



INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION

**TELECOMMUNICATION
DEVELOPMENT BUREAU
ITU-D STUDY GROUPS**

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FIRST MEETING OF STUDY GROUP 1: GENEVA, 10 - 12 SEPTEMBER 1998
FIRST MEETING OF STUDY GROUP 2: GENEVA, 7 - 9 SEPTEMBER 1998

Focus Group for Question 13/1

STUDY GROUP 1

SOURCE: TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT BUREAU (BDT)

TITLE: TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE FOCUS GROUP ON PROMOTION AND USE
OF THE INTERNET INFRASTRUCTURE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Background

Further to discussion in the Plenary of Study Group 1, the meeting decided that Question 13/1 "Promotion of infrastructure and use of the Internet in developing countries" would be handled by a Focus Group for at least one year. The issues to be studied in the Focus Group within the framework of this Question would reflect Document 209 (WTDC-98, Valletta), a joint document submitted at the Conference by the United States of America and Telefónica de España.

Composition of Focus Group

The focus group will be chaired by Mr. Dietmar Plesse, Vice-Chairman of Study Group 1. In keeping with decision made during the Plenary of Study Group 1, the membership of the Focus Group should ensure balanced participation from all regions. However, the Group will be open to all Sector Members interested in these issues.

The group will conduct its work, as much as possible electronically. Its first meeting will be held either in Geneva or Bonn/Germany (to be decided) from 15-16 December 1998 (to be confirmed). The BDT has set up a conferencing facility for the focus group so that members can exchange views and input documents. The conference is restricted to Focus Group members and can be reached at the following web address <http://wwwp.itu.ch:8080/~2/login> The conference can also be reached from the web address <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D-UniversalAccess/> - visible under the **Internet** section.

The Focus Group will submit a preliminary report to TDAB at its next meeting envisaged for February 1999. A report on the results achieved so far will be presented at the next Study Group meeting in September 1999. Study Group 1 then should reconsider its decision to establish a Focus Group and might decide to deal with this Question within the framework of the Study Group.

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 of 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 service provider licensing policies;
- Internet technology and service, access to information;
- applications, with a focus on those applications related to development (education, healthcare, agriculture, etc.);
- HRD.

Among the issues to collect information are:

- addressing and routing in the TCP/IP and its impact on network traffic;
- electronic commerce activities in the Internet;
- diversity of culture and languages;
- taxes and customs duties on information technology.

Liaison needed:

- relevant ITU-T Study Groups (SG 3: Tariffs, International Leased Circuits, SG 13, SG 16: GII activities and Internet).

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; and b) asking in particular developing countries 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.

The Focus Group would act in collaboration with the BDT focal point who will draw on BDT resources where appropriate.

Organization of the work of the Focus Group

Given the urgency and importance of the issue and the short time available, the work of the Focus Group has to start immediately.

The working languages of the Focus Group will be French and English. However input documents in Spanish will be accepted provided they arrive in time, within the date limit for submission for each activity of the Focus Group.

The Chairman has appointed Ms. Jane Roberts Coffin to prepare a draft questionnaire to be sent to administrations, and Mr. Raul Sejas Bon to prepare a draft questionnaire to be sent to the private sector, until 13 November 1998.

Members of the Focus Group are invited to submit position paper of their respective entity on the issues proposed for study 1) - 5) above until 13 November 1998. If the paper exceeds 5 pages, members are requested to provide a one page summary.

ANNEX
(Source: Document 1/036)

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