Managing the APC network of policy websites
(or ‘networking the network’)

Status and a way forward

May, 2006

Report prepared for the Association for Progressive Communications

by Open Research

Contact: Alan Finlay, alan@openresearch.co.za
Contents

1. Overview of report objective ................................................................. 5
2. Methodology .......................................................................................... 5
3. Limitations of report ............................................................................. 6
4. Summary of key findings ....................................................................... 7
5. Summary of recommendation .............................................................. 8
6. Overview of policy sites ....................................................................... 9
   6.1. Complete list of policy sites ............................................................. 9
       Global site .......................................................................................... 10
       Thematic sites .................................................................................... 10
       Regional sites .................................................................................... 10
       National Sites: CATIA ....................................................................... 10
       National Sites .................................................................................... 10
       Existing funded .................................................................................. 10
       Existing but not funded .................................................................... 11
       Existing dormant .............................................................................. 11
       WSIS @ PH [English/FMA] [Not fully functional] ............................. 11
       Not existing yet/url not available yet .............................................. 11
       Other .................................................................................................. 11
       Table 1: Complete list of sites ............................................................ 11
6.2. Status of sites .................................................................................... 11
   6.2.1. Global site ................................................................................... 11
       Diagram 1: Global site content flow ............................................... 12
   6.2.2. Thematic sites ............................................................................. 12
       Diagram 2: GenderIT.org content flow ........................................... 12
       Fibre for Africa .................................................................................. 13
       WSIS sites ........................................................................................ 13
   6.2.3. Regional sites ............................................................................. 13
       Diagram 3: LAC monitor content flow ............................................ 13
       Africa monitors ................................................................................ 14
       Diagram 4: Africa policy monitor (English) content flow .............. 14
       Asia and Europe monitors ............................................................... 15
6.2.4. National sites ................................................................................ 15
6.3. Aims and objectives of sites ............................................................ 16
   CIDA .................................................................................................... 17
   EED ....................................................................................................... 18
   Diagram 6: Overview of EED proposal .............................................. 19
   HIVOS ................................................................................................... 19
   Diagram 7: Overview of HIVOS proposal (excluding gender) ......... 20
   HIVOS ................................................................................................... 20
   Diagram 8: Overview of HIVOS proposal (gender) ......................... 21
   IDRC ..................................................................................................... 21
   Diagram 9: Overview of IDRC proposal ........................................... 22
6.4. Target users........................................................................................................24
   6.4.1. Thematic sites.............................................................................................24
       Table 4: Target users – Thematic sites..........................................................24
   6.4.2. Regional.....................................................................................................24
       Table 5: Target users – Regional monitors.....................................................25
   6.4.3. National sites.............................................................................................25
       Table 6: Target users – National sites.............................................................25
7. Content scope and interlinking of sites............................................................25
   7.1. Thematic concerns.......................................................................................26
       APC ICT Policy & Internet Rights.................................................................26
       GenderIT.org.................................................................................................27
       APC Africa ICT Policy Monitor [English]......................................................29
       APC European Internet Rights Project.........................................................29
       Catalysing Access to ICTs in Ethiopia...........................................................30
       Catalysing Access to ICTs in Nigeria.............................................................31
       Catalysing Access to ICTs in Kenya...............................................................31
       Bulgarian ICT Policy Monitor......................................................................32
       APC.au ICT Rights Monitor..........................................................................33
       UK Internet Rights.........................................................................................33
   7.2. Summary of thematic concerns of sample sites.........................................34
       Table 7: Summary of thematic concerns in sample sites..............................35
       Table 8: Most common thematic concerns.....................................................35
       Table 9: Thematic concerns from proposals..................................................37
   7.3. Linking..........................................................................................................37
       Table 10: Network interlinking......................................................................38
       Graph 1: Linking to global, thematic and regional sites.................................39
       Graph 2: Linking to national sites..................................................................40
       Graph 3: Linking out of regions....................................................................40
8. Key challenges and successes..........................................................................40
   Table 11: Achievements and challenges – Global and thematic sites..................42
   Table 12: Achievements and challenges – Regional sites.................................43
   Table 13: Achievements and challenges – CATIA sites....................................44
   Table 14: Achievements and challenges – National sites...................................45
9. Mapping user needs..........................................................................................45
   9.1. Types of content accessed by users..............................................................45
       Graph 4: Demand for information types.......................................................46
       Graph 5: Demand for original and aggregated content.................................47
   9.2. A brief look at user statistics.........................................................................47
10. Role of key APC staff members.......................................................................48
    Conceptualising online projects;......................................................................48
    Overview and proposal development;..............................................................48
Fundraising.................................................................48
Management of CIPP programme.............................................48
Overseeing the Africa, LAC and Asia ICT policy monitors;...........48
Negotiating or acting as ‘go-between’.......................................48
Management of national site development;............................49
Information architecture in collaboration with Karen and Willie; Developed
brief and budget for sites; Project manager throughout the development
phase;......................................................................................49

Table 15: Role of key APC staff members in the development of the
sites.........................................................................................49

11. What is the challenge in a nutshell?..................................................50
   11.1. Content disconnect............................................................50
   11.2. Content development capacity.............................................51
   11.3. Management Capacity..........................................................51

12. A potential way forward................................................................51
   12.1. What would a network manager do?.........................................52
   12.2. What would an editorial co-ordinator do?................................52
   12.3. Where would these positions be located?................................54

   Diagram 11: Location of new positions........................................55
   12.4. How would they relate to the different policy sites?....................55
   12.5. Brief guidelines for future development of sites..........................58
   ........................................................................................................59
1. Overview of report objective

The APC network has around forty policy-related websites. These can be clustered into four sections: Global, thematic, regional and national sites. The websites are each at a different level of development, with some, particularly at the national level, still being populated with content and undergoing technical changes. Some sites function as archives of online information, while thematic sites, such as some of the WSIS sites, served a particular advocacy purpose at a particular time. The websites also differ in their level of online visibility and user statistics.

Staff from all three APC programmes\(^1\) and two management systems,\(^2\) as well as around 15 APC member organisations are involved in different ways in the development of the websites.

The objective of this report is to propose a management strategy for the cluster of policy-related websites, informed by the needs and challenges the sites face as a whole.

2. Methodology

This report has been developed by:

- Documenting the perceived achievements and gaps of the sites according to site and programme coordinators;
- Documenting the perceived achievements and gaps of the sites according to other key people within the APC staff;
- Documenting the role these staff members have played in developing the policy sites;
- Mapping user needs based on the report provided by Debbie Budlender;
- Mapping the content scope of a sample of websites as well as the content interlinking of the sites;
- Reviewing the stated goals where they exist for each site according to funding proposals. The funding proposals reviewed were:

\(^1\) Strategic Uses and Capacity Building (SUCB), Women’s Networking Support (WNSP), and Communications and Information Policy (CIPP).

\(^2\) Communications and Media, and Membership Participation and Networking.
Engaging Policy and Practice: Internet and ICTs for Social Justice and Sustainable Development (HIVOS);

Knowledge and capacity for civil society engagement in ICT policy: linking national advocacy to global networks through south south collaboration and information sharing (EED);

Africa ICT Policy Monitor Project Proposal (IDRC);

Gender and ICT Policy Advocacy 2004-2005 (SDC);

Knowledge and capacity for civil society engagement in ICT policies: leveraging the World Summit on the Information Society (CIDA).

- Reviewing relevant project reports;

- Facilitating a staff discussion at Ithala (March 19th, 2006) based on preliminary issues raised.

3. Limitations of report

The limitations of the report are:

- APC preferred that I did not directly approach the national website co-ordinators for comment at this stage, given that a number of the websites are still under development. Instead, status reports on the development of their websites were provided;

- Given the proximity of the proposed user survey to Debbie's evaluation, and given that it was likely that the same informants would be approached by Open Research, it was felt that it would be better to distil user feedback from her evaluation report. This has been cross-referenced with website statistics for the APC global site, and Africa and LAC regional monitors. User feedback was requested from the national sites, but no responses were received;

- Languages (Spanish, French, Bulgarian etc.) posed a practical challenge in mapping the content scope of the sites. As highlighted in Section 7, the methodology used to overcome this used was to map the thematic content of all the English websites (15) and to treat these as an illustrative sample. A linking map, which includes all sites, was developed;

- The fact that some of the websites are under construction (technical and content), means that mapping the scope of the content could be only partial in a number of instances;
This report potentially occurs in a context of flux, and recommendations adopted by APC may be dependent on a number of parallel processes beyond its scope. Some of these include: APC meetings (a content workers' meeting proposed at the of May); regional and international processes and APC's strategic position in relation to these (e.g. post-WSIS strategies); internal programme changes (e.g. solutions to the challenge of technical capacity and management); and possibilities of accessing funding for content development.

