

# Toolkit

iisd International Institute for Sustainable Development Institut international du développement durable

## on Internet Public Policy Dialogue: Tools for the Practitioner



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## Introduction

Throughout the roughly 40 years of the Internet's existence and the 20-odd years since the invention of the World Wide Web, the reach of the Internet has grown immensely, both geographically and technologically. This growth has led to international engagement on how the various components of the Internet must be administered as a global resource. A central theme in the dialogue on Internet governance has been the management of a number of Critical Internet Resources that enable the Internet to function on a technical level, such as the domain names systems and IP address allocation mechanisms, as well as the underlying technical standards and protocols. But the emerging issues around the development and deployment of the Internet extend far beyond the technical considerations into the policy domains of rights, security, environmental impacts, intellectual property, economic development and many others. As a result, Internet policy development and governance requires more broad-based collaboration and participation than is currently practised. Stakeholders whose activities are underpinned by the Internet need to be engaged in assuming a shared interest, role and responsibility in the governance of the Internet.

This shared responsibility involves the private sector that has invested in the infrastructure; the public sector that has responsibility to safeguard the interests and rights of citizen; users who depend on the Internet one way or another in underpinning their livelihoods, their quality of life, and supporting communications and cohesion with family and friends; and academics whose interests lie in education and research. With this many vested interests, it is therefore important to have an approach to policies that recognize and support everyone's concerns.

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) provides a platform where these different stakeholders, in a participatory manner, engage in discussing broad-based Internet policy at a global level. However, national and regional public policy forums have emerged after the fashion of the global IGF that allow public policy dialogue to occur at a level where it can have more impact. It is at the country and regional level that decisions are made, policies are implemented and actions taken. For instance, national forums are attuned to addressing concerns such as infrastructure and digital literacy of citizens. Regional forums explore avenues where mutual benefit, shared interests and regional economic development can be achieved by, and to the advantage of, the individual members.

Over the past three years, the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) has participated in a number of these national, regional and global Internet forums in both developing and developed countries. We have learned from our work in sustainable development that the development of policy must be based on two elements: evidence that informs the shaping of policies, and consent of those who will be affected by the implementation of those policies (Souter et al., 2010). From our involvement with several Internet forums, we have developed a set of tools that can enable stakeholders to gather evidence and to seek consent.

Through this publication, we share a toolkit with the policy practitioner and stakeholders interested in Internet public policy using a structured and systematic approach that involves broad sectors of society. Nevertheless, the principles described in these pages are applicable and can be used to facilitate policy dialogue in a limitless range of policy platforms, including areas such as access to information, freedom of expression, media, and regulatory mechanisms to govern telecommunications, energy, trade, infrastructure, goods or services. We define the policy practitioner as anyone that has been or intends to be involved in organizing local- or national-level Internet public policy dialogue.

Two parts form this document. The first part is an overview of the concept of Internet public policy process viewed through a multistakeholder approach. It also highlights the importance of this approach and the principles that underpin multistakeholder collaboration. This part concludes with an overview of key global Internet policy platforms and where the concepts described in this toolkit can be applied. The second part is a description of the tools in the toolkit and a step-by-step guide of how policy practitioners can use them to drive a multistakeholder Internet public policy process in their countries, regions or provinces. It includes specific case studies where these tools have been implemented or tried and the lessons that emerged from them.

## Why a Toolkit?

From our experience facilitating policy settings and collaborating with partners in Canada (developed), West Africa (developing countries) and at the global IGF, we have observed that diverse methods have been implemented at the national, regional and global levels to gather inputs from stakeholders; yet, there is an absence of a guide that less matured or new policy groups can use or a description of tools that have worked in thriving public policy landscapes. This gap makes it difficult to develop a new process, jump-start a stagnant one, or define a baseline understanding of an existing one in order that more understanding of the dynamics and nuances within a policy space can be gained. Further, in the absence of such tools, it is difficult to benchmark growth and to identify reference points for current and future development in a particular policy area. As a result, little progress has been observed in places where, clearly, dialogue would have produced gains and where there are no outcomes to show growth. Thus, this toolkit helps the practitioner to bridge these gaps, and to kick-start a new process or gain traction in an existing one.

The tools described in this document have various strengths and can be used to achieve a variety of outcomes, including:

- Focusing the policy debate at the level where policy needs to be developed and implemented (the principle of subsidiarity)—in some cases at the national level, in others regional and even global.
- Gathering evidence to gain a better understanding of, and foster public consent on, a particular policy issue in a certain policy context.
- Facilitating local dialogue, fostering cooperation and mutual understanding around an issue of importance to various stakeholders and the general public.
- Structuring and deepening policy dialogue on unwieldy and overly broad policy issues.
- Gathering support of relevant stakeholders and policy-makers to advocate for a certain public policy issue.

## Who Is This Toolkit For?

This toolkit can be used to facilitate broad-based consultation with the intent to gather evidence that informs policy and public consent that supports effective policy implementation. This toolkit is targeted at the:

- Policy-maker who seeks to gather public input on an issue of interest
- Policy practitioner who seeks to inform the policy-maker of public opinion about an issue

It is targeted at those who may be new to the public policy process and who require the necessary tools that have been deployed in other policy contexts, along with knowledge of outcomes, successes, challenges, and the lessons learned. The absence of exemplars and detailed best practice approaches forces the policy-maker or practitioner to reinvent the wheel, often using untested mechanisms. In settings where it is difficult to gather stakeholder trust and confidence, this approach could undermine these values and thus contribute to a derailed or unsuccessful process. The practitioner and policy-maker cannot afford to jeopardize this.

The toolkit is also targeted at the seasoned policy practitioner who may have already used the methods described in this toolkit or similar, to gather public opinion and consent. While the tools in this toolkit are non-prescriptive and do not in any way suggest a definitive set of tools, they do, however, offer a collection of adaptable tools processes through which the policy-maker or practitioner can leverage stakeholder availability and acquire stakeholders' willingness to participate in the policy process. We recognize also that not all the tools described in this toolkit may be fully applicable to a particular context; hence, the need to adapt them to suit the context. In this case, the input from other stakeholders, including decision-makers, can help in shaping new tools that may work. We have created a framework that will guide the policy-maker or practitioner in developing these methods into tools that will benefit others; this is presented in Part 2 of this document.

### The Internet Public Policy Dialogue Toolkit Online:

We have established a wiki at [www.iisd.org/TIPP](http://www.iisd.org/TIPP) that will act as a living document for practitioners to revise and expand upon the current set of tools, propose new tools, and share experience about what works in building the evidence base for Internet public policy and securing consent of all stakeholders in the implementation of policy.

From our experience in engaging with Internet public policy making in Canada, West Africa and globally, we observed that policy practitioners or those who drive national processes come from different backgrounds. For instance, the host of the process in Senegal comes from academia; in Canada, the process is hosted by a non-profit agency operating under licence to the Government of Canada to be responsible for managing the country's Critical Internet Resources; in Nigeria, an individual government official is at the forefront of building a stakeholder base; a local film-maker and technology/social entrepreneur who represents civil society is responsible for hosting the online policy space in Sierra Leone, while a member of the private sector opens their forum to accommodate other stakeholders who wish to be involved in broader Internet public policy consultation in The Gambia. The methodology deployed and how consensus is achieved by these practitioners can be influenced by their specific views and backgrounds, which may result in policy outcomes that are biased toward a particular group. This toolkit, while recognizing this multiplicity, presents tools that leverage the diversity to generate policies that are mutually inclusive.

### Important Advice for the Policy Practitioner

“Continuous learning” is a powerful concept that should drive policy-making efforts, emphasizing that the policy practitioner must be prepared to be open-minded and continuously learn from the process: for instance, scenarios, backcasting and related modelling processes can assist the practitioner in arriving at integrated and forward-looking analyses of the policy context. The practitioner must, however, be willing to apply the lessons learned in order to constantly adapt the process to the changing landscape. Continuous learning is captured under the framework of adaptive policy making, which is described in more detail in the book by Swanson and Bhadwal (2011). We encourage the practitioner to study adaptive policy making in more depth to find ways in which he or she can become adept at responding to uncertainties and change and to infuse lessons learned back into the process.

Policy making is a complex process. Abiding to the principles of adaptive policy may further complicate an already challenging endeavour. This complexity should not discourage the practitioner from trying. It is for this reason that adaptive principles have been incorporated into the tools described in this toolkit from the very outset. To this end, adaptive policy making should assume an early and deliberate approach to all the processes described in this kit, rather than an afterthought, so that policy practitioners can aspire to better anticipate challenges and be prepared to meet unexpected ones.



# Part 1 > Overview

Toolkit on Internet Public Policy Dialogue: Tools for the Practitioner

## An Overview of Internet Public Policy Making

This part presents a review of the importance of Internet public policy. It examines the:

- Increasingly important role that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) play in the broad context of society and why this must assume a broad multisectoral stakeholder approach.
- Importance of Internet public policy to economic and social development and the environment within and across countries.
- Important challenges to multistakeholder collaboration, including the issues of legitimacy of the platform, the possibilities of capture by stronger stakeholder partners, and the need for creating an effective platform.
- Current Internet public policy spaces and how policy practitioners can participate in them.

ICT policy is often met with trepidation by non-technical policy-makers. As a result, ICT policy making often takes place in isolation and, in most cases, outside a developmental, contextual or thematic framework. Common perceptions such as “ICTs are tools” or “ICT is not an end in itself but a means to an end” foster the isolated development of ICT policies, usually by ICT technicians in technical communities, for instance, in policy platforms such as the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), where purely telecommunication and policy elements of resources that define the underlying Internet infrastructure are discussed and defined—this, happening while the development of policies in other areas such as the environment, energy, trade and the broad context of development continue sometimes without the consideration of ICT as an integral and intrinsic factor that could potentially assist in achieving those development objectives faster and economically. As a result, ICT elements are mainstreamed into existing sectoral policies mostly as afterthoughts (see Box 1: Mainstreaming ICT policies).

### Box 1

#### Mainstreaming ICT policies.

The initial formulation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (United Nations, 2010), for instance, did not contain any specifically defined ICT goal; neither did it reference that ICTs can help in achieving its objectives when it was formulated in 2000 during the Millennium summit. ICTs were later mainstreamed as a means of achieving some of the goals, for instance, in combatting HIV/AIDS (ITU, 2010).

In another example, through a broad sweeping ICT policy drive in Africa, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) embarked on a process of mainstreaming ICTs into existing MDGs and poverty reduction strategy papers because of the ability of ICTs to catalyze development (Islam, 2005), but for the most part this process involved a later addition rather than careful forethoughts surrounding development objectives.

The flip side to this trend is that the Internet technical community continues to engage in policy formulation in isolation and with little interactivity with broad development objectives or interaction with other policy domains (Souter et al., 2010). Carefully thought-out integration of ICT policy into dialogues on financial system reform, climate change, food security and other complex policy domains could contribute to more broad-reaching policies, given that ICTs are increasingly becoming underlying and important factors in these domains (Souter et al., 2010; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2003; Islam, 2005). As a result, Internet public policy dialogue should involve a broad range of stakeholders, including:

- Private ICT manufacturers and infrastructure owners (much of the infrastructure the Internet runs on is privately owned), and those for whom these infrastructures are created.
- Government and public authorities, which represent the broader public interest and which control the levers in legislative and regulatory processes.
- Businesses, the economic engines of society that depend more and more on Internet technology for their business models and for their operations.
- Civil society, which represents social interests of various kinds (it has long been problematic for Civil Society Organizations, or CSOs, to participate meaningfully or at all in important ICT discussion and decision-making spaces).
- Low- and middle-income countries, many of which have had very little input in Internet governance (owing to the “digital divide,” funding shortfalls, capacity issues and other problems), but nevertheless have a strong interest in the future of the Internet.
- Academics, who have been instrumental in propagating the growth of the Internet at the inception stages, have continued to provide content, and, in some cases, manage some of the Critical Internet Resources in certain countries.

Multistakeholder discussion forums provide different actors avenues for airing their concerns and opinions and contribute to shaping the debate on critical Internet related issues, while it lets the actors learn from, and about, other stakeholders. With input from multistakeholder forums, decision-makers can build more robust, adaptive solutions to problems and opportunities.

Internet policy making, therefore, needs to become a broader responsibility, with input from stakeholders across society. This inclusivity is not just more democratic; it is also more adapted to deal with diverse problems and to produce innovative solutions, encompassing a vast array of “social capital” from people of different backgrounds, professions, sectors, passions, knowledge and talents. The multistakeholder collaboration model offers one of the most promising solutions to this challenge of governing the vast and potentially unwieldy Internet space.

## What Is Internet Public Policy and Why Is It Important?

In the following section, we examine the subject of Internet public policy from the broad public policy perspectives and then link this to ICTs, the Internet and sustainable development.

Two broadly held views of public policy include:

- Institutionalists' viewpoint (those concerned with formal government structures): as a “benign component of identified rules and procedures.”
- Behaviouralists' viewpoint (those concerned with what people do): as the emergence “from a large number of programs, legislative intentions, and organization interactions that affect the daily lives of citizens.” (Gerston, 2010)

Both perspectives are important, because public policy is about structures and people, with an end result of addressing economic and social problems.

In addition to these positions, public policy making should be adaptive (Swanson & Bhadwal, 2011), “dynamic and ongoing, [...] constantly subject to re-evaluation, cessation, expedition, or even erratic movement” and having a “perpetual, dynamic, and evolutionary quality” (Gerston, 2010).

In this respect, public policy is about what governments do, why they do it, and what difference it makes in response to economic and social challenges (Gerston, 2010). Governments, regulators, legislatures and other official institutions at national and international levels create policies in the pursuit of enhancing public welfare, improving safety, protecting civil rights and innumerable other objectives that are—in their interpretation—in the interest of society, consistently and over a period of time.

As it concerns ICTs and the Internet, and within the context of three pillars of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental), Souter et al. (2010) argue that public policy is about the interface between ICTs, the Internet and other public policy domains that includes, but is not limited to, “identity, privacy, child and consumer protection, cybercrime, information and network security, digital media, and intellectual property” (Souter et al., 2010). It transcends these somewhat technically aligned issues to much broader implications on sustainable development because of:

- ICT's ability to shift the grounds beneath assumptions about how societies and economies work.
- ICT's ongoing, continuous and unpredictable impacts and the need for their accommodation in sustainable development analysis. (Souter et al., 2010)

However, these current practices in ICT and Internet public policy making are confronted with a number of challenges, some of which continue to undermine the importance of ICTs in broad sectoral public policy making, such as:<sup>2</sup>

- Evidence of a gap resulting from the different interests between policy-makers and activists concerned with sustainable development and those concerned with ICTs and Internet public policy.
- Reliance on general purpose laws and regulatory mechanisms in many countries for administering Internet issues, some of which have not been updated to reflect the impact of ICTs and the Internet.

<sup>1</sup> Quoting Thomas Dye, Michale Kraft, and Scott Furlong, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> The process of creating and reviewing policies has to be able to change as circumstances change, and the policies themselves should be easy to amend or cancel. Adaptive policy making should seek to: a) understand the policy context, b) enable innovation, c) monitor the context, d) and improve outcomes (Swanson & Bhadwal, 2011).

- Non-application (in a systematic way) of adaptive policy-making principles, such as forward-looking analysis, to Internet public policy making.

Furthermore, Internet public policy is still an emergent policy domain, with principles, norms and constructs still not well-established or agreed upon. More fundamental work is needed to establish what constitutes Internet public policy.

As a result, certain actions are necessary to address these challenges, some of which include:

- Greater dialogue and interaction among sustainable development and ICT and Internet public policy-makers and activists.
- The application of non-governmental and consensus-based approaches to decision-making.
- Self-regulatory and co-regulatory processes, adopted and adapted by governments.
- Adaptive policy-making processes, based on principles, tools and practices.
- Multistakeholder governance processes, which incorporate diversity of experience into policy debate and decision-making.

We therefore see these are sufficient reasons for facilitating spaces for multistakeholder dialogue that are neither private nor official, but open, public and collectively owned. In this regard, Internet public policy in a multistakeholder setting should focus on:

- Issues: Increasingly accommodate broad public policy to reflect the relationship between the Internet and mainstream public policy issues (Souter et al., 2010), in contrast to the traditional focus on just the technical management and coordination of the Internet.
- Stakeholders: Rethink the bottom-up approach to accommodate a much wider audience at the local level. The current definitions of bottom-up approaches, even when they take place at the local level, are often narrowly constructed to focus on purely the technical aspects of the Internet.
- Context: A good understanding of the principle of subsidiarity is warranted, in order to guide whether dialogue and decision making on various issues should be held locally, regionally or at a global policy-making forum. Thought should be given as to how to structure how local issues are discussed in relation to global concerns, particularly where action at a global level may be most effective. Local multistakeholder Internet forums can provide a crucial link between the local and the global context.

Subsidiarity recognizes that action will occur at different levels of jurisdiction, depending on the nature of the issues. It assigns priority to the lowest jurisdictional level of action consistent with effectiveness. International policies should be adopted only when this is more effective than policy action by individual countries or jurisdictions within countries. (IISD, 1994)

## Important Elements to Consider in Multistakeholder Collaboration

As the policy practitioner embarks on the challenge of a more inclusive public policy domain, we have highlighted four elements that may be encountered and that should be managed during the process:

1. **Legitimacy:** Two potential issues could arise, with respect to the legitimacy of the process. First, stakeholders who are involved have to regard it as legitimate. This depends in large part on the actions of the facilitators/organizers and their commitment to staying neutral and objective. Second, there needs to be recognition that a diversity of voices will emerge; recognition of this expectation is critical in a multistakeholder process, particularly if it involves diverse actors from different parts of society—civil society, technical communities, private sector, government, legislatures, education and others. Legitimacy of the process and the platform can suffer if diverse interests are not recognized.
2. **Capture.** A significant risk with a broad-sectoral multistakeholder process is that it could fall under the capture of certain powerful stakeholders over others, who could potentially bias the process in their favor. A related problem is the danger of being co-opted or absorbed altogether by more powerful actors, for example, governments or other interest groups. A multistakeholder group stands a good chance of success if participation is equal and if the process is managed by a cross-section of stakeholders but driven by civil society (Souter, 2009).
3. **Challenging vested interests.** In a domestic or regional setting, it is entirely possible that the group may be resisted by powerful stakeholders for various reasons. Interest groups or government lobbyists with existing close ties and easy access to the government may not wish to share their privileged access with a fledging Internet public policy platform. Recognizing the presence of such groups and how they could be incorporated into the platform could somewhat help the process.
4. **Effectiveness.** A criticism of the IGF is that different voices converge around broad resolutions without tangible outcomes. Effectiveness will be a serious challenge to the process, without which support from important stakeholders may evaporate. It is important, therefore, to evaluate strategies as policy practitioners in which to make the local policy platform more effective. It does not have to assume a dialogue-only approach such as the global IGF.

These elements are nevertheless manageable. We are continually looking for ways to improve this model, including new or improved mechanisms for bringing people and organizations of highly diverging backgrounds together. The underlying value of a multistakeholder process, however, stands firm: only together can we embrace the opportunities that new technologies can deliver, confront the challenges that they bring, and address future concerns.

## Current Internet Public Policy Spaces

This section examines some of the important global Internet public policy spaces. The ICT governance space remains muddled and will continue in this fashion; the numbers of regional and global entities with a hand in governance and policy making, and those of private companies whose business decisions sometimes become de facto Internet policies, will continue to increase (Drake, n.d.; Souter, n.d.). Fortunately, for most purposes, the policy practitioner will probably only have to focus on a few core institutions. Some of these institutions are discussed here with suggestions on how the practitioner can participate in the governance processes, many of which claim to be open and participatory but may nevertheless not be easy to access.

The subset of really important ICT governance institutions is rather small, with only a handful of major players.<sup>3</sup> They also have limited scopes, responsible chiefly for various standardization processes or—in the case of ICANN—the operation of core functions for the Internet. Table 1 below provides a brief description of the main places where (mostly) technical Internet public policy making takes place.

**TABLE 1: GLOBAL INTERNET POLICY INSTITUTIONS.**

NAME	DESCRIPTION
ITU	<p>The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is the world's first multilateral organization concerned with facilitating telecommunications across the globe. It is organized into three sectors with different mandates: ITU-R, which deals with radio-communications (e.g., radio frequencies and satellite orbits); ITU-T, which deals with telecommunication standards; and ITU-D, which handles infrastructure development and social issues related to ICT access. ITU-T is the sector most relevant to the technical operations of the Internet, being involved in Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) standardization, among other things.</p> <p><b>Input and participation:</b></p> <p>Membership is required to gain access to ITU decision-making processes, but it is expensive. Membership is costly (more than US\$10,000 per year in 2011 for the least expensive option<sup>4</sup>) and open in principle to any kind of organization who seeks to be involved. The lowest tier (and cheapest) membership, however, comes with few privileges. To overcome this barrier, the local public policy platform may need to draw on its stakeholder base for partners who may already be involved with the ITU and who may be willing to represent its viewpoints at this global forum.</p>

<sup>3</sup> For an extensive discussion of internet governance, see Souter (2009), chapter 20.

