

# The CIVIC Channel Charter

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## Definitions

**CIVIC channel:** it is a sub-section within the CIVIC 2.0 web/virtual platform and a group of members who share a specific area of interest. A Channel is built on a combination of web 2.0 tools as: a specific discussion forum/list and its archives, a specific web space, editorial blogs, editorials, a specific resource section, members' pages, and other knowledge and collaboration tools. A Channel can be Thematic, Transversal/process oriented or Geographic. The Channels are not independent organisations, but are sub-groups of CIVIC.

**A CIVIC Channel member :** a CIVIC member who voluntarily chooses to participate in a sub grouping, to exchange, network or seek collaborations, on a specific topic/country/focus

**A Channel Manager** is a CIVIC member who has received a mandate from the CIVIC membership to manage a specific CIVIC Channel.

**The Channel Manager Channel** is a special Channel whose membership comprises all the Channel Managers, and is for those managers to articulate their work, organise common tasks and share tools, knowledge and lessons related to their CM duties.

## Duties and roles of the Channel Manager (CM)

The role and duties of the channel manager are:

### Channel Moderation

The Channel Managers are required to:

- Make sure that the Channel members and activities respect the overall CIVIC ethics, netiquette, and charter
- Ensure relevance of content and discussions and that formats are respected; ensure a sustainable information environment (flows of email, members' behaviour, conflict management)
- Ensure that views from all Channel members are considered equally, irrespective of their political opinion, race, language, gender, or any other status

- Approve new Channel members following the Channel policy, and welcome new members, updating them on the current Channel activities and available resources or tools
- Moderate the Channel at least three times per week. A Channel may be post-moderated (The Channel Manager checks messages and the resources section after they are posted) or pre-moderated (the Channel Manager approves messages, resources, members requests, etc. before they appear). The Channel Manager and Channel members decide on the option.

### **Channel Promotion**

The Channel Managers are expected to:

- Define the Channel focus and definition,
- Maintain the Channel introduction page,
- Develop and maintain a FAQ page specific to the Channel (for interested and new members)
- Advocate and market the Channel within and beyond CIVIC (outreach)
- Ensure the Channel is attractive, has fresh content, is well maintained and user friendly

### **Channel facilitation for collaboration and knowledge production**

The Channel managers commit to:

- Attempt to keep people interested and contributing; promote exchanges, allow all to participate, encourage participation levels, promote original and relevant information exchanges
- Attempt to ensure community building (shared interests or values)
- Monitor the Channel so that no question remains unanswered;
- Keep themselves informed on the Channel theme (network intelligence), and share/circulate as much as possible all relevant and specific information
- Identify opportunities for CIVIC contribution in external discussions pertaining to the Channel theme (e.g. regional events, Government policies, etc)
- Encourage members to respect diversity and (as much as possible) multilingualism; and manage the Channel taking into consideration the different members' profiles and perspectives.
- Lead and facilitate (or coach and advise) members to produce knowledge (such as documents, blue papers, position papers, research briefs) and publish same on the CIVIC website.
- Facilitate collaboration processes (identify and facilitate concrete opportunities, projects, and activities)
- Facilitate the development of a body of knowledge and share it with the CIVIC community

### **Management and Reporting**

The channel managers are required to:

- Produce Channel activity reports and statistics to inform the main CIVIC body and contribute to a regular CIVIC channel newsletter
- Observe the other Channels' identity, co-ordinate with fellow Channel Managers to avoid overlapping and promote cross-fertilisation

- Identify and coach a second, who can eventually become the Channel Manager successor
- Participate actively in the Channel Manager group, as it is essential for overall CIVIC governance.

#### **Other matters**

- Some Channel Managers may have additional responsibilities to make CIVIC more relevant. Any role or duty not mentioned here has to be mandated formally by CIVIC.
- Channel Managers are volunteers, working collectively and in solidarity to advance ICT4D for the social development of the Caribbean, assuming their mandates responsibly, but also enjoying their responsibility.

### **Channel Membership**

- Any CIVIC member can freely join any Channel without pre-conditions or a specific admission process. However membership of the Channel Managers group is restricted to current Channel Managers.
- All logs/archives of all CIVIC channels will be accessible to all members, including Channel Managers group archives (see definition of this special channel below).
- The Channel Manager will ensure that
  - the request is from an existing CIVIC member (and encourage interested persons who are not CIVIC members to join CIVIC first)
  - all new members are introduced to the other members, so all know who is joining, and that his/her profile appears in the Channel member page.
  - all new members are updated with the specific Channel's ongoing activities and projects, as well as specific Channel rules, if any.

