

8.5 CONCLUSION

The Road Map outlined above captures some of the lessons pioneering local governments have learnt in realizing their LOAN visions. Developing such LOAN infrastructure is a challenging but exciting undertaking with real potential to deliver significant benefits for an area and its citizens.

A LOAN is likely to help a local government stimulate economic development both through its positive impact on the image of the city and by encouraging affordable, innovative networked services and a more IT-literate population. Over time, many believe that a LOAN will bring citizens and government closer to each other, allowing easy and convenient participation for all, and enabling the development of improved and innovative public services from health to education, making these more efficient and convenient for the citizen.

Experience clearly suggests that the best way of achieving these benefits is through private public partnerships where the core competencies of the public sector are complemented by those of the private sector. Coupling strong local political commitment and vision with a strong business case approach, based on a well-structured strategy with clear roles, responsibilities and definitions for all stakeholders involved will be the key to success. But the aim should not just be the creation of the right LOAN infrastructure – at least as important are the services – existing as well as new and unimagined – that will be delivered over the LOAN infrastructure. It is these services that will be the drivers of business and social innovation, of productivity and of inclusion. At least with the development of a LOAN, and its fundamentally 'open' topography, the origination and marketing of such services can come from anywhere – and not least from within the local community itself, thereby opening the prospect of even greater wealth creation.

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