<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/membership/Pages/default.aspx>

NAME	DESCRIPTION
ICANN	<p>The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) is not only the youngest of the Internet specific governance institutions, formed in 1998, but also the most important one in terms of enabling the Internet to work. ICANN is a private non-profit corporation, headquartered in California, with a mandate from the US Department of Commerce to manage the IP address space (IPv4 and IPv6), including the allocation of blocks of IP addresses to regional Internet registries (which further distribute these), and the Domain Name System (DNS) root zone, including the operation of DNS root servers. Without the services of ICANN, the Internet could not be interoperable. ICANN's mode of operation is as a multistakeholder, bottom-up, consensus-based organization—the U.S. government wields no formal influence, and renewed its commitment to the way the organization works in 2009.<sup>5</sup></p> <p><b>Input and participation:</b></p> <p>ICANN has continued in its attempt to create processes that fully comply with its mandate to be a multistakeholder organization. Through its frequent policy meetings where most policy issues are discussed, it has encouraged participation of individuals and institutions and provides scholarships for the purpose. It is possible for outsiders to become members of ICANN's board of directors and to attend ICANN meetings.</p>
W3C	<p>The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) exists to create and maintain standards for the World Wide Web. It was spun off from the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) in 1994 by the inventor of the Web, Tim Berners-Lee, as an industry consortium to ensure that technologies from different vendors are compatible and able to produce the same user experience for everyone. The W3C focuses heavily on the user experience in the Web browser.</p> <p><b>Input and participation:</b></p> <p>As an industry consortium, W3C currently has over 300 members though it is not restricted to commercial actors; membership is open to CSOs and even individuals. Although membership is nominally open, there is an application process and a potentially steep membership fee, up to several thousand dollars a year. It is also possible to participate in mailing lists and some events without membership.</p>

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.icann.org/en/news/announcements/announcement-30sep09-en.htm>

NAME	DESCRIPTION
ISOC	<p>The Internet Society (ISOC) was founded in 1992 by pioneers in Internet development to provide direction in standardization work and education on how the Internet works, as well as to engage with public policy. ISOC is incorporated as a non-profit organization and houses several important infrastructure standards bodies that are well known in their own right, including the IETF (see below) and the Internet Architecture Board. ISOC further takes an active role in education and advocacy, working to increase public understanding of the nature of the Internet.</p> <p><b>Input and participation:</b></p> <p>ISOC is driven by its more than 80 organizational and 50,000 individual members worldwide, organized into more than 90 local chapters. Since ISOC is open, the opportunities for engagement are many. Different tiers of membership for organizations are available with different privileges, but the higher tiers are costly; individual memberships are free. If the membership route is not desirable, ISOC organizes scores of workshops, conferences and other events that the policy practitioner can attend. As with the other institutions, partnering with an existing member could be considered.</p>
IETF	<p>The Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) is one of the main developers of Internet standards, responsible for the TCP/IP protocol and the rest of the Internet protocol stack. Its institutional home is inside ISOC and it cooperates closely with W3C and the International Organization for Standardization (known more generally as ISO), but it is managed separately and indeed very differently. IETF's focus is solely technical and all its work is carried out in informal working groups and discussion groups.</p> <p><b>Input and participation:</b></p> <p>The IETF is one of the most open and informal Internet governance institutions. There is no membership—all functions in the organization are handled by volunteers. Everyone is free to participate in working groups and informal discussion groups organized through mailing lists. Decisions are made on the basis of consensus that emerges from these discussions. In addition, the IETF organizes three in-person meetings a year to discuss current issues.</p>

NAME	DESCRIPTION
IGF	<p>The global Internet Governance Forum (IGF) was first organized in 2006 by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan at the behest of the World Summit on the Information Society as a way of resolving the issue of Internet governance, which had turned into a very contentious issue at the second meeting of the Summit. The IGF is a unique forum within the UN system in that it is founded on the principle of multistakeholderism rather than as a traditional intergovernmental organization. All stakeholders have the right to participate on an equal footing with other organizations, governments and individuals. The main purpose of the IGF is to facilitate understanding, cooperation and learning between all the stakeholders in this space. The IGF meets once a year for several days of workshops, plenary discussions, roundtables and other activities. Its mandate was renewed for another five years in 2010, after its first five-year mandate expired.</p> <p><b>Input and participation:</b></p> <p>Anyone can attend the global IGF, representing themselves, a government or an organization. Since it is customary for regional and national Internet forums or IGFs to represent the Forum and facilitate cooperation, this is an avenue that the policy practitioner can attend. In order to most effectively present their views and spread understanding, many organizations host their own side events during the annual meeting of the Forum; this is an avenue the policy practitioner should consider attending. The IGF has also encouraged the development of local policy spaces fashioned after its dialogue-only, non-binding approach. Local public policy spaces can, however, leverage this framework but have the opportunity to adapt it to suit their own local policy context and to shape it to become effective and influential.</p>

Representatives from each of these various policy- and decision-making entities should ideally participate as stakeholders in the emerging Internet governance forums, nationally, regionally and at the global IGF (and most do, at the global level). In turn, it may be desirable or necessary for stakeholders in the IGFs to participate in the debates of these related entities. It is not necessarily the case that one will disagree fundamentally with these bodies on most issues, but we believe there is room for cross-fertilization of ideas and for broadening the human capacity of these institutions (the skills, knowledge and world views that people in different walks of life or different parts of the world embody). Broader participation across these policy spaces can strengthen their legitimacy, enrich the quality of debate and lead, perhaps, to decisions grounded in a broader evidence base.

The aforementioned platforms are mostly technical, and we have described earlier that Internet public policy should be more cross-sectoral and should be incorporated into policy dialogue in other public policy domains. As a result, the policy practitioner should identify and engage with local public policy spaces such as those who are solely shaped to discuss health, education, environment, energy and other development issues.

## A Selection of IISD's Contributions to Internet Public Policy

Over the years, IISD's knowledge and analysis have contributed to shaping the global Internet governance policy process and practice. The following is an annotated selection of reports and analyses that have been published since 2005 and that will provide the learner some background, context and scope of Internet public policy. For a full list of IISD reports on Internet and technology issues, see [www.iisd.org/infosoc](http://www.iisd.org/infosoc).

YEAR	TITLE	DESCRIPTION
2006	Internet Governance: In the Footsteps of Global Administrative Law <sup>6</sup>	This Master of Laws thesis suggests that accountability and legitimacy should comprise the basic tenets of Internet governance. It suggests that solutions for Internet governance should be sought within the emerging theory of Global Administrative Law, which describes a decentralized governance scheme based on common trends and characteristics in other multistakeholder, multilevel, international issue areas and one capable of promoting the rule of law in hybrid governance structures.
2007	Internet Governance: Background to the Internet Governance Forum <sup>7</sup>	This opinion piece argues that the Internet requires a complex system of governance, more complex than any other international governance methods currently available. The multifunctional nature of the Internet, the lack of centralization of any of its functions and the uniquely wide importance of this communications medium, mean that many different actors have a stake in Internet governance and must be involved in its development and enforcement.
2007	Internet Governance and Sustainable Development: Towards a Common Agenda <sup>8</sup>	This book explores the interrelationship between historically disparate policy domains of sustainable development and Internet governance through an exploration of five areas where linkages could be established: a) governance processes; b) economic barriers to development; c) the capacity of developing countries to participate in international governance; d) access to knowledge as a critical input to decision making; and e) indicators for development.  The premise of the project was that these two historically disparate policy communities will each gain if they can discover and leverage the overlap in their respective visions for the future.

<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.iisd.org/publications/pub.aspx?pno=820>

<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.iisd.org/publications/pub.aspx?pno=834>

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.iisd.org/publications/pub.aspx?pno=911>

YEAR	TITLE	DESCRIPTION
2008	Critical Internet Uncertainties: How Will Governance, Evolution and Growth of the Internet Affect Sustainable Development? <sup>9</sup>	As input to a scenarios exercise, this paper examines a range of uncertainties that will influence the development and deployment of the Internet and, in turn, that will impact global economies, societies and sustainability.
2008	Mapping the Future of the Internet onto Global Scenarios <sup>10</sup>	Four scenarios for the future of the Internet are projected and aligned with major global scenarios for the future of the world.
2008	Internet Governance Forum: A Development Perspective: A Primer for the Third Meeting, Hyderabad, India, 3–6 December 2008 <sup>11</sup>	Taking on a development perspective, this primer summarizes the consultations among IGF contributors in preparation for the December 2008 meeting in Hyderabad, India. The paper also examines the linkages between sustainable development and Internet governance, drawing on the scenarios approach as a useful way of addressing issues that concern the sustainability of the Internet. It also explores themes on development, and structure of the IGF in Hyderabad and of dynamic coalitions.
2008	Achieving Global Sustainability: A role for the Internet Governance Forum <sup>12</sup>	The commentary traces the history of the Internet's contributions to the climate change scientific and research community regarding the way it helped in distributing large data sets. It argues that we could be on a path of creating an elitist control of the Internet if appropriate measures are not taken to “get it right.” This includes fostering the emergence of an “Internet of things” and looking beyond the green ICT debate toward the direct, indirect and societal systemic effects of ICTs.

<sup>9</sup> See [http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2008/critical\\_internet.pdf](http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2008/critical_internet.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> See [http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2008/internet\\_global\\_scenarios.pdf](http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2008/internet_global_scenarios.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> See <http://www.iisd.org/publications/pub.aspx?pno=994>

<sup>12</sup> See <http://www.iisd.org/publications/pub.aspx?pno=1042>

YEAR	TITLE	DESCRIPTION
2009	Review of the Mandate of the Internet Governance Forum: A Response from IISD <sup>13</sup>	This review marked the start of an evaluation process of the first five years of the IGF and a call for the renewal of the next five years. In response to seven questions posed by the Secretariat soliciting inputs for a synthesis document to support the UN Secretary-General's formal consultation with IGF participants, IISD is broadly supportive of the IGF and affirmed a mandate renewal for a second five-year term. It made recommendations for it to extend its reach to other policy arenas such as local and regional forums; establish working groups to develop common understanding of Internet issues of importance; and to take greater advantage of time between annual IGF meetings for more substantive debates.
2009	Innovation in the Governance of Technology and Society: Progress on Internet Governance <sup>14</sup>	This report explores progress on the evolution of Internet policy and decision making, the key institutions involved, and the importance of the debate to developing countries. The continuation of the IGF will be key to ensuring the open and candid exchange of ideas and best practices among all Internet stakeholders—including governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, industry, the private sector, civil society, academia and the Internet technical community—continues at the international level. Further, lessons learned from finding new approaches to decision making around the Internet and its related technologies have relevance for the governance of technology in other domains, in particular the central concept of “shared responsibility.”
2010	ICTs, the Internet and Sustainable Development: Towards a New Paradigm <sup>15</sup>	Two issues of profound importance lie at the heart of current thinking about the development of global economies and societies: the challenge of environmental sustainability, and the potential of ICT. This paper explores the intersection between these two issues and the emergence of the concepts of the green economy and the digital economy, and calls for greater dialogue and interaction between sustainable development and ICT/Internet public policy-makers and activists.

<sup>13</sup> See <http://www.iisd.org/publications/pub.aspx?pno=1143>

<sup>14</sup> See <http://www.iisd.org/publications/pub.aspx?pno=1164>

<sup>15</sup> See [http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2010/icts\\_internet\\_sd\\_new\\_paradigm.pdf](http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2010/icts_internet_sd_new_paradigm.pdf)

YEAR	TITLE	DESCRIPTION
2011	Preparing the grounds for the West Africa Internet Governance Forum <sup>16</sup>	Focusing on a survey conducted by IISD in seven West African countries, this document explores whether there is interest in increasing dialogue around Internet technologies, uses and evolution. It recognizes recent advancements in the area and offers some suggestions and recommendations on how to build on these foundations.
2011	Supporting Multistakeholder Internet Public Policy Dialogue in a Least Developed Country: The Togo Experience <sup>17</sup>	The report examines Internet public policy consultation processes in a least developed country. It addresses fundamental issues of education, economic development with a particular focus on its existing agricultural and mining industries, and multistakeholder policy making that incorporates the private sector as an essential foundation for long-term development.
2012	ICTs, the Internet and Sustainability <sup>18</sup>	This paper compiles interviews and opinion pieces from a wide range of opinion shapers and thought leaders from developed and developing regions, with a view to setting a new research and action agenda on the role of ICTs and the Internet in moving the world toward sustainability.

## Conclusion

In this section we have presented an overview of the Internet public policy space and why it is increasingly relevant and important to other public policy domains. Because the Internet and ICTs more broadly are shifting basic societal and economic assumptions resulting in unpredictable impacts, there is a need for greater dialogue among policy-makers and the Internet community and for principles that respond to a rapidly evolving landscape. Internet public policy should involve a broad range of actors and stakeholders from the private sector, government, businesses, civil society, academia and, particularly, those from the low- to middle-income countries. It should be broad in order to include actors beyond the traditional Internet community—those whom these policies will affect at present and in the future.

<sup>16</sup> See <http://www.iisd.org/publications/pub.aspx?pno=1383>

<sup>17</sup> In press, IISD; to be available at [www.iisd.org/infosoc](http://www.iisd.org/infosoc)

<sup>18</sup> In press, IISD; to be available at [www.iisd.org/infosoc](http://www.iisd.org/infosoc)



# Part 2 > Tools for the Practitioner

Toolkit on Internet Public Policy Dialogue: Tools for the Practitioner

## Getting Started with Internet Public Policy Dialogue

This part of the paper presents the tools for multistakeholder Internet public policy collaboration. The previous part discussed why multistakeholder dialogue is important for public policy development. We expanded the existing model of multistakeholder cooperation in the Internet domain from its current form to include more actors who may otherwise not be considered. Now, we will develop this understanding further and introduce the tools that multistakeholder groups and/or the individual policy practitioner can use to collaborate or drive a public policy process.

From this point, the paper contains two main sections:

- The preamble section, which lays out: how the tools will be used, an overview of the public policy making process, the structure of how the tools in this toolkit are presented, an evaluation and stock-taking framework for the inclusion of new tools that the practitioner finds useful, a pre-implementation framework that should be applied prior to using any of the tools, and what should be considered during the design of the process.
- The tools section, which highlights the various tools we briefly highlight in the preamble section. The process of public policy making must show evidence and gather consent—evidence that informs the shaping of policies, and consent of those who will be affected by the implementation of those policies. In the tools section we present a set of tools that can help the policy practitioner generate evidence and consent among stakeholders.

### Preamble

First, we provide a brief description of the tools and discuss how you can use the toolkit successfully in your process. After that, we introduce two simple frameworks, one to help you choose the best mix of tools, and the other to help you evaluate the use of those tools.

The following list briefly describes the tools we present in this toolkit. The tools are grouped according to their roles in generating evidence and gathering consent.

1. Tools that can be used to generate evidence include the following.
  - **Mapping the broad ICT policy landscape:** A contextual mapping of policy making, including documentation of the policies that are already in place, the issues that may warrant attention for policy formulation or reform, the stakeholders who are or should be involved, and the mechanisms currently available for policy dialogue—understanding the status of ICT deployment through empirical (evidence-based) data and analysis in a way that reveals the role of ICTs in the community as a whole, including adoption rates and usage, and in the context of the state of the economy, geography, demographics and trends.
  - **Online surveys:** Creating a baseline of stakeholder opinions, perceptions and knowledge levels. Web-based surveys represent a cheap (even free) and easy way of reaching a cross-section of interests.
  - **Experts roundtables:** Bringing together experts and thought leaders to discuss trends, frame issues, and identify information gaps, critical uncertainties and policy challenges.

2. Tools that can be used to generate consent include the following.

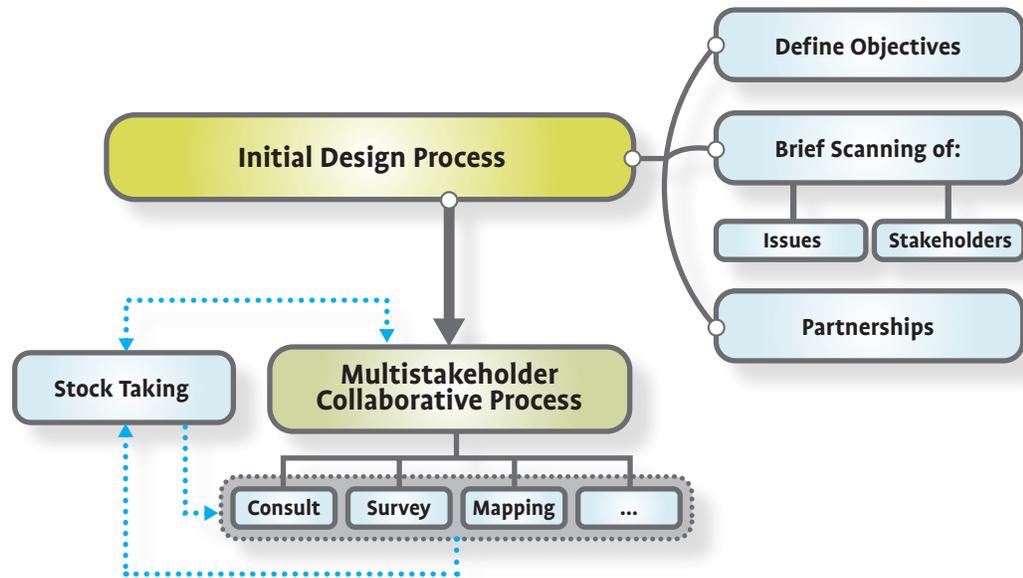
- **Background papers and policy briefs:** Presenting the evidence—based on the mapping, data gathering and survey processes, writing the background paper that describes issues; must be written by a local and highly respected expert and “ambassador” who understands the issues and is able to articulate the concerns that must be addressed to the larger community.
- **Public multistakeholder event:** The holding of a public event that brings in a diversity of sectors and interests for the purpose of developing a shared understanding of issues and challenges.
- **Focus groups and workshops:** A useful way to explore perceptions, attitudes and trends within a community or group of people that have something in common, organized around a geographic space (city or regional), theme or profession.
- **Scenarios, backcasting and related modelling and forecasting processes:** Scenarios can be a useful activity that helps stakeholders consider possible futures, identifying in the process common concerns, differences of opinion, and building awareness of options. Backcasting is a useful process to consider what actions might be necessary over time to achieve a desired future. Both will benefit from modelling data and trends as inputs.
- **Online discussion boards and mailing lists:** Discussion boards and mailing lists represent a common way for groups to keep in touch, keep organized and engage in debate across a far-flung network of people—a very practical administration tool useful for asynchronous consultations, for agenda setting prior to in-person consultations, and for eliciting evidence and consent.

This list is by no means final or exhaustive, and the next section proposes a framework that can be used to evaluate other tools that practitioners find practicable but that are not included in this toolkit. As an ever-evolving process, one that will involve adding more tools through a collaborative and iterative process, this toolkit will grow to include tools currently not listed here. IISD will develop a wiki at [www.iisd.org/TIPP](http://www.iisd.org/TIPP) through which practitioners and policy-makers can comment on the tools they have used and contribute new tools to the toolkit.

## Overview of the Process

Multistakeholder governance is a continuous, iterative process. The principles of adaptive policy making suggest the importance of continuous learning—feeding back into the learning process in order to make it more efficient, result oriented and responsive to changing circumstances. Figure 1 illustrates this: every activity feeds back into the process itself. The policy practitioner may set goals he or she intends to accomplish and then choose to disband afterwards, but there is no natural, prescriptive end point. The important thing is to view any multistakeholder collaboration as a process rather than as a one-time event or a series of events.

Figure 1 &gt; Overview of a multistakeholder process.

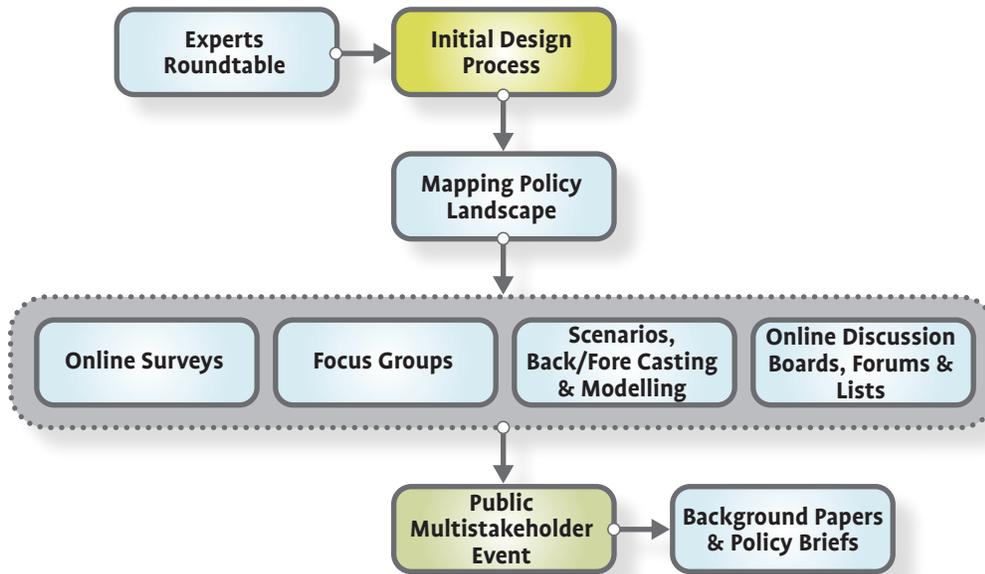


### How the Tools Are Presented and the Process Flow

A detailed presentation of these tools using a particularly format or structure is a difficult exercise because they can be deployed independently of each other and because each tool can be applied at any point of the policy-making process and to any particular event. It is, however, useful to lay out a structure of how these tools can be used in a policy process and where they could be more beneficial to the policy practitioner in order to achieve the process objectives. This description is based on our experience of using the various tools in the field and is in no way prescriptive. Practitioners could design their own process as they see fit. Figure 2 presents a structure that gives the impression that the implementation is a linear process, that there is a natural progression through all uses toward some sort of end point. That is not the case—the toolkit is intended to be modular, and each tool should be used as appropriate and need not sequentially follow the next. Tools should be used when they would produce the most effective outcome. The practitioner could adapt this structure to meet the local policy context.

Having said that, there may be some constraints with regard to the order in which they are used, along with prerequisites for which tool should be implemented earlier. Some tools should be used sooner rather than later. For instance, while online discussion lists can run continuously throughout a policy process, or in some cases outlast one (thereby remaining as a legacy dialogue platform), a mapping of the policy landscape may be required first, in order to identify participants who should be invited to the online discussion forum. We have made recommendations on how each tool could be approached by including a timing and duration's section in its description, along with suggestions for the next tool to likely be used. However, this decision remains solely the prerogative of the policy practitioner.

Figure 2 &gt; Process flow of tools.



Each tool is described in this section using the framework in Box 2. Every tool used in the process must be uniquely identifiable. If the practitioner cannot define a tool and its elements using this framework it is likely the outcomes that emerge from its use will be equally unidentifiable, making it impossible to track its use, document its importance, and develop adaptive strategies around it. Defining the tools in this format also helps the practitioner to identify which one will most likely generate the most effective outcome from any particular event in the policy-making process.

## Box2

## Framework for each tool.

**Tool:****Description:**

- What is the tool and how does it work?

**Objectives:**

- Each tool needs clearly defined objectives.
- What knowledge can be gained and how does it help the process?
- Different tools have different uses and should be implemented in order to reach specific goals. Which tool amongst others can best achieve the desired objective?

**Expected Output:**

- What are the outputs from the use of such a tool?
- How should the knowledge gained be presented?
- If the outputs are in the form of raw data, is it necessary to analyze or synthesize it?
- The outputs you choose should tie into the objectives for the use of the tool.