4. Summary of key findings

- The network of policy websites lack a collective identity. While there is some recognition that the policy sites are part of a network of 'like-minded' sites, this potential is not properly felt in the content developed, and has not been maximized;

- Related to this, the policy sites lack a collective vision and mission. While they work broadly towards the same goals, a common sense of purpose would assist in shaping a collective identity and common or complimentary editorial agendas;

- There is a general lack of collaboration between the policy websites on a content level. The primary thematic focus areas of the policy websites correspond with key thematic areas identified in the proposals. These are: Gender, Access, WSIS, Internet and Communication rights. However, there is little evidence of content sharing between the websites on these issues. Similarly, the interlinking between the websites is low and often not prominent;

- Different regions require different approaches to online advocacy. For instance, website statistics suggest that a more effective advocacy strategy in Africa might involve an information push (e.g. newsletters or mailing lists) to target NGOs, rather than attempts to pull target users to a website to access content. At the very least, in Africa an information push needs to be emphasised over static content development on a website. Conversely, the level of internet access in many countries in Asia suggests that developing an online community of content creators is a feasible strategy for online advocacy;

- Content development is not necessarily in line with advocacy needs. This relates to a number of areas, but includes presentation of content; the emphasis of particular content types (e.g. news over resources or analysis); the most appropriate form of online advocacy (mentioned
above); the capacity to develop content at the tempo of face-to-face advocacy engagement; and, in the case of some regional monitors, a too-broad thematic focus. In Africa, a clearer agenda-specific or thematic approach may be more appropriate. However, it would be worthwhile to evaluate the success of the Fibre for Africa site during the course of the EASSy advocacy campaign;

- Target users of the websites need to be more clearly defined. Currently the potential users are very broad, which has implications for appropriate content development. A clearer idea of who the content is for will shape editorial decisions, and determine the most appropriate way to present content;

- Information developed by APC (resources, analysis, toolkits etc.) is in higher demand by users than aggregated information (e.g. news or events). This, however, does not discount the need for value-added information aggregation (e.g. a comprehensive library of policy documents). In many instances, as in Africa, this has not yet been done properly by other websites. Similarly, in the LAC region, the need for such a library of information is apparent;

- Website statistics suggest that most of the website users are anonymous to APC. Online user surveys, similar to that currently being conducted by GenderIT.org, may be beneficial. If these were conducted across the policy websites, a global picture of user needs might emerge;

- The content development demands for the network of policy sites is high. While emphasis has been placed on the technical development of the sites, less time has been spent considering the content challenges. These include: a lack of local content production amongst target users or constituencies; a lack of capacity and skills in ensuring on-going content development; and a need for training in content development;

- APC does not currently have the capacity to manage the policy websites collectively. The demands relate to a ‘bird’s eye’ view to content development, and general co-ordination and management in line with a clear vision and mission.

5. Summary of recommendation

The subtitle to this report is ‘networking the network’. While the findings suggest there is some recognition that the policy websites are part of a broader network of websites, and while some work has been done in developing this sense of a network (e.g. in technical development, logo branding, some linking, and planned
workshops), mechanisms are not currently in place to maximize this relationship. As a result, the full potential of the network’s online ‘content branding’ is not being felt. Taken together, this could be powerful and influential.

This report suggests there is a need for:

- A stronger emphasis on the development of the sites as a network, and the recognition (by the sites) that they belong to a network;
- The capacity to manage the sites as a network;
- A collective editorial understanding and the capacity to facilitate this understanding;
- A commitment by the sites to collective content sharing and development where possible.

It proposes that two key positions need to be created to achieve the above:

- Network manager;
- Editorial co-ordinator.

The diversity of the APC policy sites, and the sense of their need for independent identities, while operating within a network, suggests that the focus of the proposed positions should be on developing a support context that encourages network formation, rather than on implementing a top-down management plan or editorial strategy.

While some consideration has been given to developing an Editorial and Content Development Programme Area (the broad content development needs in APC are at a level where this could be feasible), the strengths and weaknesses of this possibility would become apparent through the proposed appointments.

6. Overview of policy sites

6.1. Complete list of policy sites

The APC network of policy sites consists of 38 sites. There is one global site (the Policy & Internet Rights section of the APC global website); four thematic sites (including two WSIS sites set up in Africa and the LAC\(^3\)); five regional sites; 17 national sites online, and nine national sites planned. Five regions (including

\(^3\) Latin America and Caribbean region.
Australasia) and 16 countries are covered by the sites that are already online. At least six different languages are represented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site name</th>
<th>Url</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Global site</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1  APC ICT Policy &amp; Internet Rights [English]</td>
<td><a href="http://rights.apc.org/">http://rights.apc.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thematic sites</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Latinoamerica en la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Sociedad de la Información (LAC and the WSIS) [Spanish]</td>
<td><a href="http://lac.derechos.apc.org/wsis/">http://lac.derechos.apc.org/wsis/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regional sites</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  Monitor Politicas TIC y Derechos en Internet en America Latina y el Caribe (Latin America and Caribbean ICT Policy Monitor) [Spanish]</td>
<td><a href="http://lac.rights.apc.org">http://lac.rights.apc.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8  L’Observatoire des politiques de TIC en Afrique (APC Africa ICT Policy Monitor) [French] (Not functioning properly?)</td>
<td><a href="http://afrique.droits.apc.org/">http://afrique.droits.apc.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9  APC European Internet Rights Project [English – Archive]</td>
<td><a href="http://europe.rights.apc.org">http://europe.rights.apc.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 APC Asia ICT Policy Monitor [English] (not running properly yet)</td>
<td><a href="http://asia.rights.apc.org/">http://asia.rights.apc.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Sites: CATIA</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Catalysing Access to ICTs in Ethiopia [English] (not fully functional yet)</td>
<td><a href="http://catia.gn.apc.org/ethiopia">http://catia.gn.apc.org/ethiopia</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Sites</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Existing funded</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 La Neta (The Internet?) [Spanish/Mexico]</td>
<td><a href="http://www.laneta.apc.org/cmsi/">www.laneta.apc.org/cmsi/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Haciendo Cumbre [Spanish/Argentina/Tau] (not functioning yet?)</td>
<td><a href="http://c">http://c</a> mpi .tau .org .ar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Politicas de Tecnologias de Informacion y Comunicacion en Colombia (ICT policy in Colombia) [Spanish/Colnodo]</td>
<td><a href="http://c">http://c</a> mpi .colnodo .apc .org/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-21</td>
<td>ИТ и гражданското общество and Bulgarian ICT policy monitor [Bulgarian/English/BlueLink]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Piattaforma italiana della societa civile sulla Societa dell'Informazione (Italian civil society forum for the WSIS?) [Italian]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Existing but not funded</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Existing dormant</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Internet Rights [English/UK/GreenNet] [dormant?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Politiques sobre TIC a l'Estat Espanyol (ICT Policy in Spain?) [Catalan/English/Pangea]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>WSIS @ PH [English/FMA] [Not fully functional]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Not existing yet/url not available yet</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-38</td>
<td>Arabdev, Bytes4all Pakistan, Bytes4all Bangladesh, Openforum, Zamirnet, Unimondo, Strawberrynet, Philippines [English/Tagalog], South Africa [English]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>IttrainOnline</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1: Complete list of sites**

6.2. Status of sites

6.2.1. Global site
The APC global site has two staff members that in different ways develop and facilitate content. The content on the site is organized thematically around APC activities and programme areas, and reflects the organisation's work. It also reflects the diversity of the APC members - a diversity which is highlighted through its monthly newsletter. Besides content developed to reflect the work of APC, the global site receives and publishes content (or information of activities) from APC members. Often members need to be encouraged to contribute content, and some re-writing of the content is necessary to align it with APC's overall editorial and marketing agenda. Some of the content from the APC site (including resources developed by APC), as well as content from the newsletter, is reproduced on the regional and national sites.

6.2.2. Thematic sites

GenderIT.org

While the GenderIT site has centralized content co-ordination, it has developed a framework for some bottom-up content generation. Regional editors contribute about one article every two months to the website, and it has developed a
network of freelance, voluntary writers. It currently is reconsidering its relationship with the editors and writers, and may end up paying them for their content. Some national sites re-use content developed by GenderIT.org. Both GenderIT.org and the APC global site have developed processes that try to encourage an organic flow of content through the sites - even if, in some instances, this may be difficult to maintain.

**Fibre for Africa**

Fibre for Africa is a new thematic site with a regional concern. It currently has some content co-ordination through a consultant, with ad hoc input from APC staffers and experts (e.g. Russell Southwood). Under consideration is the potential to develop an editorial ‘cluster’ – consisting of experts, advocates and APC staffers – to respond to the content needs of the site. This might prove to be a unique way of approaching content advocacy when aligning a thematic site, such as Fibre for Africa, with an advocacy campaign.

**WSIS sites**

The Africa and LAC WSIS sites were thematic sites set up to complement civil society advocacy during the WSIS process. They are now effectively archived sites. They are included because a number of sites link to them.

**6.2.3. Regional sites**

**LAC monitor**

![Diagram 3: LAC monitor content flow](image)
Like the Africa policy monitors, content relevant to ICT policy in the LAC region is published on the LAC policy monitor. Editorial guidance includes the role of an advisory committee. Content co-ordination and production is on a part-time basis. The LAC site offers useful collections of resources, including policy and legislative documents, and catalogues. National sites in the LAC region say they reuse content from the monitor on their sites. Some national sites have attempted to form content-sharing forums, but with limited success. Although the LAC site does publish a newsletter, it has not been published as frequently as intended. This is said to relate to human resource and financial constraints. One advantage of the LAC site is that little competition exists at the level of online ICT policy information in the region.⁴

---

⁴ This is the impression the LAC monitor has, rather than the result of a detailed review of available online content.
and WOUGNET) and the CATIA policy sites. There is also some overlap of concern (for instance, the CATIA DRC site and the DRC country policy site).