### **Access to Channel contents and discussion archives**

- The Channel content, such as its presentation, blogs, documents, event, marketplace/ resources and documents are accessible by the public.
- In keeping with the CIVIC charter, posts/messages in the forums and mailing list are private (only for members) and cannot be forwarded or copied without the prior authorisation of the original posting member. Thus Channel forums and mailing list archives are private, only accessible by (all) CIVIC members.
- Those members who want their production to be public can use their blogs, or upload them in the Channel resources.
- To contribute to Channel discussions and mailing list forums, CIVIC members must also be Channel members.
- Channels may also have private working spaces (for example to be used for sharing a document being drafted) editable by its members only and not accessible by non-CIVIC member (but still "read only" for all CIVIC-logged members)

### **Channel products and copyright**

- CIVIC Channel products (briefs, papers, research positions, blue papers, guides, etc) identified as being CIVIC products must be approved by CIVIC in keeping with the CIVIC charter.
- Author attribution: The title should include the words “CIVIC document”, the name of the facilitator(s) and the list of the core group of drafters/contributors and facilitator(s), and the Channel name.
- CIVIC Channel products, including briefs, papers, concept notes, project designs, research, opinions, blue papers and guidelines are \*by default\* non-commercial open content and fall under a Creative Commons Licence. Consequently such material may be shared, copied, distributed or transmitted freely but with conditions cited under the Creative Commons Licence. Unless the author grants permission his/her copyright work should carry a clear attribution to the author; should not be altered or transformed and should not be used for commercial purposes. For full details on the Creative Commons Licence please visit : <http://creativecommons.org/about/licenses>
- If the contributors would like their product under another licence/copyright (as open to commercial use or derivative works) they have to specifically and clearly so state when they request approval by CIVIC, and should add *“You may not alter, transform, or build upon this work without including the citation for the original work, and you must make it clear that the original work was made available under a creative commons licence”*.
- All documents linked or stored in the CIVIC platform must respect the rights and copyright of their authors. Channel Managers are expected to ensure that the content posted on the CIVIC website channels does not infringe the copyright of an author and to diligently attempt to prevent the unauthorised use of copyrighted material.

### **Sharing resources across channels: Tags and taxonomy**

- Each CIVIC member, including the Channel Managers, may post resources (as documents, links, multimedia content, agenda/event, marketplace items, etc.) and
  - Indicate in which Channel or Channels the user thinks the resource should be posted. This will use a predetermined taxonomy system (i.e. the member will be able to pick from a list/menu of Channels), and
  - Input free tags/keywords, for this resource, as many as the member wishes
- The system should generate one daily mail, with notification of all the added resources that day, which will be circulated in the Channel Managers’ group. Any other CIVIC members may sign-up to receive that daily notification mail.
- Each Channel Manager will receive notification of any proposed resource/s for his/her Channel and approve (or not).
- Any Channel Manager will be able to tag any resource uploaded by other Channel Manager or any CIVIC member by using the predetermined taxonomy system to have the same resource displayed in their Channel

## Technical Management

- The CMS (content management system) will be maintained and managed initially by CarlSneT consortium. The future and sustainability of this is yet to be addressed
- All technical requests that require webmaster and/or system administrator intervention should be copied to the Channel Manager channel.

## Specific Channel rules, Channel members' rights and duties

- Each Channel can have specific rules, as long as they do not conflict with the CIVIC charter. For example
  - Channels can be moderated or post-moderated.
  - Channels can have special arrangements among their members, on shared moderation.
- Specific Channel rules have to be adopted by Channel members following the same approval procedure as overall CIVIC procedures, but within the Channel.
- Each Channel can define its members' specific rights and duties in its special Channel rules, as long as these do not contradict the CIVIC charter.
- The main CIVIC charter and its members' rights and duties supersede any specific Channel rules.