**Timing and Duration:**

- When is it appropriate to run a tool?
- Here it is important to think about the usefulness at a particular stage in the process; although the tools do not represent a linear progression, there are limitations as to when they should be used.
- What prior knowledge or other prerequisites are necessary?
- How long does the practitioner intend the activity to last?
- What is an “optimum” run in terms of time or number of iterations (for example, how many focus groups should be held)?
- Timing and duration might not be directly applicable to all the tools, such as the online discussion list, which might outlast the process.

**Case Study:**

- A real life description of where the tool has been implemented.

**Procedure:**

- A step-by-step guide for implementing the tool.

Describing the objectives that must be achieved should therefore be clearly articulated. The use of each tool must have an outcome. We had suggested earlier that tools should primarily seek to generate evidence or gather consent, or both. The practitioner should be able to picture the outcomes that will emerge with the use of each tool within any particular policy context. There may be positive or negative unintended outcomes. Describing the objectives ahead of time helps the practitioner to utilize positive outcomes while defining strategies that will be used to manage negative ones. Outcomes could be in the form of the results from survey findings, raw research data or notes from moderated discussions. It will hold very little meaning to policy-makers in this raw form until it is analyzed, synthesized and presented in a form that makes useful sense to them. One such form is in the production of policy briefs. The policy practitioner or a respectable member of the stakeholder or policy community should seek to produce an easily understandable brief from the data.

Timing and duration could be examined from two perspectives; the exact time in which a tool should be deployed within the process, and the length a particular tool can be used. Certain tools can only be used at certain periods in the process. For instance, although a survey could be employed recursively, it is best implemented at the beginning of the process to elicit evidence about issues that will define subsequent action. The online discussion tool could span the entire process and even outlast it, remaining as a legacy platform for policy dialogue continuing to take place.

The tools are described in a recipe style format. This description is punctuated with words of caution and warnings, based on our experience of their use in the field.

We have attempted to describe an exit strategy for each tool. Earlier, we mentioned the importance of articulating the objectives for each tool used. It is for this reason that an exit strategy should also be articulated—so that the shortcomings of one tool to fulfill an objective should result in the enabling of another, with the aim that this combined usage collectively contribute to the overall objective of the policy process. For instance, the policy practitioner should know when a tool is insufficient to produce the right outcome or contribute to meeting the objective originally defined, and through this device a strategy that can help the process by introducing the next, and most appropriate, tool. Ultimately, outputs from the use of one tool should feed into another.

Immediate and pressing ICT and Internet policy issues and the stakeholders who are involved with them all contribute to a better understanding of the local policy landscape. Preliminary steps should be taken to gather this sort of information, because it contributes to a better mapping of the policy landscape.

Finally, it is important that all processes are documented. The exit strategy in each of the tools describes the production of reports that may contain a synthesis or analysis of the policy process itself. In addition, an understanding of the use of these tools themselves should be documented.

## Evaluation and Stock-Taking Framework for the Toolkit

This section presents the toolkit's methodology, a framework that will guide the use of each tool, and the evaluation criteria. It is important that a uniform evaluation strategy is followed by policy practitioners and that attempts are made to provide clear answers to the questions in the evaluation framework. They may help the practitioner to think of other benefits that may accrue from the use of each tool and ways in which it can be adapted to the particular policy-making situation, and which lessons learned can be incorporated into their re-use.

This toolkit has been designed in a modular fashion to allow policy practitioners to introduce new tools into their repertoires. However, new tools can be introduced but they must be evaluated for their effectiveness and their ability to contribute to meeting the objectives of the policy process. They should not be a repetition of an existing tool or redundant in their contribution to the policy process. The practitioner may have only one chance at engaging stakeholders and may have minimal resources available at his or her disposal; therefore, careful thought should be put into selecting and applying any tool to the process.

The purpose of this framework is to enable the policy practitioner to be strategic about issues that can affect the process, to avoid surprises and to minimize unintended outcomes. Each tool should be considered in relation to the other. We therefore propose a two-step process for the incorporation of any new tool and for the use of existing tools:

1. The pre-implementation evaluation of each tool prior to its introduction into the policy-making process
2. The stock-taking evaluation after the tool has been applied to the policy-making process

### **Pre-Implementation Framework**

Prior to the use of a tool, practitioners should provide answers to the questions presented in Box 3. In Figure 1 we suggested an element of stock-taking on the appropriateness of the use of each tool and an assessment of its contribution to the entire process think of this as a “meta tool” that the policy practitioner should run before the introduction of any new tool to the process. The practitioner could use this as a test for the tool’s ability to contribute to achieving the objectives of the process.

### **Pre-implementation framework for evaluating a tool’s suitability for the policy-making process.**

## Box 3

1. What will this tool help achieve?
2. How can it help achieve the intended process objectives?
3. Does it cater to all the stakeholders involved in the process? For instance, can policy-makers and academic researchers comfortably work with the tool?
4. Can reports be generated from its use?
5. Can the policy practitioner structure its use and application throughout the duration of its use?
6. Can its outputs be validated?

## Evaluation and Stock-Taking

After a tool has been introduced into the policy-making process, it becomes extremely important to evaluate how it has contributed to the overall policy-making objectives, and the lessons that can be learned from its use. One thing must always lead to the next. It is important that the policy practitioner evaluates and documents his or her own experiences, to ensure that the tools are, in effect, contributing to meeting the process goals, and to make adjustments where necessary. Box 4 describes a simple post-implementation stock-taking framework.

### Post-implementation stock-taking framework for evaluating a tool.

## Box 4

#### 1. Defining a baseline

- Was a baseline defined prior to using this tool? Did the tool supersede the initially defined baseline? (Before running a tool, it is good to have an idea about the expected outcome.)
- What is the goal of using a particular tool?
- What are the expected results?

#### 2. Outputs/products

- What was produced from the knowledge generated by the tool?
- Have the results been published?
- Were white papers (policy briefs, specifically target policy papers to different policy-makers) created as a result of the process?

#### 3. Impacts

- What were the responses from stakeholders?
- Did the white paper (for example) elicit a response from the targeted stakeholder/policy-maker?
- What change can be observed that can be tied back to the use of the tool?

#### 4. Lessons learned and opportunities

- Did the actual results differ from what was expected? How?
- Did anything go wrong or did it have unintended consequences?
- Were there positive developments that you did not foresee?
- What can be learned?
- Any new learning here should then be infused into the multistakeholder process and into your understanding of the tool itself, in case you want to go through it again.

Both these frameworks can be applied as a matter of course or even periodically on their own to assess the suitability of a tool in the repertoire of the policy practitioner. The job is not done after a face-to-face meeting has concluded or a survey has been conducted—in essence, a tool only adds to an ongoing process.

## Initial Process Design

A policy process commences with a process design that involves a set of four separate but interrelated steps. They include: describing the goals of the policy process; seeking strategic partners who can help in achieving these goals; identifying a policy practitioner or local champion (if one has not already been identified); and engaging a wide variety of stakeholders. The following paragraphs describe each of these steps.

- **Figure out and outline the process goals and objectives:** Why is it important that the policy practitioner organize a multistakeholder Internet collaboration? What is the desired policy change and what process is most appropriate and effective to arrive at this desired objective? This exercise of outlining the process goals should involve both broad objectives and specific activities that contribute to achieving those objectives. What are some of the critical issues that such a process might initially address? Thinking strategically about these issues is extremely important. The multistakeholder process itself will later review, revise and prioritize this input, but an initial scan should be sufficiently robust enough to raise the immediate pressing issues that other stakeholders may find interesting. It is crucial, however, that you do not compromise your role as an impartial facilitator. The outline does not need to cover everything at this stage, though it should be sufficiently broad enough to make a case for why a multistakeholder process is necessary.

A good way of looking at this is using the metaphor of building and presenting narratives, which are more engaging than the presentation of statistics or simply facts. The practitioner should avoid making a grocery list of technocratic policy areas (access, Critical Internet Resources, intellectual property and/or the urgent need for IPv6), but rather put these things in context as critical public policy issues: economic growth, raising standards of living, public health, sustainable development, and so on and so forth. For example, it may not sound very problematic that only 1 per cent of local businesses are able to connect to the Internet using IPv6 today. A more effective method and an approach that gains more traction is to present this as a major obstacle to future economic competitiveness. Discuss the issues in Internet governance that prevent this from happening, or opportunities for action that you could grab. This list should raise the awareness of different stakeholder groups across your community to whom this issue concerns (and it is likely to cut across broad sectors of society). It is difficult to foster engagement around technocratic goals.

- **Seek partners:** We encourage the local champion (discussed in the next point) or policy practitioner to seek out a few partners who will become part of the effort. Doing so helps to gain alternative perspectives on why multistakeholder policy making is necessary. It also increases the legitimacy of the process and helps to off-load some of the tasks that have to be done in the initial phase onto other partners who may have expertise in those areas.

IISD has been a partner in two such multistakeholder processes. In Canada, we joined forces with the Canadian Internet Registration Authority and the Media Awareness Network (MNet) to do the groundwork for the launch of the Canadian Internet Forum in 2011 (see Case Study 1). IISD

contributed expertise on the multistakeholder processes and specific knowledge on the linkages between sustainable development and Internet governance, and carried out three focus groups and a Canada-wide Web survey. MNet contributed its knowledge on digital literacy and facilitated three other focus groups. In West Africa, IISD has been a partner for two years, contributing research, influencing the design, participating in the running of the process, and generating evidence through surveys and interviews as a part of the consultation.

Partnerships are important. They help the practitioner leverage a broad network base and benefit from the experience that they contribute. Partners are different from stakeholders.

- **Identify a local champion or policy practitioner:** This section discusses how to initiate a multistakeholder forum. There is no hard and fast way of doing this, but we go through some issues you should think of and principles you should have in mind. Initially, running the process will primarily be the responsibility of a “champion,” someone that is motivated and willing to carry the burden to keep the process ongoing. We have throughout this document referred to this person as the “policy practitioner.” If you are reading this document, you are most likely this person.
- **Engage a wide array of stakeholders:** Influencing policy is not a “one institution” thing. It must be a process owned by a number of institutions, including the policy-makers you wish to influence. By and by, as many stakeholders as possible will ensure collective ownership and sustainability of the process. This is also likely the best chance of achieving policy change. Organizers of a multistakeholder process should do their utmost to draw representatives from many different stakeholder groups.

Here is a non-exhaustive list of important stakeholder groups in almost any community:

- Government (at various levels), regulators and other public authorities
- CSOs focused on different issues:
  - Environment and sustainable development
  - Youth
  - Health
  - Indigenous people and minorities
  - Professions
  - Rights and privacy groups
- Technological community (ICT experts and ICT organizations)
- Businesses and business interest organizations
- Universities and research institutes, academia
- Other educational institutions
- Media and journalism
- Political think tanks and institutes
- Faith-based groups and community cultural associations

Inviting stakeholders is a crucial and important aspect to the process that should not only consist of a public broadcast announcing events or activities, but targeted invitations to specific partners and stakeholders who should be there. This consists of writing letters and specifically requesting invitees to play a role, either as a contributor to a focus group event or to an online discussion list.

There is no guarantee that the different organizations and actors will want to participate. Making a forum accessible and open to interested parties, however, consists of more than merely sending an invite. Geography and infrastructure will influence the practitioner's ability to communicate with people over long distances and the choice of whether to hold face to face or virtual consultations. Consider also the risk of excluding people without Internet access or without the necessary Internet skills, which is a particular problem with online collaboration tools like mailing lists—these people represent an important constituency.

Another issue is voluntary exclusion, whereby stakeholders feel they should not be part of the dialogue. Various CSOs and individuals that do not see ICTs or the Internet as directly relevant to their work (agriculture, or elders and senior citizens, for example) could exclude themselves. Facilitators should work hard to label the multistakeholder process as not only all-inclusive (of stakeholders in the same sector) but also all-encompassing (of stakeholders across all sectors), including those who may traditionally be perceived as not providing any direct or relevant input.

## Case Study 1

### Designing the Canadian process: Partnership and multistakeholder participation.

The Canadian Internet Forum was first envisioned as a process rather than a single event. Inputs were gathered from many stakeholders at various stages to inform how the Forum would be shaped and implemented. Several smaller processes and activities culminated into a larger process that is still ongoing and has run into its second year in 2012.

An early step in gauging interest in a national Canadian Internet Forum took place in 2009, with a regional workshop commissioned by Industry Canada, which introduced a range of scenarios for the future of the Internet.<sup>19</sup> A public survey to gauge Canadian public interests in Internet public policy and decision making was conducted in 2010. Although these activities were not directly linked at the time, the workshop produced input that was useful to the public survey.

The survey, which received over a thousand responses, produced evidence of Canadian interests in two very important tracks: digital literacy and economic development. These tracks formed the basis for further inquiry into how the Internet affects the lives of Canadians. In November 2010, armed with the questions, “What could/should the future of the Internet in Canada be like?” and “what are the burning issues that Canadian policy-makers need to consider relating to the Internet and the skills needed by Canadians to maximize its potential?”, The Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA), Media Awareness Network (MNet) and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) embarked on a nationwide tour of six cities<sup>20</sup> to capture the thoughts of stakeholders at the grassroots level.

<sup>19</sup> See [http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2009/projecting\\_internet\\_evolution.pdf](http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2009/projecting_internet_evolution.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> The six cities were Winnipeg, Iqaluit, Toronto, Vancouver, Halifax and Montreal.

## Conclusion

In this preamble section, we have presented a listing of tools that the policy practitioner can use to generate evidence and consent: evidence that informs the shaping of policies, and consent of those who will be affected by the tools' implementation. We have also described policy dialogue as a process rather than a one-time event in which several tools can be used by various stakeholders and partners to generate evidence and consent over a period of time.

In the overview, we described a framework on how the tools in this toolkit are represented, one that can be used to shape emerging tools that the practitioner finds useful for inclusion in the future. This section also included a framework for evaluating the process and existing and new tools. It concludes with the elements that are needed for a successful process design, which must include a clear description of the goals and issues, identification and inclusion of partners who are interested in seeing policy change, identification of a local champion or policy practitioner if one does not already exist, and finally, the inclusion of a wide array of stakeholders.

The next section describes the various tools that we have tried and tested during the course of generating evidence and consent in policy spaces, in both developed and developing worlds.

## TOOL 1 > Experts Roundtables

The experts roundtable allows issues experts and thought leaders to discuss trends, frame issues, and identify information gaps, critical uncertainties, and policy challenges in a particular policy context and on policy issues that concern a wider public. Their input, while important, should not be taken out of context or in isolation, but complementary to the objectives of the wider policy dialogue. Because contributions are not made in public (see procedures section), the policy practitioner would be required to adopt practices that tactfully introduce an expert's advice into the process. Advice could provide direction and support to the policy dialogue, usually at the beginning and throughout the process, and steer dialogue toward achieving public consultation objectives. Sometimes the experts group could play an advisory function, in which case the practitioner would be responsible for constantly engaging and keeping them informed about the process.



**Warning:** *Expert group members who are willing to provide advice should not be weighed down with process issues such as logistics, although they may be willing to offer advice on who else may be invited to the group. Expert group members should provide content-based advice.*

Expert groups can bridge government policy-makers, business and public interest groups as a first step in laying the basis for broader public dialogue.

Our past experiences suggest that policy-makers or those who can influence policies are willing to engage with peers at a level that may not involve a large group of people or stakeholders. Experts meetings that address highly sensitive issues may be held “in-camera,” a process that is closed to the public and that allows for open and frank discussions. Such closed activities may be seen as contrary to the open and frank principles of public policy dialogue. However, closed sessions may be necessary in the early stages leading up to a public process, to create a trusted space for government officials to explore with experts what the current policy issues are and the challenges of those positions.

Strategies are needed on how suggestions or recommendations from closed sessions can be presented for further dialogue in public forums. One way of doing this is to introduce concepts through an expert panel session at a public forum. The consent of the experts group must be received and a plan for how this will play out should be approved prior to engaging in this type of activity. A second way of addressing this concern is to measure the outcomes of closed sessions against a set of predefined parameters that gauges the amount of harm that will be generated if the information is disclosed to the public. A set of “what if” questions could help here, to paint a future scenario about the disclosure. The most desirable picture should be selected and the necessary information can be disclosed using a means that is most appropriate.

Participation in the experts roundtable should be limited to a small number (from four to seven) of high profile, respected and influential individuals or experts that are carefully selected from the different sectors the policies concern. The procedures section describes this process in detail.

Although we have not made use of specially created experts roundtables for much of our Internet public policy work, we have often consulted and learned valuable lessons from those who have extensive knowledge and expertise in Internet public policy issues.

## Objectives

The experts group is converged to achieve the following objectives:

- To provide expert input where one is required to fill information gaps, articulate critical uncertainties, and suggest changes that address policy challenges.
- To generate buy-in among influential figures who may themselves become ambassadors for the policy change.
- To identify unconventional and non-traditional ways of addressing certain policy concerns.

## Expected Output

- Where the session is held in-camera, no public documented output is expected from this activity.
- If the views of the experts group are to be made public, then the discussion should be captured through minutes of the meetings, major views of the group captured (including those topics where views may vary), and a report of the group published.

## Timing and Duration

- An experts meeting may be a once off event because of the challenges that may be associated with synchronizing everyone's schedules to meet at a specific time.
- Depending on the range of issues to be covered and advice sought from the experts group, several meetings may be warranted.
- Each meeting should not last longer than three hours.

## Procedure

### STEP 1 > SEEK THE RIGHT EXPERT

The decision on who to call an “expert” is not often easy to make. Hence, certain parameters are needed to make this selection. The policy-maker is one of many that could be invited to provide expert advice, especially as it concerns procedural process issues. Influence or clout is not the only prerequisite for participation in the experts roundtable. Expertise in the particular field of technology or policy, and the ability to analyze social, economic, political and environmental issues is also required.

Several persons may fit this bill in a particular policy context (nation or region), therefore, conceptually populating the seats in this roundtable may be easy but actualizing it could be challenging. Another difficult challenge is to find those who may be willing to volunteer their time, or even have the interest to participate in policy dialogue. It is therefore important that the policy practitioner finds those who meet some or most of these different criteria and who are willing to overcome the challenge of participation.

Finding the first “expert” becomes an important exercise, because that person could facilitate access to others—his or her peers who belong within a certain level of political, economic or social strata. It is important to identify someone that is amenable to policy concerns at the grassroots level and who might be willing to bring those causes to the right policy level.

**STEP 2 > IDENTIFY THE RIGHT AND INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE**

Industry leaders and private sector participants can make substantial contributions to the policy process and so can members of government, civil society, technology, business, academia, media, policy think tanks and faith-based groups.<sup>21</sup> In some cases, these groups have representative bodies from which an expert can be carefully selected and invited. For instance, the chair of an industry group or the leader of a civil society coalition could represent members of the private sector, or not-for-profit groups, respectively. Throughout this document, we have highlighted the importance of multistakeholder participation in a manner so that those invited to involve in Internet public policy should emerge from broad groups, not necessarily only those that the policy directly affects. Thus, for instance, it may be important to invite participation from the financial sector or a group representing those who might be affected financially and otherwise by technology policies. They are equally important and their input is also important.

The policy practitioner could work with the first expert identified to choose from a landscape filled with potential candidates, those who would speak for and engage with others to provide expert opinion for the particular sector.

Earlier, we had listed several qualities that could act as prerequisites for selection. Expertise alone is insufficient. Clout, analytical skill, and the willingness to volunteer and participate in policy dialogue are useful qualities to look for. Most of all, experts should be able to see through the lens of the public.

**STEP 3 > DEFINE THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE GROUP/CLEARLY CONVEY THE RULES FOR THE EXPERTS ROUNDTABLE**

There is no point in joining a group that has no clear term of reference. The terms should include the mandate of the group, the working modalities (either virtually or face to face), a clear definition of the period that the experts are needed, and how their input will feed into the public policy consultation process.

Most importantly, the mandate of the group should include the policy issues for which expert attention is required. Convey the rules of dialogue clearly; for instance, how will the results of the deliberations be made public if in-camera discussions are to be held?

**STEP 4 > FORMALLY INVITE EXPERTS TO THE GROUP**

Experts should be formally invited and their specific tasks clearly assigned to them. For instance, they should be aware of any requirement to make a presentation to the experts group or to facilitate certain portions of the dialogue.

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<sup>21</sup> Outcome from surveys of public perceptions of Internet public policies in Canada, and West Africa (Akoh et al., 2011).

**STEP 5 > CREATE AN AGENDA**

In the case that in-person meetings will be held, an agenda should be defined, possibly with input from the experts who are able to contribute to shaping the dialogue.

Focus group dialogue should be straight to the point, and short. The experts may not have all the time to engage in lengthy discussions. In some cases, a moderator or facilitator may be needed.

**STEP 6 > CLOSE THE ROUNDTABLE**

Close the roundtable when its mandate has been achieved.

## Checklist

CHECK	ITEM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Seek the first expert
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify the right and influential people
<input type="checkbox"/>	Define the terms of reference for the group
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clearly convey the rules for the experts roundtable
<input type="checkbox"/>	Formally invite experts to the group
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create an agenda
<input type="checkbox"/>	Close the roundtable

## TOOL 2 > Mapping the Broad Policy and ICT Landscape

A contextual mapping of the ICT policy landscape involves documenting the following: the policies that are already in place; the issues that may warrant attention for policy formulation or reform; the stakeholders who should be involved; and the mechanisms or platforms currently available for policy dialogue. Some of these may be focused primarily on traditional ICTs such as telecommunications or the Internet sector, but they should include other sectors such as broadcast, culture, industry and others that are affected by the Internet specifically or technology broadly. This tool is useful in describing the broad ICT policy landscape.

In the case that a map of the policy landscape already exists, the practitioner can quickly leverage it to accomplish a wide range of things. For instance, it could be used to identify the stakeholders who should participate at a public multistakeholder event, or the policies that warrant further dialogue and reform. However, from our initial scan, not many countries or regions have developed such an all-encompassing map of the landscape, despite its importance. Thus creating one is essential, albeit a rigorous exercise; its importance to the practitioner and the entire policy-making process cannot be underestimated.

This section provides a narrative of the policy mapping tool. It highlights its objectives and presents a description of the steps needed to create one. The timing and duration section highlights the time that can be allocated to implementing this tool. How the practitioner might use the outcomes from this tool in the policy-making process is also described.