The regional monitors face some ‘competition’ from a number of organisational and commercial websites. These include:

- AllAfrica.com, which aggregates ICT content daily from websites across Africa, some of which is national ICT policy news;

- Websites run by research collectives, institutions or bodies. For example, ResearchICTAfrica, which is tentatively developing a collection of policy and regulatory documents from several countries in Africa; LINK Centre, which has a substantial online library containing policy analysis, papers and presentations; and CIPACO, which tentatively collects some information relating to policy and regulatory environments, and aggregates some ICT policy content;

- Various country-specific technology and business websites (e.g. ITWEB, Technology Times in Nigeria, and Business Day, all of which track major policy developments, such as telecoms policy, closely);

- International online publications (e.g. newsletters) which aggregate or analyse ICT news (e.g. Russell Southwood's Balancing Act).

**Asia and Europe monitors**

After initial work on the Asia monitor, it has, for various reasons, reached a hiatus in its development. For the purposes of this report it is considered dormant, but with great potential to develop into a user-driven community. One of the key challenges the Asia monitor faces is technical. According to the co-ordinator, technical changes to the site are need to facilitate online community participation in its content development: “The needs and demands in South Asia are very different from other parts of the World. Partners and members are more tech-savvy and are high end users of the net.”

The Europe monitor is archived content and there is some uncertainty over whether or not a regional monitor in Europe is necessary.

**6.2.4. National sites**

The national sites are all at different stages of development. While some are up and running effectively, others are online, but little content development has occurred. Others have yet to go live.
While all the sites focus on ICT policy, each takes a slightly different emphasis, depending on the national concern. The national sites are member-driven, but are being developed with the support of APC, and seed funding provided by EED. While technical development is an on-going process, a key issue identified by the national sites that are up and running is the difficulty they have in sustaining content development processes.

This challenge relates to:

- Limitations in time for content development in an organisation;
- Limited resources for content development (e.g. content co-ordinators hired through funding have to be let go when funding runs out);
- That fact that in a number of instances little is written at a local level dealing with ICT policy – it is not the core concern of grassroots organisations;
- In some instance (as in the LAC) there is little content available dealing with ICT policy;
- Difficulty in sustaining content or editorial networks or forums.

6.3. Aims and objectives of sites

Each of the five funding proposals (see Section 2) was reviewed to identify:

- What can be considered the broad vision of the funding proposal as it related to the policy sites;
- Clearly stated goals as they related to the development of the policy websites;
- Implied goals that appeared anywhere in the funding proposal;
- What can be considered the key goal;
- How the proposals suggest this key goal will be achieved;
- A keyword summary. This refers to keywords used in the proposal that identifies something of the aims of the project. In some instances, these can be broadly taken to refer to the impact on target users that the online projects hope to achieve; for instance, to provide information that is
“essential” or that “increases” “confidence” and “awareness” amongst target users. The keywords are included because they imply something about the nature of the content to be included on the site, and can be used to critique the content (e.g. Is the content likely to increase confidence amongst the target users?).

The above information is summarized in the diagrams below. Each diagram contains “content notes” where these were explicitly stated in the proposals.

Taken together, the proposals suggest two key points:

- The proposals work collectively towards a general and mutually compatible vision, but are articulated separately. For instance, the clear visions and goals are not always the same. While this may not be a fundamental challenge, is could suggest that the clear strategic direction of the sites – a vision and mission - is not shared by all of the implementers (site co-ordinators and programme managers). A clearer collective identity, vision and mission may clarify editorial approaches, and provide some collective basis on which to select and publish content;

- While content areas are mapped out in the proposals, these tend to be general. There is little more specific consideration of how content will be selected, developed and presented to achieve the advocacy goals. For example, while an online advocacy campaign targeting African NGOs might decide that news, resources, contacts and events are important, the presentation of these to an African user of the website is less clear. On one level this relates to appropriate language. On another, this relates to levels of online access target users enjoy. For instance, how expensive is it to stay online to read or access the content on the portal? What implications does this have for content? Is a bulleted summary of documents necessary? At yet another level, this may relate to the general accessibility of terminology and concepts. For instance, should time and resources be spent on re-writing content so that it is easily accessible to non-technical users? This approach is adopted in the development of ItrainOnline content, but not for the websites generally. If the content itself is, to a large extent, the advocacy campaign, these are fundamental questions that need to be thought about and articulated. Of course we all know this, but in general online content projects do not take the necessary time to work through the possibilities properly. This issue relates to the lack of specificity in the target users (see Section 6.4.).

CIDA
National, regional and central sites
**Vision:** Strengthen civil society advocacy for enabling policy environments

**Key goals:**
Strengthen civil society advocacy for enabling policy environments [Key phrase: “Better policy formulation”]
Build knowledge and expertise so that engagement can happen at national, regional and global level
Contribute towards strong CSO input into WSIS

**By:**
Using WSIS to leverage policy engagement generally
Develop awareness of WSIS outcomes
Knowledge sharing and capacity building [networking, discussions and communications]
Websites

**Content notes:**
Broad spectrum of policy issues (including WSIS)
Gender perspectives
Relevant info (e.g. languages)

---

**Diagram 5: Overview of CIDA proposal**

**EED**

**Keywords:**
Awareness
Confidence
Increase
Relevance
Essential
Sharing

**Key goal:**
Strengthen CSO policy advocacy

**By:**
Creating a platform for animating CSOs at national level around ICT policy
Facilitating north-north and north-south collaboration
Leveraging existing policy processes
Information gathering and dissemination
Content sharing
Knowledge sharing

**Content notes:**
Multi-lingual interlinked information
Localization of content
**HIVOS**  
Core funding, Regional, national  

**Vision:** Greater participation in ICT decision-making processes

---

**Keywords:**  
[Strategic]  
Strengthen  
Support  
Build  
Monitor  
Understand  
Assist

---

**Diagram 6: Overview of EED proposal**

**Key (relevant) goal:**  
Strengthen the role and engagement of APC members and CSOs in ICT policy process

---

**This will be done by:**  
Supporting members in their policy work nationally and regionally  
Facilitating CSO engagement in policy process  
Building capacity  
Supporting advocacy  
Monitoring relevant policy developments at national and regional level  
Working with networks and researchers [including nurturing and building networks]  
Developing online content [Leveraging WSIS – CIDA]

---

**Content notes:**  
“Wealth of information” to be included: For example, legal and policy documents, information on access, summaries [e.g. on governance, policies, and internet rights], news of latest policy developments, WSIS material, papers, links to organisations and campaigns, policy checklists and training materials, position papers, introductory pieces/links, monitoring of lists and inclusion of content, list of links...  
Specific focus for WSIS on national sites  
New focus on ICT policy and environment (e.g. e-waste)
Diagram 7: Overview of HIVOS proposal (excluding gender)

**HIVOS**
Core funding
Gender site

**Vision:** Greater citizen participation in ICT decision-making processes by supporting women’s networking for social change

**Keywords:**
[Strategic]
Strengthen
Support
Build
Monitor
Understand
Assist
**Key (relevant) goals:**
- Promote an information society based on gender equality and women’s empowerment
- Enable CSOs and gender organisations to engage in ICT policy development

**By:**
- Build awareness and capacity of gender and ICT advocates
- Gender and ICT policy advocacy
- Information facilitation
- Information dissemination
- Information development: Research, collect, interpret and produce

Diagram 8: Overview of HIVOS proposal (gender)

**IDRC**
Africa Policy Monitor

**Vision:** Promote an information society based on social justice and human rights
Keywords:
Empower
Encourage
Assist
Build
Support
Essential
Educate

Key goals:
Build and strengthen CSO awareness and capacity to engage in ICT policy processes in Africa
Assist CSOs to “formulate their interests”

By:
Information dissemination
Information development (“Research, collect, interpret and produce”)
Collaboration with African CSOs
Raising awareness
Capacity building

Content notes:
Information that “educates and trains”
Essential national and regional ICT policy information
Appropriate introductory content in plain language explanation
Focus is national, regional and global level
Includes:
Legal and policy documents, information on access, summaries [e.g on governance, policies, and internet rights], news of latest policy developments, WSIS material, papers, links to organisations and campaigns, policy checklists and training materials, position papers, introductory pieces/links, monitoring of lists and inclusion of content, list of links…
Newsletter

Diagram 9: Overview of IDRC proposal
Vision: Promote information society based on gender equality and women's empowerment

**Keywords:**
Enable  
Effective  
Impact  
Understand  
Assist  
Empower  
Encourage  
Involve  
Increase

**Key goals:**
Promote democratic and equitable access to information and ICTs for women so that communication technology can serve as a means of public expression. Enabling gender and ICT advocates and CSOs to engage in policy process more effectively.