## When the Channel Managers may be the contact or thematic focal point for CIVIC

*(The main CIVIC charter has to be reviewed to include part of this section.)*

- A Channel Manager acts as a CIVIC focal point for their specific Channel topic. The Channel Manager may receive from many sources and share, within his/her Channel and CIVIC (and in the platform newsletter), information event invitations, exchanges, calls for proposals or papers, job offers, that they receive as CIVIC focal points. But Channels are an integral part of CIVIC; thus Channel Managers cannot represent CIVIC to third parties without a specific CIVIC mandate.
- Channel Managers may also follow-up on correspondence on behalf of CIVIC if they follow the procedures described below :
  - In the new platform a generic CIVIC mailbox has been created that can be reached by email and web contact-form. All (registered) CIVIC members can access (via web) the content of this mailbox/email anytime.
  - All mail/posts directed to CIVIC mailbox (except spam) are automatically added to a web archive, accessible to all CIVIC logged-on members (and also distributed via email to the Channel Manager's group). The system generates an auto reply to sender: "thanks for contacting CIVIC, there will be a follow up in the next few days".
  - Any member (Channel Manager or not, but Channel Manager in particular) may propose him/herself as the CIVIC contact/follow-up person for this issue/thread/request. This will be done by ticking a box and including as comment the main points/draft of what he/she will do/reply/process.

- There will be a delay of two working days to allow any member to object to the candidate.
- All this information (candidacies, opposition etc.) should be visible to logged-on members, on the same page where the original contact/letter is (as comments).
- If nobody opposes or there are no other candidates, then the member is automatically mandated as the "CIVIC contact person" to reply and follow-up on behalf of CIVIC (for this thread/issue only).
- If there is opposition or another self-proposed candidate then the Channel Managers' group initiates a discussion with candidates/opponents to reach a consensus. If a consensus is reached, and there is no opposition, this is considered a formal mandate.
- If no consensus is reached, then there should be a formal CIVIC mandate vote requested by each of the "CIVIC contact person" candidates. The individual who gets a majority of support has the specific mandate.
- All the exchanges between the third party and the mandated CIVIC contact person should be visible to all registered members, on the same page where the original contact/letter is and in the generic CIVIC mailbox.

## **Role of the Channel Manager group**

The Channel Managers' group, is a special channel used for the

- Co-ordination of all the Channel Managers.
- Articulation of site-wide actions and activities.
- Avoidance of Channel overlapping and enabling of cross fertilisation
- Provision of peer support for Channel Managers seeking help or advice with any situation.
- Sharing of facilitation and moderation techniques and resources,
- Harmonisation of the Channels' editorial policies.
- Preparation of the newsletter and any other such documents
- Any other collective action related to managing Channels.

This Channel is un-moderated. It is composed exclusively of the Channel Managers, although, as with all other Channels, its archives are available only to CIVIC members (all members).

This Channel will be managed initially by Carisnet (January-April 2009). After the launch and trial of the CIVIC 2.0 website and the Channels, the group of Channel Managers will select from among themselves one manager, and rotate the position monthly or bi-monthly.

## **Renewing, replacing or revoking the election of Channel Managers**

- The Channel Manager mandate lasts for one (1) year.
- If the Channel Manager desires to renew his/her mandate, a request to the CIVIC membership has to be submitted at least four weeks before the end of the existing mandate.

- If the Channel Manager desires to resign he/she is expected to be diligent in finding (first within the Channel) a substitute (who will request a mandate), and announce the termination of his mandate to the CIVIC membership, at least four weeks before the effective date of such resignation, where possible.
- The position of CIVIC Channel Manager may be revoked by the CIVIC body. At least three CIVIC members are needed to co-sign a revocation request to start a revocation process, documenting the request. They may or may not be Channel members. The request is sent to the CIVIC body and follows CIVIC mandate/approval procedures (votes).

### Temporary change of a Channel Manager

- If the Channel Manager cannot moderate for a period for any reason such as illness or travel, then it is expected that someone else will moderate in his/her absence.
- Five working days without moderation will be taken as a reason for the moderation to be temporarily transferred to another person in the Channel.
- If after three weeks the mandated Channel Manager is not fulfilling his/her duties, a new Channel Manager has to be mandated by CIVIC. In the event that no volunteer is available and duly mandated the Channel is to be closed (a Channel must have a Channel Manager).

### Non-functioning Channels

- A Channel that is inactive, has not been moderated, animated or had any activity for two months or is considered to be not functioning should be tagged in its first page as “inactive since dd/mm/yyx” by the site maintainer.