### Description

Conducting a mapping of the policy landscape is a rigorous research process that would result in the production of essentially the “state of the moment” description of the policy environment, called the *ICT policy landscape map*. Because of the decentralized and broadly divergent nature in which ICTs have evolved to date, the Internet, telecommunication and the broadcast sectors have developed independently. For instance, the system in which stakeholders in the broadcast sector, its actors such as television and radio stations, regulators, and its audience are involved is somewhat separate from the subsystems in which the Internet community operates and thrives. Also, how these sectors are governed or regulated does not follow the same principles; neither do they often fall within the purview of the same government ministries.

However, technology’s convergence brought about by digitalization has resulted in the need for a broad understanding of how all of these sectors work individually and collectively (Souter, 2009). Thus, for the policy-maker, knowledge of a particular sector is insufficient in understanding the broad context of policy making that will influence present and future policy positions in other sectors, either in a particular or the broader collective landscape. It is possible that there may be existing publications describing these different policy landscapes and the frameworks, from which the policy-maker may gain substantial knowledge. However, it is most likely that a mapping of the broad policy landscape does not already exist and that the outcome of this exercise will be the first step in producing what might become the first policy map of the country or region. In this case, the exercise will result in a substantial contribution to knowledge.

This broad policy mapping should include but not be limited to the following:

1. **The ICT sector**
2. **The policy-making process within this sector**
3. **The stakeholder community**
4. **The policy issues**

The following sectors should be reflected in the ICT policy landscape mapping exercise:

- **Telecommunications (including fixed, mobile and wireless networks)**
- **Internet (including Internet service providers, technology services providers, manufacturers, Internet intermediary companies)**
- **Broadcast (including radio, television, cable and satellite)**
- **Other sectors that are affected or influenced by ICTs and the Internet, such as education, health, commerce, food security and so forth**

Depending on the level, regional, national or provincial, this process will involve:

- **Exploring the existence of any policies, laws and regulations in the region, country or province that relate to ICTs—for instance, in telecommunications, policies such as licensing regimes, universal licensing provisions that allow for converged delivery of telecommunication and broadcast services.**
- **Government ministries or departments that are responsible for certain policies or where certain policies are located; for instance, in Canada, Industry Canada, Heritage Canada, Canadian Radio and Television Corporation are all government agencies or departments with one mandate or another that affects or is affected by the Internet.**
- **Regulators or mechanisms through which certain policies are implemented or enforced.**

At the beginning of the process, it is necessary for the policy practitioner to understand the landscape of ICTs within the community and to solidify this with empirical (evidence-based) data and analysis. This exercise should reveal the role of ICTs in the community as a whole, such as the adoption rates and uses of various services and technologies by different professions, social groups or regions, or differences in access to technology between regions, social groups and income levels. This tool would need to go beyond just ICTs, however, and also capture an image of society as a whole, including the state of the economy, geography, demographics and trends.

Effective governance requires reliable data and analysis of the policy issues that need to be addressed, and the context in which they are found. The picture of how ICTs are used (or not) that this exercise will produce is likely to influence how the policy practitioner will decide to engage a collaborative policy process that could lead to positive outcomes and in turn, policy change. Crafting good policies that can effectively address policy challenges requires substantial data about those who will be affected by the policy, why it is important to them, and where these policies can be applied to have the greatest impact. For instance, although personal observations and anecdotal evidence may have revealed that very few people can access the Internet in their own homes, the reality can be much more complex than perceived. In this case, consulting statistics and other data can reveal that some socioeconomic

groups are affected worse than others (such as people with low income), which would have an effect on what policy steps are required to address this problem at that level.

The policy mapping exercise should also explore how Internet related policy is formulated; how it is established within a national or regional context; and how responsibility is divided—whether formally or informally—between the stakeholders (such as government, regulatory authorities), private sector organizations (such as trade bodies, civil society actors) and others. Through this work, the practitioner should gain an understanding of who the key actors are for which policy area, how decisions are made in this area, and what the driving forces behind these different policy areas are. An analysis of this process will reveal the level of transparency in the policy-making process, how and if consultations are a part of the policy-making process, whether private actors such as CSOs or business organizations are extensively involved, whether there is a central strategy behind new policy initiatives, and so on. Broadcasting, telecom and other ICT regulations are central policy areas to study, but the mapping should take a broad approach—commensurate with the philosophy of broad-based Internet public policy that we have described in part 1—and look at how ICTs are used and regulated by other government departments and private actors in other sectors.

Because of the global reach of the Internet and the many decisions that are made at the regional or international level, the mapping must also consider the interplay between policy making at these various levels. Fundamentally, the policy practitioner should seek to find answers to how local policies can be influenced by regional or international policies, agreements or treaties. Sometimes, local policies that stakeholders have found to be suitable to the local context may not be in alignment with international or global Internet practices. Policy practitioners should be aware of such possibilities, and take steps to avoid or explore them for their own national benefits.

This tool should, furthermore, look backwards to capture trends over time. Has Internet or mobile phone use increased significantly over time, and does it have any correlation with economic development? Are there significant demographic trends, such as population growth? This section needs to draw on a variety of sources, published and non-published, and can include qualitative as well as quantitative evidence. Outputs from other tools in this toolkit could be used to update this document. Focus groups may be a particularly rich source of qualitative information that can capture other aspects than those that appear in statistics. Mapping the ICT landscape is an exercise that should be undertaken as early as possible, but it should also be revisited or updated. The output of this should be a well-referenced document that builds a thorough understanding of the context and how it is changing over time.

## Objectives

- To produce an evidence-based researched document that describes the ICT policy landscape.

## Expected Output

- **A detailed ICT policy landscape map:** The output from this activity should be an extensive document that describes as fully as possible the circumstances around ICTs and Internet public policy in the jurisdiction in which this activity is being implemented. It also presents a reference source of existing policies, stakeholders, policy-makers and issues. This document should be an objectively written, unbiased and neutral description of the landscape and it can include important and sometimes controversial issues. This will be extremely useful as a reference tool to understand what the policies are at present, how policy is made and who is involved in making it.
- **Policy gap analysis:** Another possible outcome of this exercise is a policy gap analysis, revealing areas where existing policies are lacking.
- The output from this tool contributes to the design of other evidence-based tools such as the surveys, experts roundtables or consent-based tools such as the focus group events.
- Its content should also contribute to a series of publications, a pamphlet with an image map of the policy landscape, a policy brief, and articles in various media.



**Note:** Remember that the point of the whole process is to be inclusive, and the policy practitioner may come across issues that involve substantial differences in opinion between different actors in the community. These will need to be reflected fairly, without bias, in the policy landscape map.

The policy practitioner should be careful, as well, not to introduce his/her own preferences into the policy landscape map. This map is about what the landscape is, not what the practitioner would like it to be.

## Timing and Duration

Although this research must be performed at the very beginning, its influence spans the entire policy-making process and produces a continuous reference tool for the policy practitioner and stakeholders. A good understanding of the landscape in which policy change is required is important, hence the need to conduct this research earlier in the process. It may be useful and necessary to revisit parts of this resource for the purposes of updating it especially in a constantly evolving landscape, such as those characterized by changes in government, radical reforms of the sector, or the advancements of technology itself.

It is difficult to suggest the duration of this particular research exercise. The full services of a researcher may be required to last from 20 to 60 days for desk research and for writing.

## Procedure

### STEP 1 > PREPARATION

For the policy map to be useful to the larger community, a variety of perspectives from different partners in the ICT landscape needs to be included. Ensuring buy-in is one of the many other important preparatory issues required. The source of funding to execute the project and the strategy for advocacy of the emergent outcomes of the policy map are equally important.

1. Identify partners: What partners are needed both to address the issue of visibility (or optics) and to provide substantial guidance in the project's implementation? Stakeholders who could create a public impression of bias should be avoided. Government departments are needed and regulators could be helpful.
2. Source funding: The cost of undertaking this task could be quite intensive. However, this challenge can be more effectively addressed after buy-in has been received from various partners who may be willing to cost share the project.
3. Identify the researcher(s): Identifying a policy researcher could be a collective effort of the various partners. Such a person should have a good historical perspective of the ICT and Internet policy landscape and be relatively well known to the broader Internet and ICT stakeholder base.
4. Advocacy concerns: A good understanding of what this policy tool will be used for, and the ways in which this can be achieved, need to be clearly defined at the onset.

### STEP 2 > IDENTIFY THE SECTORS

The production of the document will become the task of the policy researcher, with the guidance of the partners and possibly an advisory board that will be constituted to oversee the content of the report. One of the tasks they will be required to accomplish includes identifying the various sectors in the policy landscape that should be mapped. The list below is not an exhaustive one but it does provide the practitioner with a small base from which to work.

- Telecommunication (wireless, fixed)
- Broadcast (cable)
- Internet (service providers, Internet intermediaries)
- Small and medium enterprises (local businesses, resellers, phone shops)

### STEP 3 > DESCRIBE THE MATRIX OF POLICIES IN EACH SECTOR

A basic list could be generated, starting out with obvious and existing policies that are directly related to ICT or the Internet such as the broadcast laws, the telecommunication codes, and communication regulations. This could be expanded toward policies in other policy areas indirectly affected by ICTs and the Internet such as economic development, arts and culture, and even environmental management. A historic review of how these policies have evolved and descriptions of how they intersect could be helpful in describing the policy landscape. Some findings from this exercise could produce evidence of obsolete policies or those that impede growth and development in the ICTs and Internet sector or, broadly, in other sectors. This is, however, a preliminary exercise that is further expanded in Step 5.

#### **STEP 4 > IDENTIFY THE STAKEHOLDERS**

The mapping should, however, go beyond providing an initial list of stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in the sectors listed in Step 2. It should include those socially or serendipitously impacted by ICTs and the Internet—for instance, stakeholders representing different interests like consumer protection, health, environment, education, development, women and minorities and other types of public interest organizations. The practitioner and researcher should identify whether they are impacted by ICTs and Internet policy. Sometimes, the relationship between stakeholder core activities and ICT and Internet policies may not be easily evident, but the connections can be made with rigorous research.

Stakeholders also play another important role of validating the outcome of this mapping. A validation workshop that will allow the different stakeholder groups to interact with the draft policy map may be helpful in further refining the document before it is made public (see Step 7).

#### **STEP 5 > CONSTITUTE AN ADVISORY BOARD**

An important task from the partners mentioned in Step 1 is to identify an advisory board that will provide guidance to the project. We should note here that members of the experts roundtable could also serve as an advisory board for the policy mapping exercise. The board will also provide good visibility to the final outcome of the research. As a result, members of the advisory board need to be selected carefully. Board members do not have to work only in the ICT and Internet domain; they should be constituted from the broad areas that ICTs and the Internet affect. Therefore, their roles in society and positions surrounding the use of broad-based public consultation as a useful way of arriving at public policy are important. The advisory board should be between four to seven persons.

#### **STEP 6 > MAP THE POLICY ISSUES**

What specific policy issues are important to the community, region or country? It is likely that the previous steps would have revealed some of the policy issues within the landscape, some of which might include: universal access, telecom prices, Internet content regulation, ICTs and the environment/ climate change or mobile banking. Priorities may be given to some over others depending on the level of significance in policy community and interests by the stakeholders. This map should also seek to identify the key issues, challenges and opportunities that are of high importance to a large sector of the society. It should motivate a sufficient number of people while being imbued with a sense of realism. A critical evaluation of existing policies and how they are achieved may be necessary.

In addition to the findings emerging from the steps above, the following is a non-exhaustive list of questions and suggestions that could guide the production of the policy map.

- **Review of existing legal and regulatory landscape**
  - Review of existing ICT, telecommunications, broadcast policies, and policy-making processes in country/region
  - Examine national, provincial or state legislature to address state positions and policies on components of ICTs and the Internet, some of which may not be immediately visible, for instance, the provisions for access to information that—though not outrightly concerned with technology—can be facilitated through ICTs and the Internet

- What is the landscape with respect to access to information, freedom of expression?
- What are the regulatory mechanisms in place?
- Review of policy-making processes, past and present, including stakeholder involvement
  - Historic review of policy making in the region. What forums have been created for policy making? Public or government only? Are there any other public policy consultation forums that could be referred to?
  - Understand the process of citizen involvement in policy formulation. What policy formulation process has taken place in these different sectors: ICT, telecoms, broadcast and other Internet/ ICT related areas?
  - Who are the various institutions in this sector? Government, private sectors, CSOs, etc.? What is each one's particular focus, especially CSOs?
- Review of the impacts of ICTs and the Internet on the economic, social and environmental landscape
  - What is the contribution of ICT to the economy? Include analysis of the ICT industrial landscape
  - What are the incentives for small scale businesses and their use of ICTs and the Internet?
  - What are the Internet/mobile penetration rates?
  - Is there any country policy focus on cyber security, digital literacies, Critical Internet Resources, infrastructure development/deployment? How have these been used? How have they contributed to growth and development?
  - How are these tools deployed to manage food security, natural resources and the environment?

#### STEP 7 > VALIDATION

Once a draft version of the document has been produced and has been reviewed by the advisory board and the key partners, it might benefit from a public consultation that seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- Identify gaps that may be missing from the review and provide suggestions to address them
- Validate the document as a true representation of the landscape
- Highlight policy issues that may have been flagged from the report and suggest ways to address them

## Checklist

CHECK	ITEM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Preparation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify partners
<input type="checkbox"/>	Source funding
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify researchers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Advocacy concerns
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify the sector
<input type="checkbox"/>	Describe the matrix of policies in each sector
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify the stakeholders
<input type="checkbox"/>	Constitute an advisory board
<input type="checkbox"/>	Map the policy issues
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review existing legal and regulatory landscape
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review policy-making processes past and present, including stakeholder involvement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review the impact of ICTs and the Internet on the economic, social and environmental landscape
<input type="checkbox"/>	Validation

## TOOL 3 > Online Surveys

Online surveys are useful for creating a baseline of stakeholder opinion, perceptions and knowledge levels about issues in the ICT policy landscape that address a broad range of concerns such as access, connectivity, infrastructure deployment, Critical Internet Resources, security and confidence of doing business and engaging online, among many. Web-based surveys are a cheap (even free) and easy way of reaching a cross-section of interests. This section describes how surveys can be used to generate evidence and public consent in a multistakeholder public policy process.



**Warning:** *It is important to be aware of the limitations of online survey methodology as a method of generating broad-based evidence. Policy-makers and practitioners must be aware that online survey methodology might itself result in a discriminatory method of generating evidence, particularly in eliciting input from societies where Internet access is not as widespread or in those areas where potential contributors find access a challenge or purposefully decline participation. Thus they may be inappropriate for eliciting broad evidence in this context. However, they could be used alongside paper-based surveys and other methods such as focus group activities to gather and triangulate data.*

### Description

Online surveys have become cheap (even free) and convenient ways of polling people's opinions, perceptions and knowledge levels, and if implemented properly, they can be used to gauge trends through statistical analysis. In Canada (Vetter & Creech, 2010) and in West Africa (Akoh et al., 2011), IISD used online surveys through the Web tool "SurveyMonkey" to gauge people's awareness of and concern about Internet related issues (see Case Study 2: The Canadian survey process). SurveyMonkey is just one of many websites offering powerful survey design and polling tools (free of charge or for a premium). Used in the right way, online surveys can be a useful way of reaching a lot of people for very little money, demonstrating the equalizing potential of the Internet. Not long ago, the only way to do mass polling was through prohibitively expensive household mailings or phone-based surveys, which are still in use today and should not be discounted for their value.

The online survey is unlikely to be a completely satisfactory replacement for such methods; data from an online survey will likely be of a different quality than the outputs of a professionally conducted phone-based or household survey. This is in addition to the fact that online surveys may sideline those who the survey concerns. A particularly important constraint is in the mechanics of getting people to take the survey. Because participation is self-selected (it is up to each individual's motivation to take or decline the survey) it will likely be impossible to achieve a scientific, random, cross-cutting sample of a population. The goals for this tool should therefore be set in accordance with the response rate and breadth that the practitioner thinks can be realistically achieved through the available distribution mechanisms. With that said, online surveys can still be a rich source of information about the opinions and perceptions of people in a community. In the case study (see Case Study 2: The Canadian survey process), we present how the findings from a Web survey have helped legitimize the Canadian Internet Forum.

It is important to be very thorough in the design of the survey and to follow a predetermined methodology that will produce useful data. We suggest the use of data from the policy landscape map if one is available (see the Mapping the Broad Policy and ICT Landscape tool). A useful way of creating a new survey is to examine previously deployed ones and to adapt them to the context of the new study. Otherwise, a survey can be designed from scratch. It is paramount to ask what knowledge will be produced by the survey and how it can be used to help the multistakeholder process. For example, it may be desirable to demonstrate to government policy-makers that there is real grassroots support for certain kinds of action, or to discover disparities in how people across different regions and socioeconomic strata view the same set of issues. The goals and types of knowledge that can be produced from the use of this tool thus overlap substantially with those described in the Focus Group tool (see Focus Group tool) and may be used to complement these.

Unfortunately, designing a survey is not straightforward and there is an extremely significant risk that poor question formulations may lead to ambiguous data, especially when it concerns a jargon-heavy field like ICT and when the survey is implemented in a multistakeholder environment with widely diverging knowledge levels. Through clever survey design, it is possible to solicit responses biased toward a preferred view (e.g., if there is a particular policy position for which the surveyor is deliberating seeking support); for the sake of legitimacy and validity of the whole process, surveys must be kept unbiased and objective.

We thus see a case for caution, but Web surveys are nevertheless a tool that you should consider. The case study below offers a good example of how a survey can be deployed at the very beginning of the process in order to demonstrate the level of public support to the policy process, or the presence or lack of support on the policy issues. Our results are not a given: had we found little support for broad, public Internet governance, the Canadian Internet Forum would have faced a very different set of challenges. This too is valuable knowledge.

## CaseStudy<sup>2</sup>

### The Canadian survey process.

As a part of the preparations before the formal launch of the Canadian Internet Forum, IISD designed and carried out a national, online survey on the role of the Internet in Canada. The survey was made by IISD at the request of the Canadian Internet Registration Authority, CIRA (the organization that manages the Canadian .ca top-level domain name).

The goal of the survey was to gauge the opinions and concerns of a broad sector of Internet users in Canada, seeking input on priority issues around deployment and development of the Internet in Canada, what kind of process might best address this, and how to tie the local into regional and global processes. Rather than capture a true, scientific, cross-cutting representation of Canadian opinion on Internet governance, we sought to learn what people already engaged in this issue were thinking. This is an important constituency to have on board when trying to foster a multistakeholder Internet forum.

*Continued...*

## Case study 2

To elicit responses to the survey, we chose to circulate it via email directly to CIRA members and .ca domain registrants, almost 12,000 people and organizations in all. IISD further promoted the survey through its own channels to reach as broad a selection of stakeholders as possible (including representatives from academia, women's groups, environmental organizations and arts/culture groups). We set a target for 500 completed surveys and received slightly over 1,000.

Since Canada has two official languages (English and French), the survey was available in both languages. Most questions involved a Likert scale (i.e., response options include strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, and “don't know”), while some included open-ended questions, allowing respondents to write in their own answers. We also collected some demographic data.

Many of the questions asked Canadians to rate the importance of a basket of Internet related issues on the Likert scale. In this basket we placed access, ISP neutrality, Critical Internet Resources, digital literacy, privacy, security, Internet abuse and spam, intellectual property rights and, finally, Internet governance. We then asked more specific questions regarding respondents' concerns about the Internet's impact on other areas of public policy—among other things, economic competitiveness, social cohesion and environmental stewardship. Finally, we asked questions about governance, seeking answers as to who should have the responsibility for development of the Internet in Canada and how it should be managed. We specifically wanted to gauge people's support for the multistakeholder process that we were preparing.

Altogether, these questions allowed us to paint a picture of the opinions of Canadian Internet users on a host of critical issues and to draw several important messages and recommendations from the data. We could confirm, among other things, the broad support for the establishment of a Canadian Internet forum that should be engaged in a broad range of issues (rather than using a “narrow” approach). Confirming that people who are engaged in the ICT field feel that it is desirable to engage in a broader governance discussion increases the legitimacy of the whole process. All of the data were then fed into the multistakeholder forum and helped inform the discussion and the future course of the process—especially in the generation of two key tracks that subsequently informed the city focus group consultations.

Source: CIRA (2010).

## Objectives

- To generate evidence of current and potentially future policy issues and concerns.
- To provide another source of data that can be used for triangulating the evidence, either ready or intending to be generated from the process of mapping the policy landscape.

## Expected Output

1. A survey template that captures elements that have emerged from the detailed policy landscape map. This will involve the issues that were identified, the stakeholders involved, and the sectors in which these are relevant.<sup>22</sup>
2. After execution, this tool will generate evidence of the critical and important Internet policy concerns within a particular national, regional or provincial context, or in the policy community. Its outcome can be published as a standalone research report or can be used to update the policy landscape map document, or as input to a policy consultation process.
3. An executive summary of the findings can be released to the media.

## Timing and Duration

1. **Design:** Allow one week for survey design.
2. **Testing:** Allow one week to test with a small subset of the landscape, with persons that will provide feedback on the logic, content and sequencing of the survey.
3. **Dissemination:** Allow three to four weeks for survey to be disseminated. Free and open online survey tools such as SurveyMonkey or Doodle provide functions to disseminate a survey. See procedures sections on how to publicize survey.
4. **Collation and analysis:** Start the collation and analysis as soon as the survey has closed. Allow two to three weeks for survey results to be collated and analyzed.

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<sup>22</sup> A sample survey template can be found in this report: <http://cira.ca/assets/Uploads/wp-cif-digital-interest-backgroundunder.pdf>

**Important Note!** Surveys can be iterative. A first iteration could be targeted at a broad set of issues. At this time, the survey seeks to generate general knowledge and understanding of the issues within the context being surveyed or policy community. Because the survey has the capability of raising awareness as well as building the capacity of its recipients, a second iteration could deepen the research into areas where more specific concerns are required.



When an initial survey was deployed across West Africa, Togolese respondents spanning a broad sector of stakeholders became more aware of the issues that the survey addressed such as access to infrastructure, capacity development, multistakeholderism, and digital literacy. It was easier to extend a second survey where some of the important issues identified in the first iteration were deepened to provide a much more in-depth understanding. For instance, the broad concept of multistakeholder participation was deepened to include the involvement of non-technical stakeholders in Internet public policy dialogue; broad security issues were deepened to elicit perceptions on the impact of cyber-criminality on the economic sustainability of the nation.