**By:**
- Focusing on intersection of gender and ICT policy [key content issue]
- Raising awareness
- Linking gender advocates
- Building partnerships and networks
- Creating spaces for voices of women from the South
- Assisting gender organisations to formulate their interests
- Information dissemination
- Information development: Research, collect, interpret, produce (Gender and ICT policy information)

Diagram 10: Overview of SDC proposal
6.4. Target users

Each of the five proposals was also reviewed for explicitly stated target users or implied target users. These are captured in the tables below.

Overall the target users for the sites as expressed in the proposals are broad. Not segmenting the target users more clearly has potential implications for editorial decision-making. There is little to guide more specifically what should be included and how the content should be presented. By segmenting and clarifying target users, the content needs and best online advocacy strategy approach can be better understood, and its impact more easily and clearly evaluated.

6.4.1. Thematic sites

Target user summary: APC members, strategically positioned CSOs, CSOs generally, gender advocates, ICT CSOs, funders, local constituencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal</th>
<th>Target users identified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(CIDA - Gender)</td>
<td>CSOs generally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategically position CSOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CSOs that engage with govt. and pvt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sector actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(HIVOS - Gender)</td>
<td>Civil society organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>APC members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>APC member communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>APC partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender advocates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ICT advocates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(SDC – Gender)</td>
<td>Gender and ICT advocates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CSOs generally</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Target users – Thematic sites

6.4.2. Regional

Target user summary: Strategically positioned CSOs, ICT CSOs, CSOs generally, local constituencies, individuals, consultants, agencies, governments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal</th>
<th>Target users identified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(CIDA)</td>
<td>CSOs generally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategically positioned CSOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CSOs that engage with govt. and pvt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sector actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CSOs generally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CSOs that wish to be active in ICT policy arena</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Target users – Regional
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal</th>
<th>Target users identified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(EED proposal)</td>
<td>APC network members, strategically positioned CSOs, CSOs already working on ICT policy, funders (APC partners), local constituencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(CIDA proposal)</td>
<td>CSOs generally, strategically positioned CSOs, CSOs that engage with government and private sector actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(HIVOS – Core funding)</td>
<td>CSOs [National and local], individuals, local constituencies, agencies, consultants, governments, people who are not connected to ICTs in any direct way</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Target users – Regional monitors

6.4.3. National sites

*Target user summary:* APC members, strategically positioned CSOs, ICT CSOs, CSOs generally, funders, local constituencies, individuals, consultants, agencies, governments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal</th>
<th>Target users identified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(EED proposal)</td>
<td>APC network members, strategically positioned CSOs, CSOs already working on ICT policy, funders (APC partners), local constituencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(CIDA proposal)</td>
<td>CSOs generally, strategically positioned CSOs, CSOs that engage with government and private sector actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(HIVOS – Core funding)</td>
<td>CSOs [National and local], individuals, local constituencies, agencies, consultants, governments, people who are not connected to ICTs in any direct way</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Target users – National sites

7. Content scope and interlinking of sites
Because of the language difficulties in scoping the content on the various APC policy sites, the following methodology has been employed:

- A comparative sample of clear thematic content concerns for all the English websites has been mapped, including where content is shared or pooled. This involved 15 websites;
- The URL linking between all of the policy websites has been mapped.

Together the above can be taken to be a reasonable representation of the content scope and interlinking of the sites.

The key findings of the content scope are:

- The primary thematic focus areas of the policy websites correspond with key thematic areas identified in the proposals (i.e. Gender, Access, WSIS, Internet and Communication rights – see 7.2. below). Between 7-10 of the 15 sampled policy sites share these content categories as primary concerns;
- There is, however, relatively little evidence of content sharing between the websites on these issues. This is most notable for Gender and ICTs, which 10 out of the 15 websites reviewed take as a key thematic concern;
- The level of interlinking between the policy sites is generally low, suggesting that while the sites may think of themselves as part of a broader network of policy sites, this has not translated to practical content development on the sites themselves;
- The level of interlinking suggests that the European sites have that highest awareness of north-south policy concerns, and a desire to highlight those. While the LAC sites suggest a tendency to see themselves in a cross-regional context, the Africa sites are the most inward-looking.

7.1. Thematic concerns

APC ICT Policy & Internet Rights
http://rights.apc.org/

The ICT Policy & Internet Rights section of the APC global site is a community and advocacy orientated resource, which reflects the key concerns and advocacy agenda of APC and the APC network.
The information is categorized organically, rather than thematically. For instance, while background material on ICT policy is offered, links to the regional ICT policy monitors, a focus on WSIS as an ICT policy process, and general capacity building and advocacy resources receive the same prominence in the navigation hierarchy. Besides resources and content tools, information on the Rapid Response Network (a techno-advocacy solution to online content threatened by censorship) and advocacy alerts are also prominently displayed.

The section offers general introductory content to ICT policy ("What is ICT policy?" and "What are internet rights?", which links to the APC Internet Rights Charter) as well as an introduction to the APC work on ICT policy advocacy ("About" and "Monitoring policy"). Further information on APC policy monitors is provided in the "National sites" section.

The capacity building and advocacy section of the site contains links to APC-developed resources such as publications, discussion papers and training materials dealing with ICT policy or policy-related issues. A link to the APC newsletters (APCNews, the newsletters from the Africa and LAC regional policy sites, and Pula) is also included. The link also contains a news archive from the policy sites.

Besides the content types mentioned above (documents and resources), a news section offers the latest in ICT policy news from the network of monitors. This is distinct from the news archive. However, this does not appear to properly reflect the content on the various monitors in the network, and most of the content is currently fed from the APC.au policy site.

Although not offered as first-level thematic content categories, key ICT policy issues identified in the "Issues" section are: Access, Censorship, Gender and ICTs, Governance of the internet, Intellectual property, Privacy and security, and Free and open source software (FOSS). The only other clear thematic content category is WSIS.

The generic content on Policy & Internet Rights has been useful for the network of policy sites. A number of sites link to the section for background or overview material (e.g. to the “What is ICT policy?” section and the APC Internet Rights Charter) or reuse content from the APC policy handbook. Policy & Internet Rights links to the regional monitors and the national monitors.

GenderIT.org
http://www.genderit.org

---

As used in this report: the information is not categorized according to various policy themes, such as access, telecommunications, internet etc.
GenderIT.org has a thematic focus on gender and ICTs. While the geographic focus is global, a number of the thematic content categories reflect broader gender issues with a focus on ICTs (e.g. “Violence against women” deals with online pornography or sexual harassment). This way of approaching content allows for a contextualization of an ICT advocacy issue.

The thematic categories on the site are: Economic empowerment, Education, Health, Violence against women, Women in armed conflict, Cultural diversity and language, Communication rights, Universal access, Strategic use and FOSS and Governance.

The information architecture on the site is clear. The site offers a beginners section (content taken from the APC ICT policy handbook), and a section for ICT policy makers. It also includes general “Feminist talk” and “Jargon” sections. Content types include articles, case studies, guides, laws and regulations, statements, mailing lists and events. Content is also categorized by region.

A “Who’s who in policy” provides a set of links to organisations involved in policy internationally. While the websites in the APC policy network appear on the site (the national sites through a link to the global APC site), a key thematic omission is a link to EFOSSNet.

**African Civil Society and the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS)**
http://www.wsis-cs.org/africa/

This site is included as a thematic site because a number of the monitors link to it. The site was set up to support the advocacy initiatives of African civil society during the unfolding WSIS process. Currently, the site is effectively an archive. However, it does have potential to be re-invigorated to compliment post-WSIS advocacy work.

With a thematic focus on WSIS, the site offers advocacy resource material such as background content (e.g. on WSIS), news, alerts and information about campaigns, documents, analysis and declarations, and events, amongst them.

Only links to African civil society policy monitors are evident.

**Fibre for Africa**
www.fibreforafrika.net

The newest of the APC thematic sites, Fibre for Africa is an advocacy site focusing on access issues in Africa, with specific reference to EASSy and SAT3. News, events, advocacy resources (including a timeline), and background
content to contextualize and introduce the issue of access from an advocacy perspective, are some of the content types offered on the site. The site also offers an online community feedback form.

**APC Africa ICT Policy Monitor [English]**
[http://africa.rights.apc.org](http://africa.rights.apc.org)

The content scope of the Africa ICT Policy monitor is broad. It involves any ICT policy issue as it affects access to ICTs on the continent. These concerns are then ideally presented through the lens of human rights and freedoms advocacy generally.

The broad content scope means that the content is highly categorized. Content is organized primarily by ‘theme’ and ‘country’. Content is also cross-indexed by type, such as news, information, resources, events and policy-related information (as well as a substantial list of sub-categories of these content types).


The monitor also offers a ‘beginners section’ (“What is ICT policy?” and “Getting started”, which includes policy resources and information for beginners). At the same time it also offers a comparative ICT statistics information tool.

There is little content pooling happening on the site, with notable absences in links (e.g. CATIA sites). Only APC ICT Policy & Internet Rights, APC WSIS and Africa Policy Monitor (French) are given homepage prominence. A link to GenderIT.org receives prominence on the gender thematic page. However, only two links from the network of policy sites (for ItrainOnline and UK Internet Rights) are included in the links page.

