

Appendix 10B

INTERIM REPORT ON DISCUSSION OF "WHAT IS CIVIC"

January 2007

1. Definition of CIVIC, and proposed changes to it..

Most agreed with the substance of the definition, and proposals were made to change some of the language to reflect the expanding nature of CIVIC.

These proposals include :-

- including reference to non-Caribbean residents with an interest in ICT in the Caribbean
- state that CIVIC is open to all of the languages, cultures and countries of the Caribbean
- say that CIVIC is continuing rather than permanent
- recognise that we are an online community should have some reach into the physical world

2. A proposal for a new definition is

"The Caribbean ICT Virtual Community (CIVIC) is a dynamic online community of Caribbean ICT stakeholders. The community is open to people who identify with all of the different languages, cultures and countries of the Caribbean. The community engages in sharing information, discussing issues, networking and linking actors, projects or initiatives on ICTs and development in the Caribbean. It also aims to contribute in the building of a common vision/perspective on ICTs, and to promote a Caribbean strategy and/or regional Caribbean-wide actions."

The gaps and areas in CIVIC's organisation which we need to bridge to help in

a) building a common vision/perspective on ICTs

- building a structure which would allow self sustainability and funding
- accepting multilingualism and to provide for it - eg rotating language groups, providing translation tools
- increase awareness of CIVIC, rules, charter, etc
- supporting technology (dynamic website, Wikis and other collaboration tools)
- there needs to be clear leadership in moving forward on these issues

b) promoting a Caribbean strategy and relevant actions

- absence of a strategy with which to move forward (as ROK states, to operationalise the last sentence of our definition), we could start working on this by asking individual members their ideas
- rejuvenate the thematic groups, and identify others
- need for a physical meeting from time to time, and with other groups to promote CIVIC

The question of the structure of CIVIC is very important. The above principles must be applied regardless of the structure which is adopted.

The three philosophies which have been espoused are :-

a) continue with the current structure and chart, which from the survey, many people seem to be comfortable with

b) a formal structure, with formal membership, elected representatives, secretariat and supporting structures to acquire funding, etc.

c) an organisation which has been described by Stephane, and reproduced here for convenience with some editing :

" Having permanent positions inside CIVIC occupied by various persons will help change the perception of having a "small group" of active participants and will help share the burden of animating the community. The council of co-ordinators of CIVIC permanent channels would body", like a council, that would coordinate the work of various "coordinators" of CIVIC permanent "channels".

Stephane introduced a number of concepts :

- a "channel" is a permanent CIVIC Thematic (like Internet Governance, ICT Entrepreneurship, Policy and Regulation, etc.)
- each channel would have "Channel Coordinators" or "Facilitators", and working groups in these areas would fall under these facilitators.

Of course, each working group would have its own "moderator", usually the member that brought the interest on the table.

- a "moderator" is responsible of conducting a particular discussion to completion

The council would have representatives of the various linguistic groups (say three for French, English and Spanish...) and would have as main task to manage and execute the action plan for a year (or duration to be determined) elaborated by consensus by the members. "Channel coordinators" would carry the part of the action plan related to their area.

Now, for the purpose of representation inside other fora or advocacy groups, depending on the subject, a channel coordinnator would be naturally designated, or a member of the council, or an available resourceful member, in that order.

To fulfill the need for a permanent fixture - Stephane proposes that any CIVIC member could offer to put a secretariat at the service of the online setting. That role can be rotated yearly. This will help lower the overhead costs of running CIVIC.

Since we work in the ICT field, it is easy to map our secretariat services to the relevant organization and change the mapping yearly without the outside world even realizing it, except for the quality of work which will probably change from one organization to another.

Anyway, we can work on requirements (for example, multilingual requirements) for an organization to be eligible. In return, this organization can have exposure in CIVIC activities (for example, secretariat supported by XYZ.org in all communications, web site, etc.)

In short..

Option 1 - leave structure as is

Option 2 - Formalise structure as ROK and Felipe propose

Option 3 - Introduce a mechanism which Stephane proposes