5. **Distribute Findings:** Distribute findings immediately.

## Procedure

For the policy-maker or practitioner, this section highlights the steps that are involved in the use of this tool.

### STEP 1 > DESIGN SURVEY

The policy practitioner should adhere to some general principles about surveys and their use. Some of these are described here.

The policy practitioner or survey designer is faced with a number of challenges in the design of a survey including whether to make it purely quantitative, qualitative or mixed method. Quantitative surveys are easy to complete, usually multiple choice questions and useful for generating responses for generalizability, but may need to contain a large number of questions for it to inform meaning. Qualitative surveys are more tedious, requiring that respondents type answers in essay formats. They are, however, useful for eliciting depth and nuance. Surveys could also be mixed methods (a combination of both qualitative and quantitative), perhaps the most suitable form for getting respondents to provide responses covering both breadth and depth of the policy issues. The policy practitioner or survey designer should be aware of the adequate mix of quantitative and qualitative questions that help elicit the asked-for responses and must decide which method or mix would generate the most useful outcomes. The appropriate responses will only emerge if the right questions are asked!

Surveys are also opportunities for the practitioner to raise awareness about certain issues. For instance, the connection between increasing access to the Internet and economic development is not usually a connection that is easily made. The policy practitioner could use data that make such linkages a part of the introductory message or could intersperse data at key places for greater understanding—say, on a page containing a question on economic development or access.

It is important to structure surveys and group questions into categories. Pages are a good way to do this. Make sure similar questions are grouped and that each page contains an introduction that describes its category of questions. A well designed survey should seek to keep the attention of the respondents and this largely depends on the transition of one question to the next, or page to another, the logic built into the questions and the ease of completing them. In structuring surveys, the policy practitioner should keep questions on demography toward the end.

Attention should be given to the design of the survey questions so that they do not reflect a biased position. Questions should be asked in the simplest and most plain language possible. Finally, keep surveys simple. They do not have to be complex!

The survey should contain the following:

1. **Elements from the policy landscape map could help the practitioner in the survey design, which should have the following components:**
  - a. **An introductory page – that clearly states the objectives of the survey and defines the terms it uses, paying particular attention to industry-specific jargons that exist in abundance in the ICT field. Be conscious of the fact that respondents may not all come from the Internet community and therefore may not be familiar with technical terms. This page should also contain a description of the time required to complete the survey. Ten to fifteen minutes should be targeted.**
  - b. **The body of the survey – The earlier description suggests structuring survey and categorizing questions into pages. The surveys disseminated in Canada and West Africa had pages that addressed perceptions on the development of the Internet, public education on Internet rights, responsibilities and consequences, the Internet's role in support of public policy, institutions and processes for supporting policy dialogue, and the stakeholder's profile. Mixed method was used in the design of the questions, which constituted manageable proportions of multiple choice and free-form essay questions.**
  - c. **A closure page – Remember to thank participants. It might be worth letting them know the steps that will follow after the survey has been concluded and where they might expect to see the results. The policy practitioner should also include a contact email for respondents to follow up with the outcome. We also included questions on the profile of the respondent in the concluding section. Demographic questions such as age, gender, employment status and stakeholder type are useful questions to ask here.**

**Warning:** Be conscious of redundant, recursive and contradictory survey questions. Feedback from a survey test group should help in addressing this concern and in redesigning the survey template. One lesson learned from the design of the West Africa survey was that a particular question was ambiguous. A survey test group is able to capture such contradictions.



Another lesson learned involved the use of language. Researchers often forget that English may not be the first language of many respondents and may therefore design and disseminate surveys in a language different to that of the respondents. Effort should be made to translate survey questions into the language of the respondents. For Canada, bilingual surveys were disseminated in English and French. For those disseminated in West Africa, the appropriate language used depended on the country.

While online translation engines such as Google Translate can be used, feedback should be sought from a test participant, group or host institution (see procedures section below) on how the survey questions translate.

### STEP 2 > TEST THE SURVEY

In our earlier warning, we informed about the presence of contradictory, redundant and recursive questions in the survey we had designed for the West African process. These flaws were detected only after they had been deployed to a small test group. The practitioner must be willing to disseminate the survey to a few persons who would test and provide feedback on the length of the survey, the time required to complete it, and the contents, especially in relation to eliciting the asked-for response. Also make sure to analyze the responses to verify that surveyees did not generate ambiguous answers. Surveys should be adapted for the audience, especially as it relates to language. French audiences would ill-appreciate an English survey, which might affect the response rate. Be careful to get this right from the outset.

### STEP 3 > DISSEMINATE AND MONITOR

1. The policy practitioner should identify the right institution with which to partner in order to disseminate the surveys. Surveys should have a home. Usually a locally influential civil society group will suffice if there is no existing national platform for policy dialogue. It would also help if the practitioner can gather the support of an industry representative, government agency, or academic institution. In the case of Canada, we worked with CIRA and MNet and, in West Africa, with a consortium of partners including the Internet Society, Free and Open Source Foundation for Africa, the Economic Commission for West African States, and the African registry, AfriNIC (African Network Information Center), which provided support at various levels including distributing the survey through the West African Internet Governance Forum discussion list hosted by AfriNIC.

2. Specify polling period. Surveys should be time bound and present a representative snapshot of a particular period in time. Policy practitioners should be aware of their landscape and know what duration is sufficient to gather adequate data. The surveys deployed for the Canadian and West African processes ran for the period of one month.
3. Disseminate survey through the distribution list that has been generated for the purpose, but also through other partner networks and various stakeholder groups. Allow snowballing via individual emails.
4. Constantly monitor the response rate and re-publicize if necessary. Response rates are a good way of knowing if the survey will receive sufficient data for generalization, or they could be just enough to represent positions about the issues. It may be difficult to define the maximum target response rate that results in a statistically significant number; however, attempts should be made to do this using a number of resources including the policy landscape map, if one already exists. Our target maximum response rate for the Canadian survey was 500, and a maximum of 100 was set for individual countries in West Africa. These may seem like arbitrary numbers, but they were defined based on a healthy estimation of what we considered were active stakeholders or individuals in the community following our initial inquiry of the landscape. We surpassed the Canadian numbers by greater than a 100 per cent response rate and in Togo by about 20 per cent. Other countries fell short of this threshold but the response rates were sufficiently high to provide useful insights.

#### **STEP 4 > COLLATE AND ANALYZE THE RESULTS**

Leaving a survey “open” beyond its distribution window (the time bound snapshot period within which the survey has been disseminated) could potentially jeopardize the results. The practitioner should remember to promptly close the survey at the end of this window. Tools such as SurveyMonkey provide functions that allow closure. It is often much more beneficial to conduct this exercise while the survey is still fresh.

This step entails two activities: collating the results and analyzing the data. A survey outcome is collated when all the data have been extracted and compiled in a form that can be further manipulated, such as a spreadsheet or text-based file.

The next activity is to analyze the data with the intention of presenting evidence-based information that will subsequently inform policy. This is a challenging activity that requires the services of a researcher or policy analyst. Analysis should be done by an expert on these issues in the specific landscape being studied. Some of the questions to ask at this stage include: What do these data or information mean? How can they be interpreted, linked to a policy issue, and presented in a form that will attract the attention of the policy-makers? These are difficult questions to answer but they become easier as the data are examined from various perspectives.

A good place to start analyzing the data is to represent the data in a graphical form. What the figures symbolize immediately becomes clear to the researcher or practitioner. This initial perception should be documented. For instance, a bar chart that shows that, on the average, more females responded to a question on online security than male respondents could be interpreted in a number of ways that are nuanced to the policy context that is analyzed. It could mean that more female are conscious of

their online presence than their male counterparts. While this may be the first impression, asking the question, “Why is this so?” could lead to further analysis and depth. Is this outcome tied to a particular historic event? Did the policy map show that there are more females that engage in online activities than their male counterparts? What does this interpretation mean for policy? And what policy step needs to be taken to increase male consciousness of their online activity, if this is the policy concern? These are some of the more in-depth questions that could arise from a further analysis of the data.

The process of interpreting qualitative and quantitative data is different. There are many publications on interpreting research data; hence we will not dwell so much on this issue other than to highlight the importance of a critical examination of qualitative or text-based responses in order to make meaning from them. One way of doing this is to compile all the text-based responses, read through and examine them for common themes that emerge. Finally, link these themes to the policy issue and draw meaning from this linkage. This process may go through several iterations until the practitioner or analyst is convinced that they have retrieved sufficient information from the data.

It would be wise to subject the outcomes of the preliminary interpretations of the results to peer review. Seek a core team of analysts that would be willing to share their feedback and make contributions based on their own interpretations of the results.

#### **STEP 5 > GENERATE PAPER OR POLICY BRIEF; DISSEMINATE**

Analyzing data is both an art form and a science, an art form because it allows the practitioner to represent data in various ways, shapes and styles that will convey meaning to the target recipients, and science because it requires the ability to look beyond the surface of the data and to find the nugget in the rubble. From a combination of these forms could emerge a very significant representation of public awareness and evidence about issues that can be used more intelligently to inform policy and secure consent.

One sort of output that can be generated from a survey is a policy brief—two to four pages highlighting the important aspects of the findings and that link them to specific policy issues. See the policy brief tool for more details on how to create this document.

Another possible outcome is to produce a research paper that contributes knowledge to the literature or as a contribution to another aspect of the policy process such as a background paper to a focus group or multistakeholder event.

What is most important here is to ensure that the evidence emerging from the survey is disseminated to the specific policy channels where it can have the most impact. Such channels include the policy-maker and the wider public, both of whom need to be informed about the range of views on emerging policy issues.

Appropriate outlets for survey findings are: a) focus group events, for further discussions; b) online discussion lists, for further discussions and validation; or c) multistakeholder events for more public consultation around emergent issues. Depending on the outlet used, the practitioner should allow time for the community to debate on the outcomes of the survey. For instance, an existing online community or one specifically set up for the process (see the Online Discussion Boards, Forums and Lists tool) could be used to generate moderated discussions on the issues raised in the survey findings.

## Checklist

CHECK	ITEM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Design survey
<input type="checkbox"/>	Test survey
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disseminate and monitor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Collate and analyze results
<input type="checkbox"/>	Generate paper or policy brief
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disseminate

## TOOL 4 > Focus Groups

Another useful way to explore perceptions, attitudes and trends within a community or group of people organized around a geographic space (city or regional), theme or profession is through a focus group event. A focus group can be useful in triangulating the data from a survey, to assist with ensuring a rigorous approach to gathering evidence to support policy dialogue. A focus group can provide more information from another angle or perspective. We must sound a word of caution here: analyzing data from a focus group will require time and attention.

**Caution!** *Policy practitioners must be certain that they have the skills to report the proceedings and analyze the depth of data that is generated from those proceedings. The discussions in a focus group should not be the only source of data. It is also possible that the policy practitioner might focus purely on the dialogue and lose sight of other important aspects such as the atmosphere, environment, health and temperature of the group. There are many lessons to learn from these, too.*



*The practitioner's impressions of what is taking place, how issues are being discussed, and what others think about the issues being discussed (some of which may not even make it to the report) are equally as important as the impressions, objections, hesitations and gestures that may be crucial to the output of the group. Feelings, contrary opinions, statements or ideas that were sidetracked are examples of important elements that could be lost but that are also relevant. The policy practitioner should make sure to document these as the process goes on or immediately after the event, for the records and, where necessary, for inclusion in main reports.*

### Description

Focus groups are a useful way to explore perceptions, attitudes and trends within a community or group of people that have something in common. This community can be as broad or as narrow as desired, but focus groups would typically be organized on a geographic (city or region, for example), thematic or professional basis.<sup>23</sup> The idea here is to bring together people from a particular sector to explore their issues (problems, challenges, opportunities, priorities) concerning a particular policy issue. These discussions should include but not be led by ICT specialists. They can relate to development sectors (such as health, education or climate change adaptation), business sectors (such as trade or taxation), legal domains (such as privacy and security) or social groups (such as children or the non-literate). The aim is to build a sector-or client-group-led, rather than an ICT-led, approach.

<sup>23</sup> For a good overview of the use of focus groups in social research, see Gibbs (1997).

Through focus groups, the policy practitioner can include marginal voices in the multistakeholder process, learn about their common and differentiated concerns, and learn from their contributions. Individuals may offer surprising insights and reveal linkages between different issues that do not leap from datasets and statistics. This activity also serves to raise awareness about the policy-making process, especially in communities where these issues have never had a platform for dialogue.

Learning in focus groups should go both ways—between those who claim to have the expertise in the specific policy area and those who are perceived not to. Besides the benefit of being consulted, there is value in networking, partnership and sharing of knowledge and information, and opportunities to establish policy linkages with stakeholders with other interests, or in other areas or sectors. Focus group events thus allow for considerable granularity in the discovery and learning process. The practitioner should therefore make an effort to target individuals or groups who may be perceived not to have anything to contribute, as well as those who may be considered to have substantial input to the process.

There is no single and straightforward methodology to follow besides that a focus group event, as with many of the other tools described in this toolkit, requires considerable planning. A functional focus group activity is fast paced and highly interactive, and it could become difficult to keep up with the pace of the discussion. It is, however, an efficient model to elicit responses from several practitioners at one time.

The key to a successful focus group event lies with the quality of the moderation—the ability to steer the discussion, from start to finish, toward productive outputs. This should not be mistaken with controlling the dialogue, which may tend to muzzle participants and restrict them from fully participating in the discussions. Rather, it is a facilitative function that draws all stakeholders into the discussion through probing and, sometimes, leading questions. A moderator's role is to enhance the debate. The moderator should commence with a clear description of the process, including how the outcome from the dialogue will be used. For instance, how will the reports, policy briefs or minutes that may emerge from the process be disseminated or used? How can the participants be involved in the process beyond the event? It is also important to state clearly where the focus group activity lies in relation to the entire policy process and how its inputs can contribute to the desired policy objective.

The focus group activity could also act as a platform for the implementation of other methods of fostering dialogue. For instance, a scenarios building exercise could be applied during a focus group event to generate different future scenarios about a certain policy area or issue. Likewise, an online discussion list could be perceived and managed as a focus group—only virtual.

Also crucial to a successful focus group event is the importance of note taking. This task could be allocated to a member of the group who may act as a rapporteur. Alternatively, provisions can be made for notes to be taken directly on flip charts by participants while the discussion is ongoing (this is the approach we implemented in the Canadian process). Observations and perceptions of the facilitator should also be documented and these notes augmented by and compared with those taken by the group. In some cases, recording devices may be implemented to help with record keeping; however, consent must be sought from participants prior to their use. Be aware that certain participants may be uncomfortable with the use of a recording device, with the attendant risk of losing their participation. The policy practitioner should be aware of these constraints and make the right judgment about the

most appropriate form for note taking and record keeping. We do not recommend the use of recording devices for focus groups.

Another important factor is the size of the group. Focus groups should be limited to a certain number of participants—10 to 12, preferably. They should not be too large to inhibit active engagement in the dialogue and not too small to prevent depth and engagement in the subject matter.

In the Canadian case study (see Case Study 3: Canadian Internet Forum city consultations), we laid out the strategy for organizing city consultations as a part of the preparation to launch the first Canadian multistakeholder Internet Forum. The lessons learned from the round of city consultations were synthesized and presented at the first plenary meeting of the forum, endowing everyone with a much finer, clearly articulated and focused understanding of the various challenges that the forum had to handle from the different cities. The city consultations were focus group events that brought together people with a cross-section of policy interests living in specific geographic locations. These forms of consultations may be especially useful in populous or geographically large contexts in order to increase the reach, to account for a large proportion of the voices, and to ensure validity of the entire multistakeholder process. The outcomes from these consultations included notes taken by the facilitator, flip chart notes provided by the participants, and observations from the partners who were involved in the focus group events. These outputs were aggregated, synthesized and analyzed to produce the consultation reports.

## Case Study 3

### Canadian Internet Forum city consultations.

Ahead of the formal launch of the Canadian Internet Forum, IISD and MNet carried out a round of city consultations around Canada in order to gain a broad overview of what people across different stakeholders in different regions of the country are concerned about. Canada is a geographically large country, and these consultations revealed great differences in their concerns. We held a total of six consultations, one in each distinct region of the country (carefully thinking about how granular the dialogue should be), in order to capture significant differences. At each consultation, we invited a broad group of people representing different stakeholders in a community to discuss their personal opinions and experiences regarding one of two specific topics, digital literacy or digital economy.

We can highlight examples of how different regions revealed different concerns, even among themselves.

*Continued...*

## Case study 3

In Winnipeg, participants explored the intersections of the Internet and other domains such as the economy, education and environment, and the roles and management of the Internet as it relates to its openness, the need for government to have a better and clearly defined role and the importance of the Internet as a public utility. The need for equal access for all Canadians, online confidence, privacy and security were some of the concerns that participants raised.

In Iqaluit, access was at the centre of the discussion, highlighting that a Canadian solution to the access problem of the north will be a significant business opportunity in the untapped market globally for serving marginalized and remote communities. Northerners were interested in the deployment of technologies such as wireless, fibre and satellite, and improved quality of service at affordable costs.

At the consultation in Toronto, a major economic hub, participants believed the Internet paves the way for smart technology development and innovation, promoting consumer and business confidence within the context of safe competitive practices and ethics. The Internet should offer Canadians the ability to “think globally but act locally” as it takes its place in advancing business and economic development.

The digital literacy of Canadians was discussed in Halifax, Ottawa and Vancouver. The importance of the Internet in providing quality education, pedagogy and tools; and the roles that governments must play in engaging citizens, providing leadership while protecting their rights, emerged as critical in Halifax. Culture, identity and health concerns in relation to Internet safety were intrinsic to Internet development in these regions, and affordable access underpinned all of these.

Copyright reform, skills, content and the protection and promotion of a Canadian Internet culture emerged as the centre of the discussions in Montreal. The role of assistive technologies was not to be discarded if “access for all” spearheaded by the government is to shift from a conceptual idea to reality.

Youth and child safety issues, privacy and intellectual property protection emerged as important issues in Vancouver. Some of the key questions raised concern the impact of social media on youths, and safety and privacy within the context of a growing Internet. How can this be turned around for useful causes? And whose responsibility is it for the development of digital literacy skills of Canadians?

Achieving universal and affordable access remained a central issue across all six locations.

## Objectives

- To gain better understanding of public opinion, to foster in-depth discussion on an issue of public importance, and to generate evidence and consent on steps to take.

## Expected Output

1. Raw notes from the focus group process. The outcome of this dialogue is usually text-based, qualitative data. The focus group is meant to dig deeper into one or more issues through structured dialogue. Sometimes discussion may be unstructured. Either way, documenting the outcomes of the discussion is extremely important; hence the need to ensure that notes are taken and the outcomes documented as soon as possible.
2. A description of the process flow, facilitator's reflections and insights. Facilitators, being outsiders (perhaps not directly involved with the policy issues or the dialogue) can provide a third-person account of the process including their own perceptions. This is useful reflective practice that could further inform how subsequent focus groups are shaped. Outputs from this exercise could go directly into the broad ICT and Internet policy landscape map or directly into a policy brief or white paper.

## Timing and Duration

- Depending on how geographically vast the country is or the number and depth of policy issues that the process demands, a focus group could span a few days to weeks. A “traveling” focus group will go to the provinces or states to engage with the various stakeholders, such as the Canadian process that involved six stakeholder groups held in different provinces. Another option is to hold a “situated” focus group activity similar to the ones done in West Africa held alongside a larger event. Whatever form it takes, it is important that a large majority of voices are included and heard.
- The duration for each focus group should be approximately three hours, but this depends on the size of the group and the issues to be discussed. Three hours of a well-moderated session is sufficient time to generate substantial discussion about a policy issue.
- We recommend that a focus group event is held preferably after a survey of public perception and a mapping of the policy landscape, and prior to the large multistakeholder event, if one will be held. The outcomes from the focus group event could be used as background information to the multistakeholder event.

## Procedure

### STEP 1 > PREPARATION

A number of assumptions need to be made in the preparation leading to a focus group event, especially if no policy map is in place or no prior process defines the policy landscape. For instance, would a thematic or geographic approach be taken in the deployment of a focus group activity? A thematic approach concerns policy issues that address a certain core area such as health, education, economic development, or culture, and how the Internet affects these. A geographic approach concerns policy issues that are specific to certain geographic areas or region.

In the Canadian focus groups, stakeholders recognized, identified and aligned themselves with their cities. For instance, participants from the northern Canadian city of Iqaluit felt infrastructure and access were the most important issues, while those from Toronto aligned with the entrepreneurial nature and the presence of technology-based businesses that exist there. Whatever approach is taken, it should be bottom-up and should accommodate the voices of various participants including those from remote locations or those who may traditionally not be involved in such consultations.

### **STEP 2 > IDENTIFY AND SECURE A FACILITATOR; PLAN THE EVENT**

Preparation is very important; therefore, the practitioner should lay out a plan for the focus group with a view of the final outcome in mind.

We recommend that a facilitator be secured who can help plan the focus group process, including when and how questions should be posed, whether breakout groups are helpful, techniques for ensuring that all participants contribute, periodic summing up of the essence of the debate and so forth.

A number of elements should be considered:

- **What are the policy issues that should be discussed? It is important to phrase this as a question that emerges from a careful articulation of the policy concerns. For instance, three of the Canadian focus groups were guided by the question: How can the Internet contribute to Canada's economic development?**
- **Which stakeholders should participate? The practitioner should identify a range of stakeholders who will bring different perspectives into the dialogue.**
- **Prepare an agenda for the event and lay it out, from registration to closure. It is important that the practitioner be able to visualize the entire event from start to finish and to describe how preceding components fit and feed into subsequent ones. Other partners should be involved in the planning of the event in order to provide more input. Time required for each session should be equally mapped out.**
- **Undertake the logistics for the event. Identify the policy writer or a rapporteur who will document the proceedings and produce the brief or report, a suitable venue that will accommodate the participants, food/catering, stationery, and writing materials such as flip charts and color coded post-it notes (if these will be used). The practitioner should also identify speakers and other resource people. At least one month's prior notice will be helpful to speakers and resource persons—more, if they are highly sought after. Test run the process with the various participants, speakers and resource persons if necessary.**

### **STEP 3 > FOCUS GROUP**

No structural changes should be made to the plan on the day of the event if those changes have not been previously planned out. At this point, the practitioner's major preoccupation should focus on ensuring the facilitation is effective and on documentation of the process: facilitating and moderating the event in order that it maintains focus and drives toward achieving its pre-defined objectives; documenting the outcomes of the meeting through taking substantial notes.