Major absences in content pooling include a clearer content fit with GenderIT.org.

**APC European Internet Rights Project**
[http://europe.rights.apc.org](http://europe.rights.apc.org)

The European Internet Rights Project is an archive of documents, information and tools dealing with internet rights in Europe. It is both an information warehouse and, as the site points out, a thematic site: “Most of all, it seeks to

---

*While the KICATNet mailing list webpage is linked to.*
establish the concept that specific ‘Internet Rights’ need to be established as a translation of human and social rights in a modern world of computer communications.” It therefore offers an interesting combination of thematic advocacy support through broad information provision.

Content categories included issues relating to the Council of Europe and the European Union, relevant special reports and projects, internet rights toolkit briefings (a series of fifteen briefings written for civil society groups in the UK) and contacts. Internet rights country reports are also archived on the site. A country-specific drop-down list includes these reports and other information dealing with internet rights or related issues relevant to a country. The website also has details on the Rapid Response Network.

The most notable cross-linking of content on the EIRP is the content section dealing with the APC internet rights charter, which links to the relevant information on the APC global website. The rights charter includes sections on access, censorship, gender, governance, intellectual property, privacy and open source software.

Because the EIRP is an archive, organisations that do now have policy sites, such as Bluelink or Pangea, are linked to, but links to their policy sites are not evident.

**APC Asia ICT Policy Monitor**

http://asia.rights.apc.org/

The Asia monitor is currently not running properly, although a good amount of content has already been uploaded to the site. Content is structured in the same way as the Africa ICT policy monitors (by theme and country). Like the Africa sites, the Asia monitor includes generic start-up information, such as “What is ICT policy?” (from the APC ICT policy handbook), and other generic information, such as “About APC and ICT Policy”.

There are no clear links to the other policy monitors on the site, although the “About” section includes a link to the CATIA umbrella site (www.catia.ws). The “Gender” theme includes a link to GenderIT.org. Like the Africa policy monitor, the APC blogs are also linked to from the home page. There are no organisations listed in the database yet.

**Catalysing Access to ICTs in Ethiopia**

http://catia.gn.apc.org/ethiopia/index.shtml
The CATIA Ethiopia site is one of six CATIA policy sites. It is currently not running properly, although it is online, and only partial content development has taken place.

The thematic focus of the site is open source software in Ethiopia. Content categories include introductions to the issue of open source software in Ethiopia, how to get involved, and press coverage. Information types include organisations, policy and legislation, position papers, research and analysis, news and events. There is some content feeding from the Africa policy monitor site under the “General news” section.

The site links to the Africa policy monitor, as well as to the other five CATIA policy sites, and EFFOSNet. There are generic links to the APC, CATIA and GreenNet websites.

Catalysing Access to ICTs in Nigeria
http://catia.gn.apc.org/nigeria/

The CATIA Nigeria policy site focuses on the liberalisation of the community radio sector in that country. Content is much more developed than the CATIA Ethiopia site. However, some categories (e.g. “How to get involved”) are incomplete.

Content categorization is similar to the other CATIA sites, but includes the specific thematic focus of the site (i.e. “Liberalising the community radio sector” and “Community radio for rural development”). Content types include news (general and campaign news) and organisations. There is some content feeding from the Africa policy monitor site under the “General news” section. There generally appears to be a problem with the categorization of content on the site (i.e. matching content to the information architecture).

Four of the other CATIA sites are linked to from CATIA Nigeria, with a link to EFFOSNet rather than CATIA Ethiopia provided. There are generic links to the APC, CATIA and GreenNet sites.

Catalysing Access to ICTs in Kenya
http://catia.gn.apc.org/kenya/

The CATIA Kenya site is billed as the KICTANet website, and in this sense compliments its mailing list web page (http://kictanet.or.ke/mailman/listinfo).

There is only partial development of the content on the site. Content categories are in line with KICTANet’s work, and include “Universal access”, “Consumer rights in the information society”, and generic categories including “How to get
involved" and “Press coverage”. Content types include organisations, policy and legislation, news, position papers and research and analysis.

Four of the other CATIA sites are linked to from CATIA Nigeria, with a link to EFFOSNet rather than CATIA Ethiopia provided. There are generic links to the APC, CATIA and GreenNet sites.

**Gender Sensitive ICT Policies in Uganda**

The CATIA Uganda site focuses on bringing a gender sensitive perspective to ICT policy development in that country. Content is categorized in a similar way to the other CATIA policy sites, except with a thematic focus (e.g. “Engendering ICT policy processes in Uganda” and “Ensuring ICT policies in Uganda are gender sensitive” - potentially there is little difference between these categories). Content development on the site is partial.

Like the other CATIA sites, four of the six CATIA sites are linked to from CATIA Nigeria, with a link to EFFOSNet rather than CATIA Ethiopia provided. There are generic links to the APC, CATIA and GreenNet sites. Clear absences of links include a strong association with GenderIT.org, as well as with the implementing organisations (e.g. WOUGNET, which has a strong policy category on its own site).

**Bulgarian ICT Policy Monitor**
[http://www.bluelink.net/wsis/e_index.shtml](http://www.bluelink.net/wsis/e_index.shtml)

The Bulgarian monitor (English), takes the WSIS as its starting point, but focuses on thematic ICT policy issues generally. Content categories include beginners “What is ICT policy?” (from the APC ICT policy handbook) and “What is WSIS?” as well as thematic focus areas such as “Environment and ICT” and “Gender and ICT”. Categories for Bulgarian-specific issues have also been developed, such as “Initiatives in Bulgaria” (which includes news, initiatives and analysis) and “WSIS and Bulgaria”.

General categories (such as environment and ICTs) tend to have a national and regional focus. A resource section offers links to online resources relevant to WSIS and ICTs in Bulgaria, organisations working in ICTs in Bulgaria, and relevant documents. The content on the site, although not vast, comes across as organised and reasonably well maintained.

There is little evidence of content pooling (besides reusing generic copy, such content from the APC ICT policy handbook). The Gender and ICT section does, however, offer a prominent link and write-up about GenderIT.org. Besides linking
to the global APC site, the Bulgarian monitor also offers a set of links to a number of policy monitors in the APC network.

**APC.au ICT Rights Monitor**

The APC.au monitor has a strong community orientation (for instance, there is an emphasis on highlighting user comments, a prominent link to and use of news and blogs feeds, and prominence given to issues about blogs). Content categories include policy generally, WSIS, ICTs and Culture, and ICTs and Gender. Internet rights is also treated as a thematic issue on the site, but not categorized on the home page.

Content types include links to policy documents, papers and reports, news, events and resources (“tools and resources for advocacy research” and publications dealing with internet rights issues).

The geographic scope for the site is Australasia, which means that there is some overlap with the Asian policy monitor. Content from countries like India and Korea are included on the site.

The site includes prominent links to several of the policy sites in the APC network.

**UK Internet Rights**
[http://www.internetrights.org.uk](http://www.internetrights.org.uk)

The UK Internet Rights site is a well-developed policy resource, with a thematic focus. Although there are content gaps (e.g. events section), there is a sense of advocacy activity on the site and of content being developed in line with this. There is also a strong sense of linking to already developed resources (e.g. APC global online resources), rather than re-inventing the content wheel.

The UK Internet Rights has starter material for ‘beginners’ such as an introduction to ICT Policy (linked to the APC site) and to UK ICT policy (a link to the UK Communications Act), as well as a glossary. Unlike some of the other national or thematic sites, by providing background information (such as “What is ICT Policy?”) the issue of internet rights is contextualized within a broader ICT policy perspective.

While content is focused on internet rights, it is not exclusive to internet rights. Other thematic content categories are WSIS and Gender and ICTs. There are
also concerns with associated rights, such as information on the UK ID card campaign (generally an e-governance issue).

Content types include: news, policy fact sheets, links to UK-specific legislation and briefings, links to regional directives, advocacy tools, case studies, a list of relevant organisations and a calendar of events.

Besides linking prominently to the policy section on the APC site, the site links to several other policy sites in the APC network. The Gender and ICT category links to the WNSP site, but not to the GenderIT.org site.

**WSIS @ PH**
http://wsisfma.gn.apc.org/index.shtml

The WSIS @ PH site has a strong WSIS orientation, but places this within the context of national ICT policy specifically. Although the WSIS @ PH site was not included in the original list of sites to be reviewed, it is included here because a number of sites link to it. While the site is news-intensive, resource development is only partial.

Thematic content categories are broad: National ICT policy generally, the Internet in the Philippines, Universal access, Telecoms, Wireless technologies, VoIP, FOSS and e-governance, Gender and ICTs, Communication rights, WSIS, and PSIS (the Philippine Summit on the Information Society). Content types include links to legal and regulatory documents and news.

Besides a link to APC policy resources, the site does not yet link broadly to the APC policy network (e.g. the section on organisations is incomplete).

