Q. 13/1   Promotion of infrastructure and use of the Internet in developing countries

1   Issue proposed for study

This question is directed toward providing practical suggestions for increasing Internet infrastructure build-out and use. In particular, it focuses on how to create a capital-attracting, pro-competitive policy environment that will foster infrastructure build-out, as well as the policy environment suited to best foster Internet development. This question is also geared toward developing human capacity in technical expertise related to the Internet.

The study group would:

1)   develop a set a guidelines for government officials to use in creating a policy environment that fosters development of Internet infrastructure;

2)   identify the technological options available to achieve Internet build-out, and prepare a technology-neutral guide to options for Internet build-out;

3)   determine how best to build human capacity for technical expertise in the private sector and among developing country officials;

4)   develop the criteria and principles of local and regional traffic concentration and economic implications of the Internet, as well as its possible impact on network traffic;

5)   suggest mechanisms to expand and develop local and regional providers of content and information.

Among the issues to be examined are:

•   all communications infrastructure, including degree of digitization, number of Internet host computers, number of personal computers;

•   teledensity;

•   plans for network build-out;

•   universal service goals;

•   the regulatory environment i.e. policies regarding liberalization, privatization, competition, interconnection and pricing policies, Internet technology and service, access to information, Internet service provider licensing policies, taxes and customs duties on information technology.

2   Method proposed for handling this issue

Two surveys would be sent to the ITU membership; one to Administrations seeking: a) information on their existing policies etc., as described above in section 2; and b) asking that they identify their training needs associated with Internet service and facilities.

In developing the recommendations of best policy practices, particular attention would be given to those countries having a high degree of Internet penetration or high Internet growth rates.

A second survey would be sent to private sector members, seeking: a) their perspective on the optimal policy environment for Internet development; b) information on various technological options for providing Internet services; and c) asking that they identify training offered by their company that would be relevant to Internet service or network deployment.

A project group or task team would be responsible for directly contacting non-ITU organizations in order to determine what relevant training opportunities they make available to developing countries. The project team or Task Force could act in concert with BDT staff.