**STEP 4 > POST-MORTEM AND DOCUMENTATION**

Each focus group is an opportunity to learn with an intention to improve on present or future processes. In the first part of this paper, we highlighted the importance of the principles of adaptive policy, which suggests that policy should respond to changing circumstances. This principle should also apply to the process of dialoguing in policy making and is even more appropriate after the focus group event. An event post-mortem allows for the stakeholders and partners to re-evaluate and reassess its outcome, particularly as it relates to achieving the objectives of the policy process. It is also an opportunity to learn, adapt and apply this newly acquired knowledge to an ongoing or a future process. How did we perform? What emerged from the process? What should we change? How can we make it better? It is important to also document these lessons and where necessary include important findings in the final report. During the Canadian Internet Forum process, the various partners (CIRA, IISD and MNet) held a post-mortem teleconference after each process milestone, discussed the outcome, and through the knowledge generated from this activity, developed subsequent ones.

A report should be prepared, documenting the focus group process: who was invited, who attended, issues raised, and insights provided from the group.

**Checklist**

CHECK	ITEM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Preparation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Secure facilitator and plan event
<input type="checkbox"/>	Focus group
<input type="checkbox"/>	Post-mortem and documentation

## TOOL 5 > Scenarios, Backcasting and Related Modelling and Forecasting Processes

Scenarios can be a useful activity to help stakeholders consider possible futures, identify common concerns in the process, recognize differences of opinion, and help in building awareness of various possible future options. Backcasting is a useful process to consider what actions might be necessary over time to achieve a desired future. Both will benefit from modelling data and trends as inputs.

### Description

According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), “A scenario is not a prediction of what the future will be. Rather it is a description of how the future might unfold. Scenarios explore the possible, not just the probable, and challenge users to think beyond conventional wisdom. They support informed action by providing insights into the scope of the possible. They also can illustrate the role of human activities in shaping the future, and the links among issues, such as consumption patterns, environmental change and human impacts” (UNEP, n.d.<sup>24</sup>).

The future is unpredictable because we do not have complete information about the current state of global systems; elements of surprise are prevalent in such systems, and human choices for the future are still unpredictable (UNEP, n.d.). Scenarios are carefully crafted stories that:

- Describe how the future might unfold
- Explore the possible and not the probable
- Challenge users to think about conventional wisdom

Scenarios have been used to describe future political landscapes, sustainable development and the environment.<sup>25</sup> They can be developed using two approaches: forward-looking—with the present day as a starting point leading toward an end point, or backcasting—where the future picture is defined and the steps leading to it are described. If forward-looking, the exercise entails building a picture of the future according to what it looks like today: it assumes business-as-usual and extrapolates current trends. Here, participants should look at the driving forces behind the present situation, including the roles and motivations of government, the ICT sector and other entities.

Backcasting, on the other hand, takes the opposite approach and gives participants a scenario of the future, generally an ideal future, asking participants what policies and decisions could lead them there. It is also possible to construct alternative scenarios, either good or bad, and ask participants to examine how they might come about.

As a part of a scenarios workshop, organizers should aim to prepare several scenarios, ideally four or less (see Box 5: The Global Internet Scenarios process).

<sup>24</sup> Policy practitioners could consider examining this *IEA Training Manual*, developed by UNEP and IISD, for a detailed scenario development resource.

<sup>25</sup> For instance, the future of the post-apartheid South African policy landscape (2001–2002); 30 years future projections for UNEP’s global environmental outlook GEO-3 scenarios, a sustainable development scenario viewed through an environmental lens; 50 years for Geo-4; and several more years into IPCC’s future scenarios on greenhouse gas emissions.

## The Global Internet Scenarios process.

### Box5

IISD initiated a trial scenarios process to explore a more in-depth consideration of the full range of Internet development and deployment issues within a global scenarios framework and to establish a conceptual framework on how to think about the global future, both in relation to sustainability and in relation to the critical Internet uncertainties. It also intended to develop a language and a framework in which the relationships between future sustainability and the future of the Internet can be more systematically described and investigated.

Together with Tellus Institute, IISD engaged in a collaborative process synergizing the findings of the Global Scenarios Group (GSG), which resulted in a set of possible pathways that the world could follow, with research outcomes that focused on the architecture of the global system of the Internet, its associated technologies and stakeholders, and the major critical uncertainties facing the development and deployment of the Internet. This output was fed into three follow-up processes in order to refine the stories; a workshop in Ottawa in October 2008, and two workshops at the global Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Hyderabad in December 2008, one open to all IGF participants, and one specifically for developing country youth participating in the IGF.

The Ottawa event reviewed the key issues such as critical Internet uncertainties, the challenge of defining the Internet sector with all stakeholders, and a construction of a matrix of four scenarios that represented the interaction between the four main GSG scenarios and five critical uncertainties on the future of the Internet. In the first workshop in Hyderabad, discussions converged around the causality between global futures and the development and deployment of the Internet as a way to view the scenarios that emerged from Ottawa. The second workshop in Hyderabad focused on enhancing the stories of what the Internet might look like in the different scenarios and provided a first glimpse of the intersection of major Internet uncertainties with possible trajectories for the future of the world.

Four story lines emerged:

- The Policy Reform (Regulated Market) Scenario
- The Unregulated Market Scenario
- VIPnet (Fortress World) Scenario
- Internet Commons (Great Transition to a new sustainability paradigm) Scenario

**Source:** For the findings of this case study, see Creech et al. (2008).

Considering multiple scenarios and the trajectories that might lead us there can help design more robust policies. IISD has run scenario-building group exercises on several occasions, and we believe that it is a useful tool for fostering critical thinking about different development trajectories, especially when run in a group reflecting many different sectors of society. Scenario-building can be done at any time and it is a great activity for face-to-face meetings such as annual forums, focus groups or dedicated workshops.

For additional information on how others in the Internet policy domain have used scenarios, including the Internet Society and the U.S. IGF, see the IISD report on the 2011 IGF Scenarios Summit, in *IISD's Contributions to the United Nations Internet Governance Forum: Workshop Reports, 2008 to 2011* (now in press).<sup>26</sup> Box 6 also provides an example.

## Togo scenarios.

## Box 6

Initially, it was extremely difficult to convey to the planning team made up of four stakeholders that using the scenarios approach to develop appropriate Internet public policies would be a much more efficient strategy than the standard process of throwing up a menu of “good to haves” for discussions. The need for available access to communication infrastructure is among the standard sets of issues on which government decisions have been anchored in previous times. However, describing these within the context of an economic, social and environmental sustainable future presented much better options and opportunities for growth-defining dialogue.

Although Togo has rarely had any formal, organized public consultation on ICT policy, and thus did not have any current national ICT policy document, there have been efforts, mostly individual and private sector-led, to introduce the Internet into the country, most of which have been concentrated in the capital, Lome. (During our preplanning meeting, an eavesdropper mentioned that he often travels over 200 kilometres to the nearest city to send or reply to an email, in 2011!) Internet penetration in Togo is still at its infancy.

The team met a day prior to the scenarios workshop to structure the process. It comprised a telecommunications expert, a regulator, an academic, a civil society coalition leader, and the national project coordinator for Internet governance, who also doubled as a member of the Internet community. The structure involved painting the canvas of four possible future pictures of the Internet in Togo, using storylines that emerged from a previous IISD process:

*Continued...*

<sup>26</sup> To be available at [www.iisd.org/infosoc](http://www.iisd.org/infosoc)

## Box 6

- The Policy Reform (Regulated Market) Scenario
- The Unregulated Market Scenario
- VIPnet (Fortress World) Scenario
- Internet Commons (Great Transition to a new sustainability paradigm) Scenario

Initially, it was difficult to describe 20 years ahead, as the group could not conceptually shift their minds toward an ideal picture of the Internet that far into the future. It is worth mentioning that Togo had been through a very repressive past and that the present emerging, open society was too fragile to describe any future that was ideally democratic, open, forward thinking and sustainable. This important lesson emerged from the planning group and was useful in designing the process; we limited the scenarios discussion to a 10-year period and reshaped the futures to “best” and “worst” case scenarios.

Two surveys were conducted initially to elicit public awareness and generate evidence of Internet policy issues among various stakeholders in the country. The first survey was broad and explored perceptions of access, connectivity, privacy and security; linkages between local policy making and how it affects regional and global policies, and vice versa; and the stakeholders who are required to contribute to Togo’s national Internet policy. The second survey explored these issues in more depth, through focusing on the importance of the Internet for economic and social development.

The outcomes of these surveys helped in populating the scenarios with the following evidence:

- Togo has no legislation that regulates the use of the Internet.
- The cost of the Internet and poor infrastructure does not encourage the promotion of access to most people.
- The Internet remains a luxury for a significant number of Togolese.
- There is no framework for dialogue among stakeholders in the development of the Internet.
- The Internet scares some actors and stakeholders, particularly parents, political organizations and religious entities.
- Accessories for connectivity are very expensive, such as computers and, more importantly, electricity.
- The use of mobile technology to connect to the Internet is still very low and insignificant.
- Governments should invest in infrastructure improvements related to the Internet.

The public consultation focused on the development of two future scenarios, one “best case” and the other “worst case,” generated using the four storylines developed the night before. The future states were:

*Continued...*

## Box6

### Best case:

- One with secure services and widely deployed infrastructure and, where necessary, governments providing subsidy schemes to improve the proliferation of ICT infrastructure and equipment
- Access devices are available to citizens at a cost they can afford
- IPv6, secure services and regional exchange points are deployed around the entire country
- Children are introduced to the Internet at an early stage in their education
- Consumer associations have strong support and can participate in Internet policy issues
- A cybercrime free society

### Worst case:

- The emergence of a heavily censored Internet
- The existence of a monopoly Internet situation managed purely by the government
- The existence of a highly regulated and heavily taxed infrastructure landscape

After these future images were painted, the participants engaged in a forward-looking process in order to design steps required to arrive at the best case and those needed to avoid the worst case scenarios, and to consider the role of government and the private sector in developing the Internet.

Three important lessons emerged from the exercise:

1. The absence of an existing policy, framework, literature or documentation of any sort that provides a background to the ICT situation in the country offered both a challenge and an opportunity to the process: a challenge, because there was no prior reference point from which new policies could be benchmarked; and an opportunity, because the outcome of the exercise could provide content in a context where none previously existed.
2. The challenge of shifting the mindset of the planning committee, from the traditional forms of inquiry focused on thematic issues to one that explores uncertainties in an ever-progressing world, provided an indication of how the larger group would respond to this approach, resulting in a reflexive adaptation of the public consultation program.
3. Designing future scenarios cannot be devoid of the political context in which the emerging policies will be implemented. The future scenarios were largely influenced by the uncertain and unstable political context from which the country had emerged; hence, stakeholders could usually describe steps and actions that were most plausible under those conditions, even though that could change under the present, more democratic, regime.

Two challenges, in particular, warrant attention. First, the policy practitioner should emphasize the importance of reality to the stakeholder group. Painting a blissful picture of the future could be a pleasant dream, but less helpful to the policy design process, particularly for policies required to address immediate or short-term challenges. Generally, the practitioner should avoid designing futures that rely on unrealistic policy change or as-of-yet un-invented, silver-bullet technologies. The imagination of the team should not be constrained; however, balance must be struck between realistically achievable policies and the steps that can be taken toward achieving them. The second point concerns risks—that organizers may set up scenarios in such a way as to secure support for a particular outcome that the organizers are advocating. The process should be open and not shoehorned toward any particular desirable outcome. As a consultation process, unintended outcomes may produce a number of interesting possibilities that may be more valuable than any preconceived outcome.

The output of this exercise should then be synthesized and analyzed, but there is considerable scope here for creating additional publications and even rich media for mass consumption. Scenarios represent stories, and stories represent one of the most powerful and compelling communication tools that can be used to influence policy.

## Objectives

- To generate awareness of possible futures and how policy decisions made today can influence them.
- To stimulate engagement, creative thinking, and to generate different opinions and diverse views in the process of change toward better policies.

## Expected Output

- A set of recommendations generated by and involving stakeholders, arrived at by considering a multitude of factors that lead to a desirable future scenario. Recommendations emerging from a scenarios exercise could be published as a policy brief.
- Narratives that describe future desirable and undesirable scenarios collaboratively developed by different stakeholders. Scenarios could be published as fully developed stories, background material for further research or output as animations, videos or frames of pictures.

## Timing and Duration

- Design: Allow two to three weeks for scenario design, including defining the objectives of the exercise and the policies that are affected, identifying stakeholders and participants, and defining the indicators and targets for identified policy themes or areas (UNEP, n.d.).
- Implementation process: Allow one week to run the scenarios workshop. This activity should lead toward identifying the drivers and the critical uncertainties for the future scenarios. Although these also could be created as a part of the design process, it is best to include stakeholder input in the design elements of the scenarios at the implementation stage. It might also be worth discussing the strategies for communication and outreach with stakeholders at this point.

- **Develop stories or content:** Allow two to three weeks to generate the narratives, conduct the qualitative analysis and explain how the stories interface with policy. Mechanisms for channelling findings and policy recommendations should also be described at this stage (UNEP, n.d.).

## Procedure

### STEP 1 > PREPARING FOR THE PROCESS DESIGN

Perhaps the first, most important step in the design process is to identify the policy issue that requires consultation and to frame the process and scope the stories that will emerge within the policy context. In identifying the policy issue, the desired goal should be considered because it helps in shaping the rest of the process.<sup>27</sup> Decide:

- **The goal of the scenarios process:** whether to raise awareness on an issue or to directly influence policy in an area.
- **The method to use:** whether forward-looking or backcasting method or both.
- **The degree and amount of data to use:** whether quantitative or qualitative or both.
- **The means of gathering data:** whether to use a consultative approach and a desk review.
- **The method of disseminating findings:** how the stories will be told and which medium is most effective for telling them.

On completion of this step, the practitioner should be clear about the best methods to use and how they can help achieve the policy outcome.

The UNEP *IEA [Integrated Environmental Assessment] Training Manual* is a useful tool that helps practitioners to develop and analyze scenarios, among other things. Chapter 6 of the training manual focuses specifically on scenarios development and analyses and the use of scenarios, with an aim to impact existing policies or to explore policies that can lead to a certain desired future (for more details on scenarios planning, consult UNEP, n.d). Four steps on developing and analyzing scenarios described in this manual are as follows:

- **Clarifying the purpose and structure of the scenarios exercise**
- **Laying the foundation for the scenarios**
- **Developing and testing the scenarios**
- **Communication and outreach**

<sup>27</sup> Also see <http://www.unep.org/IEACP/ica/training/manual/module6/1251.aspx>

## STEP 2 > CLARIFYING THE PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF THE SCENARIOS EXERCISE

The training manual suggests the need to:

- **Establish the nature and scope of the scenarios:** This involves clearly defining the purpose of the scenarios exercise and the outputs, and identifying a core team of key partners who will run the process. Steps should be taken to identify the policy issues that need addressing, identifying any existing policies in this area; describing the end visions being sought; identifying the audience, the approach that best conveys the message from the exercise, and the nature of the scenarios—either quantitative or qualitative, how these scenarios link to policies and connect to others, the resources that are available for the exercise, and the role that the scenarios team and other stakeholders will play in the process.
- **Identify stakeholders and select participants:** Policy practitioners should carefully identify the stakeholders to be invited to the scenarios workshop, if a consultative approach is chosen. Because these workshops are very highly focused and engaging, with intense dialogue, the number of participants should be kept at a manageable level. The objective of the scenarios will determine which stakeholder would be most useful to the process. In selecting participants, persons could be chosen from the groups or organizations interested in the scenarios exercise, those for whom the outcome of the scenarios is intended, and stakeholders who have a key stake in determining the future of the policy context.
- **Identifying themes, targets, potential policies and indicators:** Practitioners should identify the key themes on which the scenarios should focus key targets and goals that should be considered in their evaluation, indicators to identify if targets are being met, and the key existing policies that should be explored.

## STEP 3 > LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR THE SCENARIOS

This step involves:

- **Identifying the drivers:** Identify the key trends that determine the course of the future,<sup>28</sup> in the context of the themes selected, and attempt to describe the ways in which they could evolve in the future.
- **Selecting the critical uncertainties:** Identify two or three factors that are unpredictable. For instance, in a highly politically instable region, a critical uncertainty involves the role that a repressive regime could play in an open Internet landscape. This involves recalling all the possible ways and the degree of variation in which a driver can evolve and measuring them against importance/impact and uncertainty.<sup>29</sup>
- **Creating a scenarios framework:** Lay out the critical uncertainties in a spectrum and use them to define these future worlds or stories that show significant levels of importance or impact. These steps could be repeated if the outcomes are not meaningful.

<sup>28</sup> Also see <http://www.unep.org/IEACP/iea/training/manual/module6/1255.aspx>

<sup>29</sup> Also see <http://www.unep.org/IEACP/iea/training/manual/module6/1255.aspx>

#### STEP 4 > DEVELOPING AND TESTING THE SCENARIOS

This step involves:

- **Elaborating scenario narratives:** This step involves writing the narratives for each of the scenarios. This should be done keeping in mind the current state, end state, and the timelines in between them. Scenarios should also be named.
- **Undertaking the qualitative analysis:** The aim is to enhance the narrative with quantitative data. This is done first by identifying the quantitative data that could be used and the tools and models that can help to create linkages between the data and narratives, and then producing a final narrative that incorporates these elements.
- **Exploring policies:** This step involves identifying potential policies that can be influenced by the narratives. Policy can be included in the narrative in two ways: Ex-post, as suggested here, or ex-ante, which involves including policy concerns at a much earlier stage in step 2, and prior to elaborating the narratives.

#### STEP 5 > COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

A clear message to communicate regarding the outcomes of the scenarios is that they are “intended to explore what could happen, not what will happen,” in order to avoid misuse and misinterpretation.<sup>30</sup> Communications and outreach should be undertaken throughout the scenario development process. Stakeholders involved in the process are the primary recipients of outreach efforts, and they could assist in conveying the message through their networks to others. Policy-makers could also be targeted.

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<sup>30</sup> See <http://www.unep.org/IEACP/iea/training/manual/module6/1257.aspx>

### Checklist

CHECK	ITEM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Preparing for the process design
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clarifying the purpose and structure of the scenarios exercise
<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish the nature and scope of the scenarios
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify stakeholders and select participants
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify themes, targets, potential policies and indicators
<input type="checkbox"/>	Laying the foundation for the scenarios
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identifying the drivers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Selecting the critical uncertainties
<input type="checkbox"/>	Creating a scenarios framework
<input type="checkbox"/>	Developing and testing the scenarios
<input type="checkbox"/>	Elaborating scenarios narratives
<input type="checkbox"/>	Undertaking the qualitative analysis
<input type="checkbox"/>	Exploring policies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Communication and outreach

## TOOL 6 > Online Discussion Boards, Forums and Lists

Discussion boards and mailing lists are common ways for groups to keep in touch, keep organized and engage in debate across a far-flung network of people. They are very practical administrative tools useful for asynchronous consultations, for agenda setting prior to in-person consultations and for eliciting evidence and consent.

**Warning:** *Online discussion boards can become highly unruly. Dialogue may be tangentially off track or etiquette issues may arise. Conceptualize the online discussion list as another focus group and manage it in the same way as you would a focus group—only virtually. Allow a certain degree of freedom; this could result in unintended outcomes, most of which could be positive. However, constantly monitor the outcomes to ensure that the discussions remain on track.*



**Beware of MEES—the mass email exodus syndrome!** *Usually started by one email, it is followed by a chain of emails often angrily requesting to be unsubscribed from the list. Deal with the first one before it catches on. Making sure participants subscribe themselves to the list at the beginning is a good way of avoiding this. Also make sure that the unsubscribe information (along with the etiquettes) is sent either periodically or as a signature with every email. Reply to the first such email using the standard unsubscribe information.*

### Description

This tool is a little different from the others in that it could span the entire policy-making process simultaneously with other activities and with no time limit, with certain exceptions (see Time and Duration section). An online discussion board or list could serve as a centralized debate space as well as an administrative and procedural discussion forum. Having an open discussion space where everyone can continue to participate and make suggestions regarding the management and direction of public policy is important.

Nevertheless, there are also severe constraints with the mailing list model. It can be difficult to engage the broad and diverse stakeholder community in a fruitful online debate, and it is not an appropriate tool for gauging public opinion, because only those with an interest in participating will do so. They are also not useful for gauging views on specific issues of the wider policy-making community, as such consultation processes could be dominated by people from that sector. Societal imbalances and disparities (such as in Internet access, wealth, knowledge levels, and linguistic differences) can make it hard to adopt a common frame of reference and to engage in fruitful discussion, or indeed even motivate people to participate; hence, lurking—a scenario where people remain silent on the list—could become prevalent. In such cases, the dialogue hovers around a few active participants.

In spite of these shortcomings, an online discussion group is useful for generating debate, establishing a community of practice, and creating a platform for knowledge and information sharing. Depending on the archiving methods built into the forum, it could become a knowledge base with significant information of future value.

The Kenya ICT Action Network, or KICTAnet (see Box 7: KICTAnet, the Kenya ICT Action Network) proves that it is possible to run discussion lists in a multistakeholder setting with the right leadership and under the right conditions (Munyua & Mureithi, 2007), which include: interest in the multistakeholder model among ICT sector organizations; buy-in from both the wider community of private stakeholders and the government; existence of specialized and exclusive discussion boards (caucus discussions, for example); and a focus on specific themes, starting with the national ICT policy. The value of the forum has served to tie participants together, to keep the movement going forward and to motivate the network.

Technologically, an online debate space can be as simple as a hosted forum on a private server or one running free and open-source mailing list software—and these could potentially be integrated with social media. Whatever technical model is employed should appeal to the community and also address the technical or Internet constraints with which members of the community may be faced.

Methodological and technical decisions are also important, specifically affecting how the tool is used and how it could be most effectively implemented. Facilitating and moderating discussions could end up taking considerable time, and it is important to have a plan for how this can be managed. As discussed earlier (see the role of the moderator in the Focus Groups and Experts Roundtable tools), moderators can take an active or a passive role in facilitating discussions, depending on the originally defined objectives. Clear codes of conduct also have to be provided.