### 7.2. Summary of thematic concerns of sample sites

The thematic category concerns of each of the above sites are summarized in the table below. [x] indicates a strong thematic concern on the site, which is not specifically categorized by the site as a key concern.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access</th>
<th>Bandwidth and infrastructure</th>
<th>Censorship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>x [x]</td>
<td>x [x]</td>
<td>x [x]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 In some instances, these categories might not be heavily populated with content. They do, however, indicate intention.
Table 7: Summary of thematic concerns in sample sites

Table 8 shows the top five most common thematic content categories on the websites:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Out of 15</th>
<th>Some evidence of content linking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WSIS</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication rights (Censorship)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Governance)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Security and privacy)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Getting started)</td>
<td>5*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Most common thematic concerns
As the table suggests, gender and ICT issues receive the highest priority overall, followed by access issues, the WSIS, and issues relating to the internet and communication rights. This suggests that these are collectively the strongest thematic concerns in the APC network of policy sites (given the constraints of the sample).

It also suggests where content sharing amongst the network should be at its highest, and where some kind of collective identity could be developed through common content development and sharing. As suggested, there is some use of APC material, such as “What is ICT policy” content from the APC policy handbook or content from the APC internet rights charter. This is either re-sued on the websites themselves or through linking to the APC global website. Similarly, there is content sharing on WSIS introductory content. However, overall, evidence of content-sharing on the sites is marginal.

While some websites highlight GenderIT.org in their thematic gender content areas, reuse of content from the gender site is the most notable absence of content pooling. Given that gender and ICTs is a thematic concern for 10 out of the 15 websites, and given that the GenderIT.org’s concerns are global, there should be a high degree of content collaboration on this issue.

It is interesting to compare these themes with key concerns identified in the website proposals. As can be seen, the most common thematic content areas of the sites broadly correlate with the identified focus areas listed in the proposals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CIDA</th>
<th>HIVOS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internet governance, “cyber-</td>
<td>Free and open source software;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>security” and privacy;</td>
<td>Promoting the internet as a global public good;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual property rights and</td>
<td>Access and connectivity (“digital inclusion”);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the public domain;</td>
<td>Restrictive intellectual property regimes that create barriers to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social impacts of ICT in areas</td>
<td>innovation and development);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>such as gender equality and</td>
<td>Human rights and communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>protection of the environment;</td>
<td>rights in the context of ICTs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordability of ICT services,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>access and infrastructure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WSIS.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Protecting and expanding the public domain;
- Secure online communications including the right to privacy;
- Gender.

| (others mentioned) | ▪ Open access;
|                   | ▪ Internet governance. |

Table 9: Thematic concerns from proposals

7.3. Linking

The table below shows the extent of url cross-linking from each of the policy sites. The column on the left is the site surveyed, and the top column are the sites linked to. Country names have been used instead of website names.
From the table, the graphs below have been developed. They support the observation that content development is not necessarily happening with a strong sense of the possibilities of content collaboration, nor within a strong sense of identity of the network of policy sites.

Graph 1 shows that the APC global website, the APM English website and the LAC site are the most frequently linked to websites in the APC policy network.
There is a relatively low level of linking to the other regional websites. GenderIT.org is the most linked to thematic website.

**Graph 1: Linking to global, thematic and regional sites**

Graph 2 below shows that in general the national sites are infrequently linked to.  

---

8 The graph excludes the CATIA websites, which only link to themselves.
Graph 2: Linking to national sites

Graph 3 suggests how the sites contextualize themselves within global ICT policy issues and trends. The graph suggests that there is a greater readiness amongst websites in the north to make links and connections with projects outside of the region. Policy sites in the LAC region appear to show a similar tendency, while the websites in Africa are the most inward looking (suggested, for instance, by the CATIA websites).

![Frequency of linking out of region]

Graph 3: Linking out of regions

8. Key challenges and successes

The table below summarizes the key achievements and gaps identified by site and programme co-ordinators. The mixed level of site development (with a number still under construction), means that the challenges are likely to weight in more than the successes at this point in time.

While the global APC site, and the GenderIT.org thematic site have one or two challenges that need to be addressed, these are relatively minor in relation to the success of the sites. The same can potentially be said for the LAC regional monitor.

Several key challenges, however, remain at the regional and national level:

Key regional challenges:

---

9 These suggestions are highly hypothetical, and should be taken that way.
• The scope of the sites are broad, and may not be focused comprehensively enough on particular issues;

• Related to this, information is not necessarily immediately in line with advocacy needs. For instance, from the advocacy perspective of African NGOs, the Africa policy monitor might not be the most appropriate resource (this is also suggested by web statistics – see Section 9);

• There is a lack of regional collaboration between the sites.

Key national challenges:

• There is a lack of local content production in grassroots constituencies;

• There is a lack of capacity and skills to ensure on-going content development;

• Related to this, there is a need for training in content development;

• There is little sharing of content with other APC members in the policy network.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global/thematic</td>
<td>Recognition\textsuperscript{10}</td>
<td>Big gaps related to important areas of APC work (e.g. CATIA).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender portal considered a practical and unique tool</td>
<td>Content on APC global site sometimes confusing to navigate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender portal content collaboration and development\textsuperscript{11}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integration of the portal with other APC ICT policy activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GenderIT site useful to national sites</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>APC good community site and for human rights perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>APC global site serves as 'intranet'\textsuperscript{12}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{10} As the advocacy and the gender-sensitive policy development tool by gender and ICT advocates and policy makers in particular from a range of ICT4D stakeholders.

\textsuperscript{11} Growth of archive [more than 500 resources] and production of analytical articles, and regional input through the regional editors (Africa, Asia-Pacific, Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America), and GenderIT.org writers. (blog entries). Development of multilingual version of the website. Partnership and alliance building. Having local editors supplying original content, making the site into something more than just an aggregator of already-published content.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Have managed to reflect national, regional and WSIS policy issues</td>
<td>Focus: Too much breadth of coverage rather than depth 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thematic and country filter for APM 13</td>
<td>How content development relates to APC key focus areas and strategies 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have good experiences where donors have written and said only place to get information. Has a lot of information.</td>
<td>Sites not interactive or ‘alive’ enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LAC is a good resource for policy documents.</td>
<td>Little cross-regional analysis and collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LAC site useful to national sites</td>
<td>Lack of commitment to online collaboration between regional monitors and development of sites 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comprehensive and deeper treatment of some subjects in the newsletter (LAC)</td>
<td>Quality of content (includes, original content, and content accessible to rights novices, and local content) 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of non technical language to convey the information (LAC)</td>
<td>More analysis needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sites used as work tool 14</td>
<td>Consideration of technological situation of potential target audience and how this relates to content production 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Building a community and developing confidence and trust amongst activists (Asia monitor)</td>
<td>Content needs to work for advocacy needs. Content needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

12 Site works really well at the level of giving a sense of what is happening in APC network. It is a community orientated site. While it also gives perspective on human rights, it is not a comprehensive window on ICT world. It is useful to showcase the network and the diversity of network. Used to find information about APC work: events, partnerships, media releases etc. It works as a kind of intranet. This is in line with the functions of the site, which is to “build APC’s public profile in the media and target communities”. A more general approach to content is applied (compared to if the CIPP were managing the policy section).

13 Can’t do that for LAC site.

14 To handle queries, to point donors and partners to information. In this way the site is used as a strategic tool.

15 For example, not serving as a comprehensive repository for all policy documents, regulations and legislation in the region concerned.

16 Should the regional sites reflect only the specific policy issues APC or CIPP is engaged with post-WSIS (e.g. internet governance and open access models)?

17 Work is being pursued in an old style client - service provider relationship. One reason given for this is that it was felt the regional coordinators had not embraced their role as a co-ordination team within a global network. As a result, a client-service provider relationship is established, rather than a collective process of mutual sharing, learning and participation.

18 The ‘getting started’ sections have not been exploited. Little systematic analysis of where gaps lie and how to fill them.

19 For example, dial-up (and how this relates to linking out of website from briefs) and in terms of time spent online (e.g. should there be short bulleted summaries?).
to advocate, rather than just be a reference.\textsuperscript{20}

APC people “know too much”, so there’s sometimes too much detail for a beginner.

Relevant information sometimes absent and not current

Internal needs for APC managers not being met by sites.

APM too newsy.

Politics (competition?) in sector around APM website and content collaboration

Lack of strategic vision for content collaboration (APM)\textsuperscript{21}

Asia monitor doesn’t allow for “public submission” (e.g. writing blogs, using wikis, extensive RSS feeds in all pages etc.)

Difficult to get constituencies to participate in website development (LAC)

Difficulty in reaching non-ICT constituencies

Lack of editorial guidelines

Table 12: Achievements and challenges – Regional sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CATIA</td>
<td>Communication between CATIA animators\textsuperscript{22}</td>
<td>Difficulties in facilitating and animating virtual workspace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Technological emphasis in training has neglected content emphasis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{20} Need short, quicker, sharper briefs on content; need to ‘catch attention’ for advocacy work and focus. Content needs to advocate and not just be a reference tool. There’s too much accumulation of information without any real analysis or summarising for a busy audience.

\textsuperscript{21} When APM started it was very leveraged towards civil society. Now need to decide if developing site along CATIA (multistakeholder) lines, with thematic focus or still general engagement of civil society.

