



DIGITAL ASIA ACCELERATOR

During the 2019 Indo-Pacific Business Forum in Bangkok, Thailand, Deputy Administrator Bonnie Glick announced the Digital Asia Accelerator, a part of the Digital Connectivity and Cybersecurity Partnership’s effort to promote an open, interoperable, secure, and reliable internet within the Indo-Pacific Vision. The Digital Asia Accelerator (“the Accelerator”) aims to advance economic development by increasing businesses’ and citizens’ capacities to use digital technology safely and effectively.

As the world’s fastest growing digital economy, the Indo-Pacific region has the potential to be an even more valuable market for American and partner countries’ companies. To help realize this opportunity, USAID’s Accelerator, in close coordination with the U.S. State Department, will improve digital security and safety practices among local businesses and civil society organizations, and increase their capacity to engage on digital economy policy issues.

PHOTO: CHANDY MAO

HIGHLIGHTS

In Thailand, the Accelerator is designing a competition for youth to create and disseminate videos to encourage the public to practice responsible digital citizenship. Using content from Facebook’s We Think Digital program (an online education portal working to create a safer and more responsible digital world), the competition builds on the successes of Facebook’s pilot initiative in 2019. Videos will address topics such as: safeguarding against hacking; avoiding online scams; spotting fake news; managing your digital identity; preventing identity theft; and practicing responsible digital citizenship.

In Cambodia, the Accelerator recently concluded the “Online Safety” awareness campaign which posted videos that brought to people’s attention simple digital security tips and tricks across multiple online platforms. As a result, the campaign reached almost 1.4 million people and prompted more than 36,000 responses. Going forward, the activity is partnering with local private sector and civil society stakeholders to strengthen the local digital ecosystem through customized technology training programs for entrepreneurs, small and medium enterprise (SME) industry associations, digital content creators, and women with disabilities.

In Burma, the Accelerator is leveraging local networks and private sector technology partnerships to empower small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and youth with the digital skills they need to grow online businesses. The Accelerator is also developing a partnership to revolutionize Burma’s microfinance industry through an interoperable, digital payments platform, making it easier to access capital.

In Indonesia, the Accelerator is equipping marginalized entrepreneurs in East Java with digital skills through a training program for young women, persons with disabilities, and marginalized youth.

In Mongolia, the Accelerator has completed a cybersecurity needs assessment to understand previous initiatives in the digital ecosystem and will hold a major information communications technology (ICT) industry event with key stakeholders to jointly design a campaign to raise awareness among the Mongolian public around cybersecurity issues.

MOVING FORWARD

In the coming year, the Accelerator will seek opportunities to convene like-minded stakeholders, including enterprises of all sizes from across the Indo-Pacific, to strengthen private sector engagement in the development of digital policy recommendations that advance the vision of an open, interoperable, secure, and reliable internet that fosters inclusive economic development in the region.

For more information, please visit www.usaid.gov/asia-regional or email info-rdma@usaid.gov.