With that said, a discussion space can be set up from the very beginning as a coordination tool, and a strategy for its use in the policy process could be subsequently designed. Getting substantial participation may take a while, so the full benefits of this tool may not be attainable until the process has become more mature—when there is a large (and growing) number of people engaged in discussing policy issues. Because discussion lists will probably run continuously (although the list could be time bound), opportunities should be made available for summarizing and analyzing the discussions, with intent to provide a synthesized report of the entire discussion group. Documenting the process could be good for stock-taking, as it affords the practitioner an opportunity to learn from the experience in order to make it better in future iterations.

## Box7

## KICTAnet, the Kenya ICT Action Network.

The Kenya ICT Action Network, or KICTAnet for short, presents itself as a good example of an organization that has been successful at fostering meaningful, substantive online debate among stakeholders of different backgrounds. KICTAnet was launched in late 2004 using mailing lists as its core communication and coordination mechanism. It was brought to life by a combination of private forces as well as foreign donor money after several organizations involved in ICT policy had lamented the lack of an open and inclusive national policy process in Kenya. It has developed into a broad platform for discussion of ICT policy and related issues.

Operationally, KICTAnet does so through the use of multiple mailing lists, with dedicated lists for stakeholder groups (e.g., academia, civil society and the private sector), administrative lists, and lists for committees and projects that are created for different purposes. As an example of the level of activity that it enjoys, in the month of July 2011 the “ICT policy discussions” list received more than 500 messages and there is a clear trend toward increased activity. On the technological side, KICTAnet uses Mailman, an open source mailing list manager for Linux maintained by the Free Software Foundation. Mailman uses the SMTP (outgoing email) protocol and all users receive new messages and replies in their email inboxes as plain text, thus building on a well-established and available technology, yet using little bandwidth. This is an important consideration in a developing context, where bandwidth could act as a major constraint.

The network quickly became actively engaged in the ICT policy process in Kenya, its activities expanding beyond cyberspace and into the real world. An early and significant victory for KICTAnet came right after its inception, when it managed to convince the Kenyan government to let it take charge of organizing the multistakeholder consultations for a draft ICT bill. In addition to its discussion boards, KICTAnet organizers used “workshops, seminars, [...] roundtable discussions and constituency-level forums” to develop a common position on the proposed bill. In June 2005 it further worked with the Ministry of Information and Communications, other government agencies and private stakeholders to organize a policy workshop, the output of which was incorporated into the bill.

With a national ICT policy framework in place, KICTAnet has turned its attention to other pressing issues and is currently engaged in two projects, one concerning e-waste management and the other concerning the problem of cybercrime against women. It further puts itself at the centre of a broad movement that fostered the East African Internet Governance Forum, and it keeps moving forward with new initiatives.

KICTAnet’s success shows the potential of online discussion forums. On one hand, although it started as a mere discussion space, it soon morphed into something more, becoming a catalyst for ICT policy. On the other hand, much of the substantive policy discussion that KICTAnet has engendered through its mailing list has had impacts in areas outside of it. The prevailing lesson here is that KICTAnet has used discussion lists as only one tool, deploying a host of other tools when necessary to facilitate constructive multistakeholder cooperation.

**Sources:** KICTAnet (2011); KICTAnet (2012); Munyua & Mureithi (2007).

## Objectives

- To achieve depth on one or more policy issues and to gain consensus and consent on them
- To provide a platform for the dissemination and sharing of information

## Expected Output

- After execution, this tool will produce substantial dialogue that could result in a policy brief. Its output could also feed into a public multistakeholder event.
- This tool should result in the production of at least two outputs: a summary document describing the outcomes of the discussion, and a detailed document describing the process and the procedure employed. The outcomes from the discussion tool could be used to triangulate data resulting from other tools such as online surveys and focus groups.

## Timing and Duration

- An online discussion can be time bound or open-ended. New platforms should grow interests through organizing dialogues on specific issues around short periods of time—preferably three to five days, to allow participants to engage at will and on their own time. Remember, this is an asynchronous session and participants should not feel compelled to contribute. A properly structured dialogue could discuss up to four thematic subjects over a two-week period of time. Engaging in online discussion prior to a focus group event or a multistakeholder dialogue allows for an opportunity to validate the concepts at the face-to-face event.
- Depending on how the list is structured (see steps in procedures section), closure is important—either for drawing conclusions about a particular policy issue or for winding down the list. A long, unstructured group with unending dialogue is not only tiresome, but often leads to disinterest. Evidence of a start and finish time may help maintain a certain level of motivation. Practitioners should keep sight of the group's health and be on hand to motivate dialogue. Summaries and a statement on next steps are useful ways of building and maintaining an online dialogue group and for keeping the list ongoing.
- Unlike other lists set up purely for a particular event or activity, which may require decommissioning upon completion, the policy dialogue list should be maintained as an ongoing dialogue space for national or regional policy issues.

## Procedure

### STEP 1 > IDENTIFY A DEDICATED MODERATOR

A budding policy dialogue group or discussion list gone awry can be very frustrating for the policy practitioner, particularly if unruly comments begin to surface that contribute to disintegrating the cohesion that the group has struggled so hard to develop (see Box 8: Moderating online discussion groups in West Africa). Keeping a watchful eye over the discussion is one way of nipping such unwanted activity in the bud before it gets out of hand. Another way, discussed below, is to develop a set of principles underpinned by mutual respect and understanding that will guide the conduct of participants and the discussions. Even then, a watchful eye is still required. Most new and existing groups employ the services of a moderator or steward who will be responsible for occasionally administering the list, including subscribing and registering new members (in a closed group),

responding to member requests, and moderating all messages before they are disseminated to the members of the list. Responsibility for moderation can be transferred after a period of time to another dedicated steward of the list. As groups mature, the functions of this role may reduce and may become less significant.

## Moderating online discussion groups in West Africa.

Box8

In West Africa, national coordinators—whose tasks include fostering dialogue in a national online policy discussion group—were hired to manage online discussion lists specifically set up for ICT public policy dialogue. For some countries such as Sierra Leone and Liberia where such platforms do not exist, the discussion groups immediately offered avenues for knowledge and information sharing among stakeholders about ICT activities ongoing in various parts of the countries. The national coordinators further used the lists to disseminate information about decisions made at other policy forums, such as ICANN and the regional and global IGFs, in order that global issues relevant to the local context could be discussed. The lists have continued to grow in their function and relevance to policy making in a few countries. For instance, stakeholders in Burkina Faso continue to use them as important platforms for ongoing discussion of national ICT policy issues.

Moderators are faced with the constant challenge of creating and maintaining vibrant discussion lists. They may be unable to raise the level of interactions needed to keep dialogue ongoing. As a result, there may be more lurkers in the list than contributors. In some cases, debates have gotten heated and eventually resulted in a fragile list. One such case resulted from grievances between two members, which commenced offline but ended up on the list. As a result, stakeholders preferred to stay away and lurk rather than participate. It was difficult for the list moderator, younger in age than the contending parties, to openly confront the situation because “culturally, you cannot correct an elder” (more so, in a public forum).

Two important points emerged from this exercise:

- a) The recognition of the local culture as a strong and influential element in the science surrounding the functioning of an online discussion list. Moderators should ensure that relevant elements of the culture that can foster dialogue are incorporated, while aspects that could potentially derail dialogue are dealt with in a manner that is culturally acceptable. An offline dialogue between conflicting stakeholders, managed by an elderly person, could have potentially mitigated the crisis mentioned earlier.
- b) The role of motivation in an online discussion list. Moderators played an active role in maintaining ongoing dialogue in Burkina Faso and Sierra Leone by constantly engaging in the discussion through asking questions, raising comments, sending links to new information and requesting participation. Moderators should use motivation strategies, most of which should be internally generated, to foster increased interactivity in their discussion lists.

While list moderators may be concerned with the broad functioning of the discussion list—including, in some cases, the technical aspects—they may lack the expertise or time, or simply not have been given the responsibility of moderating and steering policy discussions toward substantive outcomes. In such cases, stakeholders with expertise in a particular subject could be invited to moderate ongoing discussions (see Box 9: Thematic moderation of Kenyan dialogue).

### Thematic moderation of Kenyan dialogue.

## Box 9

Annually, and prior to the global IGF, KICTAnet holds a one-day national multistakeholder policy dialogue event where it validates outcomes of policy debates held over a two-week period on its online mailing list. Usually moderated by a number of thematic moderators, policy discussions are divided into different themes. Preceding the 2011 IGF, the dialogue covered several areas; these were moderated by individuals who were commissioned to write a background paper for the area, generate the discussion questions, structure the dialogue, moderate and report on the outcomes.

#### STEP 2 > SET UP ONLINE DISCUSSION BOARD

A number of online discussions or bulletin board style tools exist for the management of online dialogue. Free and open source software tools such as Mailman<sup>31</sup> or online discussion tools such as Google Groups<sup>32</sup> allow policy practitioners to create online discussion groups easily and at relatively low cost. While the former requires a hosted service, the latter is free. These applications also offer a Web portal for access to archived messages that policy practitioners could use to generate reports.

Either of these platforms offers the moderator the option for automated moderation, where a store-and-forward method is applied to all messages. Messages are distributed after they have been vetted and approved for “public consumption” by the moderator. However, this method creates a backlog of messages. A combined human/system automated store-and-forward technique may be unsuitable for a vibrant list in which participants contribute around the clock, from different time zones and geographic locations. However, moderating dialogue may be necessary in a forum where the discussion could potentially go off track. Irrespective of what method is used, it is the task of the moderator to ensure that the dialogue is continuous, respectful, objective and vibrant.

A useful way of setting up a discussion list is to host it on the infrastructure of a partner institution that may already offer similar services for its own use. The tasks of stewardship—the technical management of the discussion list—remain the responsibility of the IT department or administrator of the host institution, allowing the moderator more time to deal with the substantial aspect of

<sup>31</sup> See <http://www.gnu.org/software/mailman>

<sup>32</sup> See <http://groups.google.com/?pli=1>

moderating the policy dialogue. However, the policy practitioner should weigh the options and ensure that such a partner is non-partisan or not biased in a way that could negatively affect the multistakeholder structure that the policy process set out to achieve. In West Africa, this list is hosted by AfriNIC (African Network Information Center), the African regional Internet registry, and in Canada, it is hosted by CIRA, the Canadian Internet Registration Authority. KICTAnet, the Kenyan public policy consultation group, hosts its own infrastructure, moderates its list and allows appointed content moderators to chair thematic discussions.

New forms of online discussion boards are emerging through the use of social media. Tweets aggregated using a hashtag could, for instance, be compiled around a particular theme. Facebook pages or Pinterest sites could create a centralized location for policy dialogue. Policy practitioners should carefully select the platform (or combination of platforms) that will be most far- and broad-reaching and that will have the most impact.

### **STEP 3 > PLAN POLICY DIALOGUE ISSUES/THEMES AND STRUCTURE OVER A PERIOD OF TIME**

One challenge of ICT policy making is that it is an extremely complex process. Applying ICTs or Internet policy to aspects of society further increases its complexity. Take for instance, the issue of cyber security; defining policies around this singular issue has implications for the technical infrastructure and Critical Internet Resources in the country and externally—on the privacy and identity of citizens, on the impact to economic growth and development such as the country's share in the global digital economy, on moral and cultural issues such as intellectual property rights, and on legal issues such as the effectiveness of existing criminal laws to address crime committed on the Internet. Defining a policy and engaging in a public consultation in this area would require a carefully planned activity that takes all of these angles and more into consideration. The policy practitioner should therefore either structure the online dialogue to accommodate the broad complexity of the issue or narrow its scope to address a specific area in which more depth may be desired. A structure may therefore contain:

- Background paper on the issue with some analysis that situates it within the policy context
- Subthemes of which the issue is comprised
- Discussion questions aimed at generating debate on the themes
- Time required to discuss theme, for instance, two to three days scheduled for a particular theme
- Moderator or expert assigned to each theme, if policy dialogue takes on a thematic moderation approach (remember, each thematic moderator must report back to the policy practitioner)
- Strategies for reporting outcomes and for directing them toward policy implementation

### **STEP 4 > IDENTIFY MODERATOR(S) FOR EACH OF THE THEMATIC AREAS**

Depending on the approach taken, the policy practitioner has to moderate the discussion or appoint other stakeholders to do so. The Kenyan model for thematic moderation has worked effectively by:

- Splitting the tasks among several competent persons, thereby spreading the responsibility for management.
- Introducing fresh perspectives and diversity in dialogue through assigning the task of moderating the list to stakeholders from different backgrounds and work contexts.
- Building the policy-making capacity of individuals who might otherwise have no place to “learn on the job.”

Through these methods, the Kenyan list has continued to develop a succession mechanism in which the capacities of young persons are developed to take on national and global policy issues and from which present policy-makers can be gradually succeeded in the future. The extent to which the list systematizes this process determines its success in the future.

The policy practitioner could assign the task of moderation to persons willing to learn from the process, particularly in a context where a desirable outcome involves the development of local capacity. The practitioner should ensure that a term of reference covering the components described in Step 3 is designed to guide the activity of the moderator.

#### **STEP 5 > SEND INVITATION TO PARTICIPANTS**

An introductory email to participants is required. Mail should be personalized, if possible, to the early invitees to the list. The objectives of the list should be clearly indicated, and a link to the location of discussion etiquettes and principles should be provided. Invitees should be aware of the potential outcomes of the discussion list, for instance, if the outcomes are to be synthesized into a report. Participants should also be informed of the list's lifespan—for instance, whether the list is temporary with a finite closure date, or a permanent list that will last much longer. The invitation email should contain subscribe and unsubscribe information and a reminder for invitees to snowball the invite to their various discussion lists.

#### **STEP 6 > SYNTHESIZE DISCUSSION POINTS AND REINTRODUCE INTO DIALOGUE (AT END OR INTERMITTENTLY)**

Moderators should constantly monitor the discussion while allowing the free flow of dialogue. They should intermittently encourage participation, especially when it becomes clear that the rate of discussion is taking a downward spiral. This could also signify that the direction the current discussion is taking may have been exhausted and a new discussion topic is required. Moderators should remember and seek to reintroduce concepts that may have “fallen along the way” but that may still hold particular potential for affecting the policy outcomes. They should make sure to summarize the discussions and present the immediate outcomes at the end of the period.

#### **STEP 7 > CLOSE OR RENEW DISCUSSION**

Moderators should always close the discussion and allow stakeholders to know the form through which further dialogue will continue (if so desired) or if the list will be formally shut down.

## Checklist

CHECK	ITEM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify a dedicated moderator
<input type="checkbox"/>	Set up online discussion board
<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan policy dialogue issues/themes and structure over a period of time
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify moderators(s) for each of the thematic areas
<input type="checkbox"/>	Send invitation to participants
<input type="checkbox"/>	Synthesize discussion points and reintroduce into dialogue (at end or intermittently)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Close or renew discussion

## TOOL 7 > Public Multistakeholder Forums

Bringing together various stakeholders to participate in a structured but engaging dialogue is a useful exercise in the policy-making process. Some Internet public policy platforms, such as the Kenyan Internet Governance Forum and the West African Internet Governance Forum, consider this activity a milestone in the public policy process. The South American Internet Governance Forum describes this event as being more important than the global IGF.<sup>33</sup> At the public forum, all stakeholders meet, usually annually, to dialogue about ongoing Internet public policy issues. It presents an opportunity to engage a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including non-technical actors and those for whom these policies will affect.

This tool is helpful both for gathering evidence and securing consent, because it helps to seek broader public input and it could be used to generate support around policy issues.

### Description

Consultations of various kinds are the bedrock of an open and inclusive policy process. The toolkit contains several ways of consulting stakeholders, but face-to-face meetings like regional or national Internet forums may be seen as core events in a multistakeholder process. IGF and its regional and national offspring are examples of multistakeholder forums. As opposed to government-run consultations where public policy-makers seek opinions and input from various stakeholders on draft policy proposals, multistakeholder consultations bring together both decision-makers and other stakeholders on an equal footing.

The role of a large public forum within the policy-making process depends on the policy goals that are meant to be achieved. A forum can be wide-ranging or specific about a particular issue. A public forum also presents an excellent opportunity to implement other tools, such as focus groups, scenarios exercises, and evidence-generating tools like surveys. The length of the forum can be set according to what organizers or the policy practitioner hopes to achieve. This is also dependent on the resources that may be available. As a result of these factors, a public consultation must be well structured. Adequate preparation is required, which could result in a very useful and invaluable tool.

Practitioners in more matured policy landscapes such as the Kenyan community (KICTAnet) recognize that the annual public policy forum is a platform to generate consent on evidence-based issues that have already been discussed in between forums through the use of online consultation tools. Because they can be expensive and time consuming, it is most common to hold one annual forum. In such cases, the multistakeholder forum would be used to validate the concepts that may have emerged earlier.

For the IGF, these meetings have had specific themes (such as “Internet Governance for Development” or the less-specific “Internet for all”).

<sup>33</sup> Statement from Raul Echeberria during the Global to Local Internet Public Policy Workshop 93 at the Nairobi 2011 IGF, organized by IISD.

Following the principle of subsidiarity, the national and regional public consultation forums present opportunities for the policy community to reach consensus on issues that can be addressed most effectively at that national or regional level. For younger or new public policy communities, a public consultation process is also a good tool to kick-start a policy process, alongside the policy mapping tool described earlier. The outcome of the mapping exercise could be presented as an input into the public forum. This experience is similar to those in both the Canadian (see Box 10: Public multistakeholder forums and the Canadian Internet Forum) and West African Internet forums, where a public consultation was implemented as the kick-off event. Whereas this is a public event that may be perceived as the first activity in the policy consultation process, it is clear that there could be a number of prior significant activities leading up to this event. One such activity is the need for broad consultations with other stakeholders, including partners, on the essence of the policy process and the objectives of the public consultation. The practitioner should make sure to document the lessons learned from the planning consultations as additional input to the forum and other future activities.

Two further critical issues should be mentioned here. First, there is a regrettable tendency to see the forum as an event rather than as a continuous process, perhaps because a large, annual forum can easily be its most visible manifestation, or perhaps because there is a perception (real or imagined) that not much goes on in the year between meetings. Continuity remains one of the greatest challenges of multistakeholder processes. It is vital that the practitioner fosters a dynamic process that is able to move forward year after year, rather than one that revisits old issues. Second, the effectiveness and legitimacy of a public forum depends on organizers' abilities to mobilize and engage stakeholders beyond the ICT or technical community; otherwise, the purpose of the forum will be defeated. The forum therefore has to include all stakeholders, such as the decision-makers in government as well as the business community, and including both users of ICTs (banks, the service industry, exporters, etc.) and the ICT sector. The former (users of ICTs) may be hard to convince, because private enterprises will typically only attend if there is a visible incentive for their business.

## Box10

## Public multistakeholder forums and the Canadian Internet Forum.

Canada had its first multistakeholder Internet forum in 2011, while West Africa launched its own process with an initial meeting in 2007 in Senegal and a full-fledged meeting a year later in Accra, Ghana, and subsequently in Senegal in 2010 and Nigeria in 2011. IISD has been involved in both the Canadian and West African processes. Both forums have been inspired by the multistakeholder message that emerged from the World Summit on the Information Society and have followed in the footsteps of similar events, notably the global IGF and the many national Internet forums that the global IGF has spawned around the world.

The Canadian Internet Forum was created at the initiative of the Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA), the .ca top-level domain registrar in Canada, with the assistance of IISD and the Media Awareness Network (MNet). With this collaboration, CIRA was able to increase its capacity considerably and cast a wider net to capture a greater variety of stakeholders across Canada. The Canadian Internet Forum seeks to become a multistakeholder discussion space that can coordinate solutions and take advantage of opportunities to shape Canada's future for the better. The kick-off meeting for the Canadian Internet Forum took place in Ottawa in February, 2011, with more than 200 attendants from the ICT sector, academia, civil society, government and the business community. A second Forum was held in February 2012. Invitations were sent by email to all CIRA members and .ca domain registrants and the event publicized through radio and Twitter feeds. The Canadian Internet Forum is a one-day in-person event, with webcasting, structured with a combination of keynote speakers, presentations and plenary debates. In the first year, the presentations covered the findings of the survey and focus group consultations that were held in the run-up to the meeting. Overall suggestions did emerge regarding the future direction of the Forum.

### Objectives

- To bring together as many stakeholder groups as possible to facilitate discussion, mutual understanding and, ideally, dialogue on public policy.
- To provide an opportunity to network and to engage other stakeholders involved in policy making.
- To orient stakeholders in the community toward the benefits of collaborative and multistakeholder public policy and to encourage social cohesion.
- To arrive at recommendations and, possibly, decisions on local, national or global policy issues.

### Expected Output

- Multistakeholder public consultation report
- Refreshed, revised or new Internet public policies

## Timing and Duration

A public multistakeholder forum could be scheduled as a preliminary public event, as a step in gauging interest and need for an ongoing process. More mature national and regional IGFs such as the West African, East African, United Kingdom, United States, and South American IGFs hold their multistakeholder forums annually. This schedule allows them to develop activities that may involve generating evidence on local policy issues through, for instance, the use of online discussion tools or other tools discussed in this toolkit. Multistakeholder forums that are scheduled annually allow the policy community to implement several activities in between.

Policy communities at the national and regional levels have usually scheduled their events prior to the global forum for a number of reasons: first, to develop national or regional level policy concerns that could be presented at the global forum in sessions that have been designed for interregional dialogue; and secondly, to debate on national or regional level issues that may be in alignment with the annual theme of the global forum, even though this is not a requirement.

National consultations could last from a few hours (the U.K. IGF) to a couple of days (West African IGF). The duration depends on the issues that should be discussed, the resources that are available to the community, the structure that best fits the policy issue, the time commitment required from and available by the stakeholders and partners, and the extent to which policy issues have been resolved (or not) in previous activities taking place prior to the event. From our experience, a well-structured day is sufficient to dialogue and validate one to three policy issues.

The policy practitioner should seek to generate a report, not to exceed 5 to 10 pages, that highlights the major discussion points, outcomes and decisions of this multistakeholder public policy consultation.

The report may reinforce what emerged from previous focus groups. The outcomes of the Canadian multistakeholder public consultation, for instance, were very much consistent with those that emerged from the six city focus groups, validating those more grassroots-focused discussions.