\textsuperscript{22} It is useful for animators to see what is going on with other animators’ plans.
in training (i.e. there is a need to develop content training and support processes similar to tech. training and support)

Content categories not in line with local information availability and nuances (i.e. top-down information categories)

There are too many categories which puts pressure on updating. The information often not available

Language of technological interface

Web address complicated and not useful for some  

### Table 13: Achievements and challenges – CATIA sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>&quot;Getting them up and running!&quot; Getting the content to feed through to the global site</td>
<td>Difficulties in facilitating and  animating virtual workspace</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| | Some of the sites are being read and used  
Content development | Training: Technological emphasis in training has neglected content emphasis in training (i.e. there is a need to develop content training and support processes similar to tech. training and support) |
| | Organic growth: Evolution of content development with content categories  
Some tangible impacts on policy processes and as an advocacy tool | Sustainability of content development |
| | Strong need for information evident  
Supporting advocacy | Funding: Cannot employ content developers |
| | | Time: No time to regularly update |
| | | Little sharing of content with other APC members |

---

23 CATIA DRC: “The web address is quite complicated for be easily remembered, particularly since it is written in English (DRC) but the majority of users are from a Francophone background and would normally perform a search for something like ‘CATIA RDC’ instead, which would of course not bring up any results.”

24 For example, the DRC Civil Society Internet Portal which receives each month 22,800 visits a month. 7,600 of these visit the national policy site.

25 For example, TAU.

26 For example, “Spy law” in Argentina (TAU).

27 TAU reports many requests for information from other provinces in Argentina, generally from journalists and academics. ITeM says there is an absence of information on policy issues, and no focus on policy. Uruguay is one of the few countries in the region without an ICT national strategy (not to mention a country position towards WSIS). ICT policies have been, up to now, developed by many different actors in an uncoordinated way.

28 For example, the formation of “CRIS Mexico”, in which ten organisations are beginning to discuss, to write, and to lobby in the national context. The content of the Laneta portal has supported this group and others to
Collaboration (at least initially) when faced with concrete needs and situation
Challenges with collaboration
Lack of local content production in constituencies
Sometimes a lack of basic data and statistics to include in site

Table 14: Achievements and challenges – National sites

9. Mapping user needs

9.1. Types of content accessed by users

The following user feedback has been developed from the survey conducted by Debbie Budlender, and supplemented by ad hoc feedback collected during the course of writing this report. While Debbie comments that informants didn't make the distinction between the APC global website and the policy monitor websites, the feedback from informants is nevertheless useful in determining the types of online content most accessed by users.

better understand the WSIS context and its impact on the national policy.

When this portal was set up and launched, several civil society organisations in Uruguay (including ITeM) were involved in the formation of a Communications Forum. Bluelink says partnerships with Bulgarian NGOs working in the field of ICT policy were established. Latena says it has published the information that civil CSOs have sent it on topics related to communication rights in Mexico. This has improved the level of alternative media content.

For example, the allocation of specific funds for the development of the ITEM site would also make it possible for ITEM to use these resources to upgrade and maintain the portal.

A lot of effort is put into training end users in how to technically manage their sites, but the management of content is neglected. “A case point is the Catia Uganda site - now populated with content after good training and documentation, but with quite glaring errors in some of the content.”

For example, the ITEM Forum has not been able to articulate its work or to generate content in a systematic way. ITEM says that even if it could make an effort to independently develop the site, it would not be possible for it to maintain it regularly with its current resources and without the involvement of other local actors in the task. This has led to a situation in which the portal cannot continue to be updated on a regular basis.

Unfortunately, civil society organizations in Mexico do not write systematically about their communications rights.

In Mexico there is said to be a lack of statistical and other kind of official information on law, affordable access to infrastructure (universal access), and monitoring of governmental programmes. This absence is reflected in the Laneta portal.

The percentages in the graphs are only suggestive, and should be used as an indication of broad trends, rather than exact statistics of content types accessed. The graphs relate to the APC global site and LAC and Africa regional monitors in particular.
Graph 4: Demand for information types

Graph 4 breaks down the information types accessed. It suggests that the highest demand is for information that has been developed by APC. This includes discussion papers, evaluations, recommendations and surveys. Resources developed by APC are also frequently accessed. These would include business plans, handbooks, advocacy toolkits and training materials. APC websites are also frequently used for referral purposes, in particular for contact information. The graph suggests that the websites are accessed less for content types like news or events.
Graph 5 shows the breakdown of what can be considered original content developed by APC (e.g. reports, resources and toolkits), and aggregated content (e.g. contact information, links and news). ‘Other’ includes community-developed content, such as blogs. It clearly suggests that although there is a strong demand for content aggregation, the highest demand is for original content developed by APC.

9.2. A brief look at user statistics

A sample of user statistics suggests that the majority of website users at the global and regional level are anonymous to the APC. While this may be an obvious point, it does suggest that little is known about the particular uses and impact of the sites.\(^{36}\) In 2005 and 2006, monthly visits ranged from 10 000 to 25 000 for the Africa monitor (English) and between 13 000 and 28 000 for the LAC monitor.\(^{37}\) In March 2006, the APC global site received 33 684 unique visitors.\(^{38}\)

The recent statistics for the APC global site suggest that the majority of users are from the United States, with strong interest in the website from LAC countries such as Brazil and Colombia. There is also good access to the site from users in European countries (e.g. Switzerland, the UK, Germany and the Czech Republic). Statistics from the LAC regional site suggest that there is reasonable usage of the site from countries in the South American region (counting for at least 20% of the top country users). Statistics from the Africa policy monitor show

\(^{36}\) Suggesting that an online user surveys may be useful.
\(^{37}\) According to intranet statistics.
\(^{38}\) According to statistics provided by Gustavo.
a significantly lower regional usage (African countries barely making up 1% of the country users).\footnote{Sample months were compared from 2005. Only countries specifically stated where included.}

For the global site, South Africa dominates site usage amongst the countries in Africa, which may be an issue of access limitations or content relevance. While there is a clear interest in Spanish-language content, the statistics also show that there is strong interest in the Africa policy monitors (both English and French websites).\footnote{Again, from international users.} Both these monitors dominate the links accessed through APC global site. While most of the users access the global site through search engines such as Google and Yahoo, a number are pushed to the site through the regional monitors, in particularly the LAC monitor. International users, particularly from the United States, also dominate site usage on the regional LAC and Africa monitors.

If one were to suggest that these are typical usage patterns, the question can be raised of the relevance of website advocacy for Africa-based organisations (mailing lists or newsletters may be a different issue). While websites clearly are effective in attracting attention to issues from regions outside of Africa, they may have limited applicability in attempts to reach target users on the continent. If this extrapolation is possible, it has strategic implications for the future role of websites, such as the Africa policy monitors, as advocacy tools.

### 10. Role of key APC staff members

The table below summarizes the key roles APC staff members have played in the development of the websites so far:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff member</th>
<th>General</th>
<th>Global/thematic</th>
<th>Regional</th>
<th>CATIA</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anriette Esterhuysen</td>
<td>Conceptualising online projects; Overview and proposal development; Fundraising; Gathering and passing on content to site managers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willie Currie</td>
<td>Management of CIPP programme</td>
<td>Overseeing the Africa, LAC and Asia ICT policy monitors; Negotiating or acting as ‘go-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

\textsuperscript{39} Sample months were compared from 2005. Only countries specifically stated where included.

\textsuperscript{40} Again, from international users.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karen Banks</td>
<td>Some editorial responsibility; Planning (monitors’ roles etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Higgs</td>
<td>Main developer and maintainer up until now; Occasional updating of global site; News production; Developing issue papers; Facilitating translation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna Feldman</td>
<td>Content pooling with national sites; Participates in rebuild working group; Designed and site planning (thematic sites).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Karen Higgs | Principal coordinator of the current versions (V1) of the Africa and Asia (and shortly LAC) sites; Development of common technical specification with monitor co-ordinators; Facilitating the set-up of the v1 iteration of the LAC site. |
| Anna Feldman | Development of technical briefs in conjunction with regional monitors for V2 of the regional sites; Project management for development work. |

| Karen Higgs | Informal feedback on design; Promotion of sites (upcoming). |
| Anna Feldman | Information architecture in collaboration with Karen and Willie; Developed brief and budget for sites; Project manager throughout the development phase; Developed training manual for end users (animators); Training. |

| Karen Higgs | Extensive promotional work at the time of launch; Content pooling section on global site. |
| Anna Feldman | Management of technical development; Development of end-user documentation; Training; Integration of content with global site; Developing information architecture; Planning workshops. |

Table 15: Role of key APC staff members in the development of the sites.
11. What is the challenge in a nutshell?

11.1. Content disconnect

APC has many content development needs. Besides the policy websites (which are substantial on their own), there are occasional advocacy reports, research documents, training and information manuals, the APC newsletter, and the content developed by initiatives such as ItrainOnline. However, there is a sense that many of these are being developed independently, and there isn’t a mechanism to oversee and guide a collective editorial approach or to manage the development of the content collectively.

