Asian sub-regional knowledge networks. While still employing the World Wide Web backbone, it will make use of broadband and wireless technologies for connecting research and development institutions from the ten Southeast Asian countries. Furthermore, it shall identify the most appropriate standards and platforms for knowledge exchange and sharing. Its objectives are: to design and develop the infrastructure for a Southeast Asian Knowledge Network that may serve as a template infrastructure for other sub-regions in Asia and the Pacific; to establish and operationalize this knowledge network by linking research and development institutions in Southeast Asia through a complete intranet system within specified knowledge domains; and to identify appropriate platforms, standards and protocols for the K-Net. The super project will cost an estimated US\$ 1.1 billion covering all components: project feasibility studies, project design and preparation, hardware-software-middleware procurement and installation, construction, capacity building, and monitoring and evaluation. Considering that this is a sub-regional undertaking, the super-project will take seven-years to complete beginning 2002. Partners in this super-project include: the Southeast Asian Forum for Agricultural Research (SEAFAR); the SEAMEO Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA); Sun Microsystems Philippines; international funding institutions (IFIs); and the governments of ten Southeast Asian nations.

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