### Policy on sponsored Channels

- Channel Managers are volunteers, committed to maintain their Channel without financial reward.
- As their time is a contribution of their employer or of themselves (if self-employed), recognition of that in the Channel main page is possible, by inserting in the Channel page a sentence and a hyperlink such as “The management of this channel is a volunteer contribution supported by xxx consulting, or zzz agency or yyyy Inc. ”
- Channel Managers, as any other members of CIVIC, can receive, when duly mandated, remuneration to perform certain tasks on behalf of CIVIC that are above and beyond normal Channel management duties.
- Channel Managers should seek mandates for proposals with activities related to their Channel such as: knowledge production and diffusion, articulating, coordinating collaborating, developing/implementing regional projects, training, advocacy and public awareness/education.
- For this the Channel Manager has to define and seek a specific CIVIC mandate that includes at least: the institutional arrangement (which institution will receive and manage funds on behalf of CIVIC), the source of funding, the deliverables, the budget, how results will be monitored, and a work plan. Channel Managers cannot receive directly any funds, from any source, without a formal approval from CIVIC.

- Mention of sponsorship of some CIVIC channel activities (in documents and activities), is allowed, as long as provision for it has been included in the mandate approved by the CIVIC constituency.
- It is recommended, but not mandatory, that several Channel Managers develop proposals jointly, including similar activities (knowledge production, coordinating collaboration, advocacy etc) in the different areas/countries, to be managed for CIVIC under the same mandated institutional arrangement.
- Only non-vendor specific advertising (such as Google ads) is allowed and income will accrue to CIVIC, and be used for the overall maintenance of the platform.

## **Diversity, translations management and policy**

- The CIVIC 2.0 platform is multilingual and should enable equal access to the resources, tools and content in three major Caribbean languages. Web site navigation and “skins” are available in three languages
- Resources are posted in their original language. When a “human/original translation” of a resource/item exists, that will be provided by a link “also available in XX language”. If not, the automatic translation output of resources is always available on request (next to any content/item should be a “translate to XX” button).
- All mailing list posts and web forum contributions will be automatically translated (translation below original message)
- Channel Managers are not expected to be trilingual, but have to be conscious of the possible limitations of participation caused by languages and encourage members to participate in their original language.
- Channel Managers should promote the broadest cultural, linguistic and geographic diversity in the CIVIC 2.0 channel;
- They should also promote the broadest possible participation in the Channel, with regard to, gender, philosophy/belief, etc.

## **Document management**

- All Channel products and documents should be available in open formats or formats that are readable in a free reader (such as PDF and ODT)
- All Channel products and documents should follow a common nomenclature that includes date-versions and Channel (XXXX-bluepaper-draftv3-E-commer-channel-12-Dec-09.pdf)
- For drafting, the Channels will be able to use their wikis, or any document format, if so agreed by the Channel members

## **How to become a Channel Manager**

- Channel Managers are mandated by the CIVIC constituency
- A standard draft mandate is attached (to be prepared after agreement on this charter)

(Other note: hopefully the CIVIC platform will have a mandate management system to make it easy to check the current mandate requests, the mandate content, the approved mandates and validity dates, the pending ones and vote).

Channel Manager Preferred Profile

- Accomplished persons of integrity, objectivity, and intelligence, with reputations for sound judgment and open minds, and a demonstrated capacity for facilitating thoughtful group decision-making; and who are willing to serve the community as volunteers, without direct remuneration.
- Persons with an understanding of CIVIC's mission and the potential impact of ICT on the Caribbean community, and committed to the successful adoption of ICT4D by the Caribbean region.
- Persons who will promote the broadest cultural and geographic diversity in CIVIC, consistent with meeting the other criteria set forth in this section;
- Persons who have personal familiarity with ICT and ICT4D, with policy development procedures and the public interest; and with the broad range of government, international donor organisations, business, individual, academic, non-commercial and other stakeholders' interests or some combination of the above;
- Term of Channel Manager
  - One year
  - Channel Managers may be reappointed for an unlimited number of terms, although change is welcome.
- Time commitment
  - The basic responsibilities of a Channel Manager should require no more than approximately 20 hours each month. This includes participating in online (e-mail) discussions, drafting or overseeing the drafting of documents/proposed actions, participating in scheduled Channel Manager meetings, general Channel management and meeting with or making presentations to local and regional organisations as necessary.

### **Changes to and approvals of this Charter**

- The Charter will be reviewed periodically, but at a minimum of every year by the Channel Managers' group, to incorporate ongoing experiences and improvements. (The next scheduled review date is December 2009).
- This Charter may be requested to be amended or modified, by any CIVIC member, through the approved CIVIC process in effect at the time of the request.
- The Channel Manager group must be included in consultations on the proposed amendments or modifications, and may inform the main CIVIC constituency of its opinion(s) but the final decision remains with the main CIVIC body.

### **Overlapping Channels**

- These issues will be managed within the Channel Manager's Channel. The decisions will be determined through collaboration and consensus as much as possible, and though votes, if no consensus is reached.