## Procedure

Most of the steps required to conduct a multistakeholder forum can be run in parallel. For instance, developing the background document that is needed to guide the discussion will entail identifying and understanding the pressing policy issues. The size of room for the consultation could determine the duration of the meeting or the number of stakeholders to invite. There remains the challenge of not drawing out a program or procedure for the forum in such a way that it negatively impacts the ability of the group to examine the policy issues in depth; time will always be a constraint but the program should be structured so that time is judiciously used to achieve the forum's objectives. In this respect, it is difficult to isolate the logistics from the content. Although these aspects are intrinsically linked to each other, the policy practitioner must make sure to separate the process issues (those related to logistics and, as such, having no direct link to the content of the discussion) from the content issues (the actual policy issues that will be discussed). The steps below have been isolated along content and process lines.

### **STEP 1 > DEVELOP A BACKGROUND DOCUMENT THAT WILL PROVIDE A CONTEXT FOR THE FORUM**

Elements from the policy landscape mapping, if it already exists (see the Mapping the Broad Policy and ICT Landscape tool and the Background Papers, White Papers and Policy Briefs tool), would be extremely useful for creating this document. Remember, it should highlight the major policy issues to be discussed at the event. These issues should be based on evidence gathered through surveys, online discussions, focus groups and other tools. In the Canadian case, the background document for the 2011 consultation resulted from a synthesis of reports from the six city focus groups held several months prior to the multistakeholder forum. This document contained six sections:

- **Introduction: A background on the Canadian Internet Forum.**
- **Results from the Consultations: A narrative description of the key points of the city/regional consultations; highlights of main bullet points of emergent issues; and summaries of the issues.**
- **Economic Development: This section and the next highlighted the two tracks that guided the city consultations: the Internet and economic development, and digital literacy—two policy areas where better policies are required. In the Internet and economic development section, pressing issues that emerged included the transition from IPv4 to IPv6, development and deployment of Internet-based smart systems, the sustainability of the Internet, the Internet in rural and northern Canada, affordable access, and the Internet for innovation in research and development, business and public services.**
- **Digital Literacy: Pressing issues that emerged from the digital literacy track included transforming education for the digital age, digital literacy in support of rights and responsibilities, and developing local digital media and content.**
- **Conclusion: Contained in this section were a set of discussion questions that emerged from the city consultations and that were used to guide the multistakeholder forum. Economic development and digital literacies emerged as pressing issues for policy dialogue following extensive discussions and analysis of the Internet in Canada.**
- **Appendix: A methodology section that described the process.**

These elements made up the background document that was sent ahead to stakeholders, informing them of the pressing policy issues and offering a head start to the policy dialogue.

### **STEP 2 > IDENTIFY POLICY ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE DISCUSSED AT THIS FORUM**

The previous step highlighted the policy issues that emerged from the Canadian example and how these were generated using the city or regional consultation approach. A number of other options exist for the policy practitioner to generate key pressing issues for the national consultation agenda. In the case of the Kenyan ICT policy community, issues have emerged based on current happenings in the information technology and telecommunication sectors, along with any other sector in which ICTs have a social and economic link. Elements such as affordable bandwidth, access for women, rural cyber centres, and inland fibre cable and last-mile access following undersea cable deployment are some of the policy concerns that have been discussed on KICTAnet, the Kenyan ICT online discussion forum, and at national consultations. A survey of public perceptions of the Internet and its applications to society is another approach that can be used. The West African IGF disseminated a survey from which

issues of online security, intellectual property rights, access and infrastructure emerged as major concerns. The important point here is that the inputs to the multistakeholder forum must emerge from an evidence base, and several approaches can be deployed to generate such evidence. It is also important that the identified policy issues directly link to a social, economic and environmental dimension of society.

### **STEP 3 > STRUCTURE THE FORUM**

The success of a multistakeholder forum also depends on the structure of the event. The steps following describe some of the process issues in more details. However, emphasis should be placed on the design of the forum's agenda so that it leads to the intended objectives and outcomes. Nothing should be taken for granted. One important aspect to which the practitioner should pay particular attention is the method that will be most effective for generating the most suitable outcomes. This toolkit already discusses a number of approaches, including the use of small focus groups or the future scenarios method or a combination. Whichever method is implemented, the practitioner should ensure that it encourages dialogue and that it leads to the desired outcome. An agenda might consist of the following:

- **Welcome from the person or group chairing the event**
- **Keynote address from a thought leader on national/regional issues**
- **Presentation of the background paper**
- **Panel session to address major issues arising**
- **Facilitated plenary debate**
- **Summing up of the day's insights**

Sometimes, a panel discussion may not be the most suitable method for a forum in which evidence from local voices is the desired outcome. A more public participatory method, such as a scenarios exercise or small breakout groups, with the possibility to report back to plenary, might be most suitable. The practitioner should be aware of these different methods, some of which have been discussed here, and several others that should be evaluated for their effectiveness before their inclusion in the repertoire of tools in the practitioner's toolkit (see the Evaluation and Stock-Taking Framework in Part 1 of this toolkit).

A policy practitioner should structure this forum also because the discussions could potentially be hijacked by a more dominant stakeholder or interest group. These possibilities should be anticipated and the appropriate measures taken to address them prior to their happening. Some measures include effective moderation of panels or the use of equal proportions of stakeholder groups.

### **STEP 4 > IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS, PARTNERS AND FUNDING INSTITUTIONS**

The process of identifying stakeholders for the forum is similar to the process described earlier in the policy map section and in the logistics section following. We reassert that the policy practitioner should proactively invite stakeholders and partners across different communities. This document is about multistakeholder participation, and therefore it should include as many different types of participants as possible. No single stakeholder should be exempt, as Internet policy affects everyone, including those who may not show any particular interests in the use of the Internet. Sectors involved should include education, health, economic development and others, and not be limited to the technical departments in these sectors only.

Another important aspect is the identification of partners who can contribute financial and intellectual resources to the process. In the Canadian process, CIRA assumed the responsibility of convening the 2011 Canadian Internet Forum in collaboration with IISD and MNet. IISD and MNet contributed intellectual support in developing the dual economic development and the digital literacies track. The West African IGF is another example where multiple partners contributed financial and intellectual capacity.

The practitioner should approach potential partners with the correct and most appropriate role, allowing partners the option to accept or decline. This might include providing a consultant that will generate the background documents, design the public consultation process, or synthesize the outcome of discussions. The practitioner should ensure that the partner can deliver and commit to delivering the assigned task. An important and yet often forgotten partner is government. Most public forums perceive of government as a partner that engages at a much higher level than say, civil society or other actors, because of the political power it wields. The Internet public policy platform encourages participation of all stakeholders on an equal footing; thus, the practitioner should identify the right governmental department to bring into the dialogue. Usually the technology, culture, or industry ministries are useful partners, but other government ministries should be encouraged to participate.

Finally, it is essential to seek funding partners who would be responsible for logistics such as hosting and catering. Partners may also wish to offset these associated costs by providing in-kind support such as the use of conference rooms or meeting facilities. The cost of hosting an event could range from nothing to rather costly, if venue rental, catering, simultaneous translation, webcasting and other expenses must be incurred. The practitioner should ensure that the purpose and objective of the forum is maintained irrespective of what a partner or stakeholder contributes. A functional event does not have to be expensive. The practitioner should also be concerned about funding sources that may exert undue influence on the process. One way of dealing with this is to neutralize stakeholder/partner influences by seeking multiple funding sources.

#### **STEP 5 > LOGISTICS**

The previous section already bridges the gap between content and process concerns related to planning and hosting a multistakeholder public policy event. Even though we have attempted to separate them, the lines that keep these concerns separate are not always clear. As a result, the practitioner should make sure to implement plans that ultimately seek to achieve the objective of the process.

To organize logistics, the following substeps are required:

- **Identify an events management system to use.**
- **Coordinate with the different stakeholders in managing the participant lists and other aspects of the logistics.**
- **Be proactive in sending out invites to stakeholders. Do not think that a broadcast message is sufficient.**

One of the most difficult logistical challenges of organizing a multistakeholder event is handling participants' registrations. An automated, Internet-based events management system is an excellent way of coordinating such activity, especially if it involves more than 20 guests. It will help with

sending out a uniform invitation letter and meeting agenda and the organizing of RSVPs. An events management system also helps to distribute the meeting proceedings and to provide specific information about the event or broad details of the policy process.

An events management system somewhat reduces the stress usually associated with planning an event involving a large number of participants, but the use of such systems does not come without challenges. Practitioners should be aware of technical glitches, such as spam, that may result from their use. The first sets of emails we sent out from our events management system during the Canadian process ended up in recipients' spam folders; most were not received. It became necessary to follow up directly with the invited stakeholders through phone calls and direct emails.

Another option is to contract with a company specializing in events management to handle all aspects of organizing the event, including invitations and registration.

It is important to involve the partners in developing the list of participants. Stakeholders usually bring relevant members of their own networks into the policy process, most of whom may otherwise be unavailable. In the case of the Canadian Internet Forum, we set up a Google Docs share and invited the different partners to develop the invitation list. This should be a consultative process in which time and resources are required to develop collaboration between and among partners. The development of a participant list is just one of the many areas that can help to develop stronger partnership ties and relationships and that will ensure a representation of broad sectors of stakeholders in the process.

Finally, the practitioner should be proactive in sending out invitations to participants. Announcing the event alone is insufficient. Apart from ensuring the presence of stakeholders such as panelists that may play a prominent role, those who bring on-the-ground field experience into the policy discussions are equally important.

#### **STEP 6 > POST EVENT REPORT AND ASSESSMENT**

An event post-mortem allows for the stakeholders and partners to re-evaluate and reassess its outcome, particularly as it relates to achieving the objectives of the policy dialogue. It is also an opportunity to learn, adapt and apply this newly acquired knowledge to an ongoing or a future process. How did we perform? What emerged from the process? What should we change? How can we make it better? It is important to also document these lessons and, where necessary, include important findings in the final report.

A report should be prepared documenting the public forum process: who was invited, who attended, issues raised, and insights provided from the event.

## Checklist

CHECK	ITEM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop a background document that will provide a context for the forum
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify policy issues that should be discussed at this forum
<input type="checkbox"/>	Structure the forum
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify stakeholders, partners and funding institutions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Logistics
<input type="checkbox"/>	Post event report and assessment

## TOOL 8 > Background Papers, Policy Briefs and White Papers: Presenting the Evidence

Background papers, policy briefs and white papers document the evidence gathered through various tools and can support public dialogue, leading in turn to the development and refining of policy.

### Description

Earlier, we presented the policy mapping tool, which contains a description of the policy landscape including policies that are already in place, the stakeholders who are or should be involved in making them, and the mechanisms through which they are made. An outcome of a policy mapping exercise is a document that can be useful as a reference material and as a contextual background of the policies in a particular sector or policy context. This document may be broad (highlighting policy issues) or deep (showing evidence of analytical depth in very specific sectors) or a combination of both. Whatever approach is taken, the policy landscape is ever-evolving and new policy issues emerge, as do activities that influence existing policies. As a result, policy maps should be constantly revised and updated. Because this publication concerns the creation of new policies where they do not exist and the modification of existing ones (using a multistakeholder approach) to respond to new challenges, any of the tools already described can be used to update the policy map.

It is sometimes necessary to synthesize this “large” document into bite-sized pieces for the benefit of the policy-maker—to address certain elements of policies that require attention and for which the policy practitioner is concerned. There are many ways of doing this: civil society has experimented with the use of art forms like dance or radio or television drama, storytelling or small essay competitions to raise awareness of policy-makers. All of these approaches may have various levels of use and appropriateness in driving that specific policy issue to the forefront of the policy process. The most effective should be considered and carefully applied. We have decided to explore three options of bringing visibility to a publicly discussed policy, namely, background papers, policy briefs and white papers.

Each of the activities or tools described in this toolkit, except for the process of undertaking a policy map itself, can benefit from the production of a background paper at the start of implementation. For instance, a background paper could be produced that will guide an online discussion or a public multistakeholder event, help anchor the discussion around certain important, predetermined issues, and give focus to a process that could become unwieldy if left too broad; they are also useful in setting the expectations of the participants and for creating boundaries within which discussions can be useful and focused. A background paper can also be used to define the expected outcomes of the consultative process and to give visibility to statistical facts and evidence such as those contained in the policy map. Background papers should not take sides or describe a policy concern or issue from a biased position. As it is a discussion document, a background paper should tend to produce a balanced reflection of all sides of a dialogue.

Policy briefs, on the other hand, are produced at the end of a process, after the use of a tool, at a milestone, or at a point where it is most important to do so—usually anchoring the publication or launch of the report to a useful event where the publicly decided policy would have the greatest impact. A policy brief contains the context of the policy issue, and the outcomes of the consultation are written in a way that calls for policy change in a specific area. Policy briefs are usually short and straight to the point and should be limited to a few pages, preferably four. A policy brief should be made public and should be strategically delivered to a policy-maker in order to give it visibility.

A white paper is an official government document that states and explains the government's policy on a certain issue (Parliament of Canada, 2009). Historically, a white paper is a compilation of facts, information and explanation that can be used to support or provide backing to an issue. White papers may vary in size and could be large. White papers may appear to be final policy positions, in contrast to green papers, which are put out to the public to elicit comments and inputs before a policy position is taken by the government. A white paper may be the end point sought by a policy practitioner on a policy issue. Because society and the landscape for which policies are shaped and created change and evolve, there may be need to revisit existing white papers or defined policy positions, with the intent to adapt them to more recent realities. For instance, old broadcast regulation, from which most modern ICT laws are adopted and adapted, may not be applicable to new technological innovations and contexts. Such policies may require public consultation, with the intent to adapt them to reflect the present context. A white paper would be the end point (presumably containing public opinion) about that policy.

Similar to a policy brief, white papers contain detailed information about a policy process and the content of the policy dialogue and outcomes, and they are reports providing evidence of public consultation. The difference is that the policy practitioner will not draft the white paper; that responsibility rests with the government, as an official government document.

Background documents and policy briefs—though produced or used at different times and performing different functions—accomplish the common objective of providing evidence of multistakeholder participation and of acquired consent in a specific area of public policy, and for requesting policy change.

In this section, we will describe the process of creating the background paper and policy briefs, two documents used at various stages in the Canadian Internet public policy process (see Box 11: Background and final report).

For the IGF, these meetings have had specific themes (such as “Internet Governance for Development” or the less-specific “Internet for all”).

## Box11

## Background and final report.

The Canadian Internet Forum followed a process that was informed by a number of activities:

- A survey that produced an evidence base of the perceptions of Canadians about the role of the Internet with respect to Canada's economic development. Two themes emerged from the survey findings: the Internet and Canada's economic development, and the importance of digital literacy for Canadians.
- A public consultation process that followed, sourcing a broad base of voices and contributions from various stakeholders across six Canadian cities. The two themes emerging from the survey were used to form overarching and guiding questions to the policy dialogue in these consultations.
- A multistakeholder event that brought together various stakeholders across the country.

Two background documents and a process report were produced.

### BACKGROUND PAPERS

Two background papers were created for use during the city public consultation process, one for each theme on digital literacy and economic development. Both papers were anchored to the Government of Canada's digital economy consultation process, which highlighted the importance of digital literacy skills development as a cornerstone for Canada's planned digital economy.

The digital literacy paper raised questions that policy-makers should consider because they relate to the skills needed by the general public, children and youth, workers and learners and the vulnerable population, to benefit from the Internet; the issues and barriers to acquiring these skills; and what is needed to ensure that all Canadians have opportunities to develop and apply digital skills in all sectors.

The economic development paper drew policy-makers' attentions to the major issues they needed to consider regarding the role that the Internet plays in the digital economy in the context of economic, social and environmental challenges. The paper raised questions on the new and current economic Internet opportunities available to Canadians; the key policy issues related to the role of the Internet in the digital economy; and the key Internet management and governance issues concerning the Canadian public and policy-makers.

### THE FINAL REPORT

A final paper that summarized the results of the Canadian Internet Forum to its participants highlighted the results of the process, with suggestions to further the development of multistakeholder approaches to Internet policy and governance issues and to provide a Canadian perspective on Internet and governance policies for the international community (CIRA, 2001).

*Continued...*

## Box 11

The paper recognized the Internet's vital contribution to Canada's future through the provision of opportunities to address economic, social and environmental challenges; as a strategic tool for product and service innovation, better performance and productivity; and for learning and employment, citizen engagement and public participation. The key messages that emerged suggested that:

- Synergies need to be created between digital literacy and economic development because they are tightly interconnected; therefore, the discussions around them should be reframed and rebalanced.
- Certain fundamental Internet governance challenges should be recognized and addressed, including: achieving universal and affordable access, building Canadian knowledge and skills to participate in the digital economy, promoting Internet-enabled innovation, and promoting digital inclusion of all communities of Canadian population.
- Other countries face Internet governance challenges similar to those that Canada faces and can also benefit from the steps that Canada takes to address these challenges.

Amongst the issues to be addressed are the need to develop a national Internet vision for Canada, the provision of a world-class Internet infrastructure and services for and across all of Canada, transforming education for the digital age, building digital literacy in support of individual rights and responsibilities, enabling Internet-based innovations, and developing Canadian digital media and content.

## Objectives

- To provide evidence of public consultation and consent on public policy issues requiring the attention of the policy-maker.
- To document the progression of issues within the policy-making process, recognizing that policy making is a process and the issues that are discussed within it are dynamic and require constant attention and revision.

## Expected Output

Two forms of documents may result from this process:

- Background paper
- Policy brief

In response, the government may issue its own white paper as a precursor to setting policy, assigning roles and responsibilities, drafting appropriate laws and regulations, and implementing programs.

## Timing and Duration

- **Background paper: this should be produced first.**
- **Policy briefs should be issued after each major activity, summarizing the evidence gathered and outcomes relevant for policy guidance and formulation.**

## Procedure

### **STEP 1 > IDENTIFY THE POLICY RESEARCHER**

The role of a policy researcher is significant and integral to all the tools described in this toolkit. For instance, developing the background document that will guide online discussions requires research in areas that concern past and present policies, the current mechanisms for policy making, and the stakeholders who are involved in the process. Some of these elements become more evident with a presentation of facts and analysis that should be performed by a researcher or policy practitioner with the right research skills. A clue to identifying someone is to explore options at the university or a particular policy institute that may be involved in the policy area or that has performed work in the area, or even a strategic partner or stakeholder already engaged in the process.

A policy researcher should be retained throughout the process, either full time or on contract.

### **STEP 2 > IDENTIFY THE POLICY ISSUE**

Several tools described in this toolkit point toward a public consultation process from which will emerge a policy concern that requires policy change. Identification of a policy issue is the reason a process is required in the first place and is perhaps not necessary if no policy issue exists. A concern may result from the desire to have a future equitable state, or from a state that emerged via a scenarios exercise or from an issue around which minimal public consultation has taken place. Policy issues could also emerge from research, an online consultative process, a survey, or by comparing the situation of one country to another. For instance, the development of Internet infrastructure as a means of improving governance processes or to develop the economic sector in a particular country could emerge from online dialogue, from a desired future state or from comparing the specific issue with a similar issue in another country. The issue should be articulable in a single sentence.

### **STEP 3 > RESEARCH THE POLICY ISSUE AND BACKGROUND DATA/CONSULT THE POLICY MAP**

One of the functions of the policy researcher identified in the first step is to conduct a study of the pertinent present or past policy issues that require public consultation and to link them to the present policy context, with an intention that they will have more sustainable development-oriented future impact. This process involves looking through qualitative and statistical data. For instance, in the ICT field, the rates of adoption of the Internet, available bandwidth, and growth trends of mobile usage, and how these link to, or can contribute to, economic, social and environmental development are elements that require further research in any particular context.

**STEP 4 > DEVELOP THE BACKGROUND PAPER**

Once a good draft has been prepared, it is helpful to circulate it to two or three external experts to validate the research and conclusions drawn. See Box 11 for the content of the background paper that was developed for the Canadian Internet Forum.

**STEP 5 > ENGAGE THE PUBLIC IN A CONSULTATION PROCESS**

The purpose of the background paper is to provide evidence that will generate further dialogue. A useful place to generate dialogue is in the online consultation or face-to-face multistakeholder consultation forum. The paper presents the policy contexts, as well as asking questions that help the dialogue process.

**STEP 6 > DOCUMENT THE PROCESS AND ITS OUTCOMES**

Lessons can be learned from both the policy dialogue and the process. The key points from the discussions, outcomes, action steps and recommendations should be documented. The observations and perceptions of the facilitator are also important. These elements should be used in producing the evidence-based report.

**STEP 7 > PREPARE THE POLICY BRIEF**

Perhaps one of the difficulties of a policy process is deciding upon the most suitable policy—one that works well for the majority of those for whom it applies. A different policy position can be held by various stakeholder groups. For instance, one particular stakeholder may only be interested in policies that have direct applications within his or her own environment, not one necessarily addressing the best interests of the majority of the people and other stakeholders for whom the policy is defined. The challenge for the policy practitioner and researcher is to assume these different positions and to present the outcomes in such a way that the issues can be discussed without bias or prejudice to any particular preconceived position. This toolkit is about public policy making on a platform where all stakeholders engage on an equal footing. This principle should guide the researcher and the policy practitioner in the production of the evidence—be it in the form of a white paper, policy brief or background paper.

A structure of a report has been presented in Box 11. However, a white paper or policy brief should contain the following sections:

- **Background and context:** a description of the policy context and the process that has led to the present policy process
- **Emerging discussion points:** Issues that emerged from the dialogue linked to historic policy context
- **Policy recommendations:** Recommendations for change, modification or creation of a new policy
- **Action points:** Other steps necessary for policy change to take place. This may include the perceptions and observations of the researcher, policy practitioner or facilitator of the policy process, albeit in an objective form
- **Impacts on the present policy landscape:** Specific recommendations for ongoing or future work in the area

## Checklist

CHECK	ITEM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify the policy researcher
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify the policy issue
<input type="checkbox"/>	Research the policy issue and background data/ consult the policy map
<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop the background paper
<input type="checkbox"/>	Engage the public in a consultation process
<input type="checkbox"/>	Document the process and its outcomes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prepare the policy brief

## Conclusion

In the preamble section of this paper, we described the origin and importance of the tools in this toolkit and how it should be used. The next section described, in more detail, the various tools that we have used and that have worked for us during our work on generating evidence and consent in Internet public policy nationally, regionally and globally.

We trust that this toolkit has been useful. We invite you to contribute to the online wiki at [www.iisd.org/TIPP](http://www.iisd.org/TIPP), where a “live version” of this toolkit will be available for the inclusion of more case studies and tools that have worked for the policy practitioner.

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