



Framework for ISOC's Engagement with Membership re Policy work

- Brief for the Board -

In a recent recommendation, the Chapter Advisory Council (AC) put forward proposals for more systematic involvement of Chapters in the Internet Society's public policy development process. This recommendation was the product of a collaborative dialogue between the AC and ISOC staff and is summarized as follows:

Interactions with national policy makers: *review with the chapters policy positions and alliances before they are made, and inform chapters of meetings with national policymakers, unless time constraints do not permit it.*

Consulting the membership during policy development process: *policy background and position papers should be submitted to the membership for comment prior to publication...when papers are published or submitted to an outside entity, chapters should be informed.*

The Board asked Staff to develop a recommendation on how to implement the Chapter AC proposal.

Staff Recommendation

Internet policy is an increasingly fast-moving environment; therefore, we agree that engagement and collaboration between staff and membership must be ongoing. In light of the helpful recommendations made by the Chapter AC, we outline some modifications to our overall engagement processes for Chapters, Organizational and individual members that integrate the proposal from the AC.

In summary, **we agree that more systematic and predictable consultation** would be useful for both Chapters and Staff. We will launch a **monthly policy alert to Chapters** that highlights current & upcoming policy consultations where input is needed; informs chapters of known submissions that are imminent; and announces upcoming webinars, workshops, etc.



First, we describe the ongoing policy engagement opportunities for members and staff. Second, we outline several proposals to implement the Chapter AC proposal for the consideration of the Board.

I - Ongoing efforts to expand engagement opportunities

- Since its inception, ISOC policy positions have consistently been developed in line with ISOC’s Mission Statement and Principles as well as the **strategic direction set annually by the Board**. This should continue.
- For the past two years, ISOC has engaged in a process to produce **Policy Briefs and Frameworks** (Trust, Access, Multistakeholder Governance) An integral part of it includes soliciting members’ views. Feedback has been positive on this approach.
- **ISOC Scenarios on The Future of the Internet**: The project is unique because a significant part is based on the premise of membership input (bottom-up project coordination). Surveyed several times, members are shaping the findings.
- **Participation of Chapters in Key Internet Governance dialogues**: Chapters are key in leveraging our positions with local governments and community leaders. Their action was pivotal throughout WCIT and WSIS+10 negotiations, for instance.
- **Regional Chapter Workshops and Calls**: The development and strengthening of our Chapters and SIGs is a key priority so that our Chapters have the skills and information they need to be effective local advocates. Monthly policy calls and regular workshops are useful ways to bring chapters and staff together to share information and build local policy capacity.
- **Online Community Dialogues on key policy topics**: Feedback on webinars where members can interact and share their views has been positive. They are used to advance work on ISOC’s thematic priorities: Access & Trust (e.g. Encryption webinar).

II - Improvements going forward: New proposals to implement the Chapter AC Proposal



Going forward, ISOC staff proposes to make its policy development processes easier to access and to predict.

1. **Membership Consulting within a relevant scope:** Staff will continue consulting prior to the publication of new position papers and take steps to make this consultation more systematic and predictable. Staff should be able to assess when consultation is needed and retain sufficient flexibility to be responsive to the fast-moving environment. In any case, staff is responsible for determining the final position of the Internet Society.
2. **Putting in place effective mechanisms:** A discussion with our members would be welcome on the best way to engage with them. Mailing lists, virtual meetings and other tools need to be assessed and adapted (e.g. interest groups) if needed.
3. **Clarity from Chapters regarding inputs:** Staff would appreciate clarity from Chapters as to how their input will be developed. Are all chapter members informed of consultations or just Chapter Leaders? Staff is keen to work with the Advisory Group to identify efficient and constructive mechanisms for consultations.
4. **Adjusting to all segments of our membership:** Chapters, Organizational Members and individual members are all key parts of our community that have a role in advancing ISOC's work and Mission. As we conclude our membership assessment project (led by Ayesha Hassan) we will adjust these opportunities.
5. **Increasing involvement at the local level:** Staff will inform Chapter delegates of meetings with government officials (subject to time constraints). Chapter delegates can also *proactively* inform staff of their own connections to advance ISOC's agenda.
6. **Sending policy alerts:** Staff proposes to provide monthly policy alerts to membership including information regarding forthcoming ISOC submissions, meetings or policy documents. With a two-way communication channel, members would know what to expect, when input is sought, and could, in return, share information and opportunities that arise from their own network.

Consulting and engaging ISOC Members is and will remain a constant priority for the Internet Society. ISOC's policy positions are stronger when the insight and views of our diverse community can be incorporated. Consultations with our members enable us to test new ideas and to enhance our positions with local and



regional perspectives. At the same time, the Internet Policy space is very busy and we understand that Chapters would appreciate a more systematic approach that is easier to access and participate in.

This is why our proposal is to work on the basis of the Chapters Advisory Council recommendation to enhance opportunities of consultation and collaboration for all members: Chapters, Organizational and individual members.