



Open Regional Dialogue on Internet Governance  
(ORDIG)

**Voices from Asia-Pacific**

*Internet Governance Priorities and Recommendations*

**ORDIG Policy Brief and Executive Summary**

**for the UN Working Group on Internet Governance and the World  
Summit on the Information Society**

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In collaboration with

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and  
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# Voices from Asia-Pacific

## *Internet Governance Priorities and Recommendations*

### ORDIG Policy Brief and Executive Summary

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTERNET GOVERNANCE IN ASIA- PACIFIC

The Open Regional Dialogue on Internet Governance (ORDIG) was initiated in October 2004 as a core activity of UNDP's Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme (UNDP-APDIP) in collaboration with various other organizations.<sup>1</sup> The initiative was created to provide Asia-Pacific perspectives to the United Nations Working Group on Internet Governance (UN-WGIG) and the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). Since October 2004, ORDIG has undertaken a number of activities with a view to understanding governance priorities in the Asia-Pacific region. Those activities, which include an extensive regional survey, an online discussion forum and a variety of other research, are described in the accompanying ORDIG Paper, *Voices from Asia-Pacific: Internet Governance Priorities and Recommendations*.<sup>2</sup> That Paper also contains a more extensive discussion of Asian views and opinions; it provides a broad overview of the regional context that may be helpful for those seeking more details on particular issues and priorities.

This present document contains a key summary of policy principles and recommendations. These can be divided into three categories:

- A list of six Working Principles, which provide a working definition of Internet governance and establish some baseline concepts;
- A list of six key recommendations, each of which is derived from ORDIG research and consultations; and
- A list of recommendations by individual issue: these suggest policy steps for specific topics and priorities in the Asia-Pacific region.

Each of these principles and recommendations is the outcome of an intensive stakeholder-driven process that has collected and analyzed the views of over 3000 citizens in the Asia-Pacific region.

#### WORKING PRINCIPLES

The concept and scope of Internet governance has been the subject of intense debate. ORDIG has not attempted lengthy discussions over definitions, instead we take a more

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<sup>1</sup> These organizations include the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP), the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), and the Asia Pacific Network Information Centre (APNIC). For more information on UNDP-APDIP, please visit <http://www.apdip.net> For more information on ORDIG, please visit <http://www.igov.apdip.net>

<sup>2</sup> See [http://www.igov.apdip.net/ORDIG\\_Paper.pdf](http://www.igov.apdip.net/ORDIG_Paper.pdf) for the complete document.

pragmatic approach offering six Working Principles that together establish some parameters and context for discussions of governance in Asia-Pacific.

Three Working Principles are derived from the WGIG's own definitions, presented in its preliminary report in February 2005:

1. The terms "governance" and "govern" mean more than "government activities";
2. The enabling dimension includes organized and cooperative activities between different stakeholders; and
3. Internet governance encompasses a wider range of conditions and mechanisms than IP numbering and domain name administration.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, ORDIG proposes the following three Working Principles, which apply specifically to the Asia-Pacific region:

4. ***Broad, holistic and oriented towards human development:*** We believe that a broader, more holistic view of Internet governance is particularly relevant to the Asia-Pacific region, which is made up of a large number of developing countries. As recognized by the WSIS process, the Internet has an essential role to play in meeting the objectives set forth in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the outcomes of its governance therefore extend beyond merely the technical domain. It is in view of this belief that we have included a social and developmental dimension to the three more traditional dimensions of governance described above (i.e., infrastructure, logical, content).
5. ***Balancing global and local interests:*** We believe that effective Internet governance should extend across national borders. Governance mechanisms and processes should recognize the Internet as a unified and co-ordinated global platform, and should foster international co-operation and co-ordination. In addition, Internet governance must recognize (and, when possible, reconcile) the genuine conflicts that sometimes exist between the need for global solutions and the desire to safeguard national interests.
6. ***Maintain stability and interoperability:*** We believe that the Internet is an essential service and a critical infrastructure in the region, and it must be governed in a manner that reflects its operating realities and exigencies. Any proposed evolutions or changes that arise through the process of governance must therefore take into account the need to maintain the stability and continued interoperability of the network.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our various activities and research, ORDIG has established the following key recommendations. These represent a six-step actionable list of priorities to enhance Internet governance in Asia-Pacific:

1. ***Subsidiarity:*** The Internet is a distributed network, and Internet governance should similarly be distributed, with its mechanisms and decision making located as close as possible to the issues or problems that are being addressed. While some issues require

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<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.wgig.org/Definitions.html>

global or regional coordination, many others (notably IDNs, ccTLDs, and localized content and software) demand local input, and are best designed with the participation of those most directly affected. It is therefore vital to design mechanisms and structures that include representation from the national level, as well as from grassroots and other local communities.

