

Internet Governance Arrangements: Questionnaire

At its third meeting in April 2005, the WGIG discussed current Internet governance arrangements and assessed what works well and what works less well and may merit improvement. The group examined options for the improvement of existing arrangements in order to bring them more in line with the WSIS principles, i.e. that Internet governance should be multilateral, transparent, democratic, and based on the full involvement of governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations, and coordinated effectively.

The WGIG also began to assess whether any new governance arrangements might be needed in order to promote the WSIS principles. These discussions are at an early stage. They have focused on various governance functions. In the light of these discussions, and to advance this part of the WGIG work program, a questionnaire was developed to solicit structured feed-back from all stakeholders. The objective of this questionnaire is to seek input as a basis for the development of policy recommendations or “proposals for action”, in accordance with the WGIG mandate set out in the WSIS Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action. The WGIG also discussed the nature of any possible recommendations including operational feasibility and the need for pragmatism. Responses to the questionnaire should therefore take into consideration whether the implementation of any recommendation would be politically and financially realistic.

The questionnaire refers to four different processes or functions. These categories are not intended as a model for any future Internet governance structure. Rather, they are simply a schematic tool with which to organize key elements of the discussion.

First, the WGIG noted that today’s distributed governance architecture includes many public and private sector arrangements dealing with different aspects of Internet governance. However, there is no existing forum in which the global community as a whole can address broad public policy issues or emerging issues that are cross-cutting or multidimensional and affect more than one institution. The group therefore discussed the desirability and feasibility of setting up an additional body or arrangement to address these issues. The first process or function refers to this possibility.

Second, the WGIG discussed whether there was a need for enhanced public sector oversight of the management of the Internet’s logical infrastructure (including the domain name system, IP addresses, and the root server system). The second process/function below addresses the desirability and feasibility of new oversight arrangements. These questions are not intended to prejudge the issue, but simply to solicit views on this area. In addition, the questions do not prejudge whether any such oversight should be exerted by the body or arrangement referred to in the first cluster of questions, or whether this function would be best carried out by under a separate arrangement.

Third, the WGIG felt that there was a need to improve the coordination among and between all organizations and institutions dealing with Internet issues. The third process/function refers to the institutions in their managerial functions only and is not intended to include any form of intergovernmental cooperation or multistakeholder involvement.

Fourth, the WGIG noted that international coordination needs to build on policy coordination at the national level. Global Internet governance can only be effective if there is coherence with national level policies. The fourth process/function refers to this “fit” between national and global arrangements.

Process/Function 1 : “Forum function”

1. Is there need for an additional arrangement or body?

If the answer to question 1 is yes:

2. What functions should it exercise?
 - (a) Create a space for a multi-stakeholder discussion forum?
 - (b) Give policy direction?
 - (c) Any other function?
 - (d) Be a combination of the above?
3. What kind of public policy issues should it address?
 - (a) All issues related to the Internet?
 - (b) Only issues outside the scope of existing organizations and institutions?
4. Where should it be anchored (to what institution should it be linked)?
5. How should it be financed?
6. How should it be structured?
7. What would be its relationship with existing organizations and institutions?

Process/Function 2 : “Oversight function”

1. When talking about oversight, what functions do you envisage (simple audit function, arbitration, policy direction or any other function) and over what areas of activities?
2. Should the ICANN’s Government Advisory Committee (GAC) be transformed and take on some oversight functions?
3. Should the GAC be replaced by another body and what functions should such a body take on?
4. Should any post 2006 governmental oversight be exercised within the UN framework?

Process/Function 3: Functioning / coordination of existing institutions

1. What improvements in their functioning should existing institutions make to bring them more in line with the WSIS principles
2. How can their activities be better coordinated?
3. Are there existing models of inter-agency cooperation that could be followed?
4. Should any existing institution be given the role of lead agency?

Process Function 4: Functioning / coordination at the national level

1. How should Governments bring their national decision-making process in line with international Internet governance arrangements?
2. What successful multi-stakeholder models could be recommended as an approach to be followed?