2. ***Governments Have a Role:*** National governments have a vital facilitating and enabling role to play in Internet governance. Governments can set up an efficient market environment, establish and monitor broad competition principles, and ensure that the benefits of the network are equitably maximized. A liberal market environment, nurtured by the government, is often important in lowering access costs and encouraging innovation. Governments should also encourage the development of comprehensive national ICT agendas to optimize resources and ensure coordinated participation in national and international governance processes.
3. ***Multi-Stakeholder Participation is Required:*** Internet governance is a broad-ranging process that affects, and frequently requires collaboration between, a variety of actors. Governance mechanisms should therefore include all affected stakeholders in the processes of decision-making and implementation. Such multi-stakeholder participation, which would include actors from the private sector, government and civil society, is essential to successful governance on a range of issues, including content pollution, ccTLDs, and standards.
4. ***Preserve Cultural Diversity:*** Bodies responsible for international Internet governance functions should reflect the priorities of all affected cultures in their operations. They should ensure an effective voice for all cultures in the deliberations and decision-making processes of these bodies. Such representation will facilitate the development of local content in local languages, help implement IDNs, and ensure that cybercrime is confronted in an effective and culturally appropriate manner.
5. ***Enhance Participation with Capacity Building:*** Multi-stakeholder participation is most meaningful when supplemented by capacity- and awareness-building measures. Governance topics (for example, standards) are frequently complex and require technical knowledge and other forms of expertise. In order to participate in a substantial sense, stakeholders need information, knowledge, resources, and the opportunity to participate.
6. ***Supplement Law with Other Tools:*** Law and regulation are not the only tools available for Internet governance. On a variety of issues (e.g., cybercrime, content pollution and localized software) these traditional tools should be supplemented by a variety of innovative mechanisms, including codes of conduct, self-regulatory mechanisms, and international, multi-stakeholder collaboratives. In addition, technology itself can play an enabling role in achieving governance goals. Free and open source software, in particular, can help increase participation and network stability, and facilitate the development of local content and localized software.

## RECOMMENDATIONS BY TOPIC

In addition to the above six recommendations, the accompanying ORDIG Paper also contains a list of more particular recommendations, addressed at specific priorities and topics. These recommendations are categorized into four dimensions: infrastructure, logical, content, and social and developmental. The topics covered are not comprehensive and do not cover every issue in the area of Internet governance. Rather, they represent a list of governance priorities as identified by ORDIG's work.

### I. THE INFRASTRUCTURE DIMENSION

#### **Access Costs**

- Ensure a robust competitive environment with limited barriers to entry and strong protections against monopolistic behaviour;
- Liberalize access to international bandwidth, promote diversity in domestic infrastructure, ease ISP licensing restrictions, and encourage “peering” between ISPs;
- Actively seek and develop international fora to solve the problem of high international settlement charges;
- Consider aid and other financial mechanisms to help developing countries develop infrastructure capacity.

#### **VOIP**

- Legalize VOIP services and promote a “light touch” approach to any regulation;
- Implement Quality of Service laws, allocate number resources, and provide access to emergency services.

#### **Wireless**

- Adopt spectrum management regimes that embrace unlicensed spectrum;
- Promote the use of wireless as a technology to bridge the digital divide and provide social benefits.

### II. THE LOGICAL DIMENSION

#### **Root Servers**

- Enhance international participation to address concerns over sovereignty;
- Ensure that any steps taken maintain one and only one authoritative root.

#### **ccTLDs**

- Promote local control and authority over ccTLDs;
- Take steps to ensure a coordinated local approach that includes all stakeholders.

#### **Internationalised Domain Names (IDNs)**

- Ensure a multi-stakeholder and participatory process to build on progress with technical standards;
- Promote greater coordination between language and cultural groups to ensure smooth implementation;

- Begin implementation of IDNs even if technical standards have not yet been perfected.

### ***IP Address Management***

- Develop fair and equitable mechanisms for IPv6 allocations;
- Reconcile perceived need for national allocations with desire to avoid central-planning type approaches;
- Ensure that increased government involvement does not result in censorship, inhibit innovation, or prevent the deployment of new services.

### ***Technical Standards***

- Increase participation in national and international standards-creating organizations;
- Supplement participation with capacity building, including education, awareness-raising and resource support;
- Ensure availability of standard specifications;
- Consider the use of Free and Open Source Software to promote open standards.

## **III. THE CONTENT DIMENSION**

### ***Content Pollution***

- Supplement legal measures with technology, user education, and other mechanisms;
- Ensure that legal measures do not diminish the openness of the network or lead to censorship;
- Develop global solutions to solve what is a global problem.

### ***Cybercrime***

- Ensure that legal steps do not infringe on civil liberties;
- Promote multi-stakeholder collaboratives and other mechanisms, including codes of conduct and self-regulation;
- Ensure that definitions of criminality are culturally and regionally sensitive and specific.

## **IV. THE SOCIAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DIMENSION**

### ***Cultural Diversity***

- Carefully consider the impact of technical governance on cultural diversity;
- Enhance localized software and localized content, and consider financial or other support mechanisms;
- Promote the use of Free and Open Source Software to facilitate local content and software;
- Protect indigenous intellectual property rights.

### ***Participation***

- Take all steps to promote multi-stakeholder participation in decision-making processes;

- Supplement formal participation with capacity building to ensure that participation is meaningful and substantive.
- Make special efforts to enhance participation by developing nations.



APDIP ([www.apdip.net](http://www.apdip.net)) is an initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that aims to promote the development and application of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) for poverty alleviation and sustainable human development in the Asia-Pacific region.

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