Considering the policy sites alone, this dislocation between content development approaches is apparent. For instance, while the funding proposals suggest that the sites do work towards the same general goals, they do not necessarily share a strategic vision and mission. A collective approach to identifying target audiences strategically has also not been clearly thought through. Both these have implications for how content is selected and developed. Similarly, while the APC global site has editorial guidelines, the other policy sites either don’t have guidelines, or have guidelines which have been developed separately.

While there is some recognition that the policy sites are part of a network of 'like-minded' sites, this potential is not properly felt in the content developed, and has not been maximized. At its most obvious, content sharing on key issues, such as gender, is minimal. While Action Apps provides a technological template for website development, a 'content template' is absent. This may include editorial approaches and guidelines suggested above, but also the possibility of content pooling.

Similarly, there are gaps between key thematic concerns identified by the policy sites and content developed by other APC online initiatives, such as ItrainOnline (e.g. wireless networking, open source, resources for women). While ItrainOnline content may not have direct policy implications, it should at least be foregrounded in the policy sections that deal with these as thematic issues.

The content disconnect means that, instead of content sharing, some ‘competition’ exists between the policy websites. These include:

- Thematic overlaps (such as WSIS and Fibre for Africa) and regional sites;
- Regional overlaps (e.g. the Asia regional monitor covers some countries that are already covered by the APC.au site);
• National overlaps (e.g. the CATIA Ethiopia site and EFOSSNet or the CATIA DRC site and the DRC policy site);

• Organisational overlaps (implementing organisations sometimes have already-developed resources on their organisational homepages. For example, WOUGNET, which develops the CATIA Uganda site, has a policy section on its own site).

Taken as a whole, this dislocation means that an overall advocacy opportunity, through a collective approach to content development, is lost.

11.2. Content development capacity

A number of the sites have difficulty meeting their content development requirements. This is particularly the case at the national or local level, where, in instances, there is little content available dealing with policy issues. However, at the same time, websites like GenderIT.org suggest there are difficulties in securing content from its network of writers and regional editors. One of the key challenges identified is a lack of resources.

At the same time, APC’s capacity to systematically develop advocacy content to meet the tempo of its face-to-face advocacy engagements is lacking. On the one level, this is simply a case of properly reflecting what is actually going on on the ground or in projects on the websites. While one staff member pointed out that the CATIA programme is not properly reflected on the global site, the programme’s absence is also notable on the Africa policy monitors (or any of the other policy sites). Another example is the EASSy roadshows, and difficulties in reflecting their ‘content equivalent’ online.

11.3. Management Capacity

APC does not currently have the capacity to collectively manage the policy websites. While there is technical co-ordination at the level of the development of the national and regional sites, as well as other collaboration in working groups, co-ordination at the level of content appears to be ad-hoc, rather than systematic. A bird’s eye view is absent. A number of the key APC staffers are part time, while full time staffers, such as the ICT Policy Programme Manager or the Director, do not have the capacity to engage directly in content and website development.

12. A potential way forward

The above considerations suggest there is a need for:
- A stronger emphasis on the development of the sites as a network, and the recognition (by the sites) that they belong to a network;
- The capacity to manage the sites as a network;
- A collective editorial understanding and the capacity to facilitate this understanding;
- A commitment by the sites to collective content sharing and development where possible.

As a result, there is a clear need to develop capacity in two key areas:

- Management
- Editorial

While these two profiles are not necessarily mutually-exclusive, the needs are sufficient for these to be separate positions.

12.1. What would a network manager do?

- Manage the collective needs of the national, regional and thematic sites;
- Report writing and fund-raising;
- Support the development of a collective vision for the policy sites (including understanding editorial direction, thematic concerns, target users etc.);
- Act as the liaison between these sites and APC’s other programme areas and management systems;
- Manage the relationship between technical development and the sites;
- Ensure that the potential of APC’s online content development, as an advocacy activity in itself, is maximized.

12.2. What would an editorial co-ordinator do?

- Contribute to developing a shared editorial approach to online content development. This may involve developing a shared editorial strategy
around the presentation of content (including a shared style guide), but should at least involve training and capacity development;

- Initiate online editorial meetings;
- In collaboration with the manager, help develop appropriate information architectures for new website development;
- Assist in developing content as well as taking the lead in content pooling;
- Write news articles;
- Ensure that online content collaboration is maximized;
- Provide editorial checking and gatekeeping functions;
- Facilitate translation (in conjunction with the communications team);
- Manage and update global policy site (so that it reflects the network) with input from the communications team.

Given the current capacity constraints in the APC, as well as the scope of the work that needs to be done, both positions are potentially full-time positions. They are “potentially” full-time positions because it is difficult at this point in time to assess the exact demands of the workload. There may be some justification for beginning the positions as half or three-quarter-time positions, and scaling their time contributions from there, depending on the actual work demands.

However, one of the key attributes of both these positions, given the size of the network, and the need for them to interface with current APC programme activities and management systems, is responsiveness. If you want, they need to oil the cogs in the machine, rather than create another cog that needs oiling. While developing their core work areas, they need to be able to facilitate the interaction between various role players at management level and at the actual production level (for instance, a person who is developing content for a website, or engaging in advocacy work on the ground). This means that they will most likely need to be able to work flexibly with their time, so that they can in fact be responsive to the needs of the network and APC. The more part-time their contributions, the more difficult this flexibility might be. Ultimately, the balance between the work demands and the time required for those, and the level of responsiveness required needs to be negotiated in practice and process (or through trial and error).
12.3. Where would these positions be located?

Arguably APC is at a crossroads. Given the extent of its online content development initiatives, it needs to take a position on how online content development fits into its broad advocacy agenda. Should it be considered a core activity, or a complementary activity? While this may not be clear in all instances, a broad strategic decision in this regard has implications for how it manages the online content initiatives already in place.

The Africa Policy Monitor is a good example that illustrates this. Currently the monitor has a very broad content agenda – much broader than any specific advocacy initiative APC is engaged in. This means that content development becomes a core focus of the project, rather than a complementary focus to advocacy initiatives. This has implications for securing funding for the ongoing development of the website, which can be difficult. In contrast, the Fibre for Africa site has a thematic or complementary content focus.

Should content development be identified as a core activity for APC, and given APC’s broad content needs, there is the potential to develop an Editorial and Content Development Programme Area. However, for current purposes, the recommendation is that the management and editorial positions suggested above provide a support context for the policy sites couched within a current programme area (they could, of course, evolve into a programme area of their own, should the need arise).

The diagram below suggests where these positions could be located:
12.4. How would they relate to the different policy sites?

12.4.1. Global and GenderIT.org site

While both these sites may face specific challenges, they are both functional websites that work well independently. They also have a distinctly different positions in the policy network. The APC global site (http://rights.apc.org/) should ideally represent more generally the work of the APC policy network, and be run centrally. It seems practical that the network manager and editor take over the maintenance of the global policy section on the APC site, with input from the communications team. The GenderIT site is the product of an APC programme area, with a policy focus, which also gives it a unique position in the policy network. While it may benefit from developing a context of support for the policy sites generally, one of its key roles is likely to be content-sharing and communication, as well as participation in online editorial discussions, rather than making major changes to how the website currently operates. It will be the work of the network manager and editor to ensure its effective integration into the network, while respecting its separate function.

12.4.2. An approach to the regional sites

One vision for the regional sites could be to develop a collective identity, and to approach their development in a systematic manner, including at the level of editorial processes, content structures and kinds of content developed on the sites. APC could commit to developing regional portals in each of the key geographic regions: LAC, Africa, Asia and Europe. Their content focus could be regional in focus (rather than national), broadly analytical, and the sites could be developed into ‘content libraries’ (e.g. policy documents and other resources) that support the content agendas of the national sites. These sites could be collectively managed and an editorial collective, consisting of the co-ordinators of

---

41 For instance, there are challenges maintaining the APC global site. Some feel that the content could be presented more clearly, and that some of the content experiments, such as the content feeds from the regional and national sites, hasn't worked.

42 How one deals with the different language requirements of the global site can be worked out during the development of the management and editorial processes. Given the general nature of the global site, it is not ideal that the French and Spanish ‘versions’ are links to the French and Spanish regional monitors. This may also not be practical if the regional monitors begin to develop organically, rather than uniformly. However, at least at first, this may be the most suitable solution.

43 If this is not the preferred option, the GenderIT site could, of course, simply be treated as another policy site. However, there is a sense that its objectives are slightly different to the other policy sites, and that it therefore has some form of separate, but compatible identity.
the regional monitors, with input from other APC staffers, could be formed. National sites could also participate in this editorial collective.

However, the main disadvantage to this approach is that regional needs are potentially different. A one-size-fits all approach to online content advocacy in the different regions is not necessarily the most effective approach.

A second approach is a more organic one, that takes the specific regional needs into account. Many users in Asia are very technologically savvy and enjoy a high level of online access, which suggests that a community-driven approach to the regional portal development is the correct advocacy approach. In the LAC region, there is a reported absence of online content dealing with policy issues, so a broad content aggregation approach, with an advocacy agenda, seems appropriate. In Africa, there are a number of competitive content initiatives. This, combined with access challenges, suggests that developing a broad online repository of policy information is less useful as an advocacy tool for organisations working in Africa. Rather than trying to get organisations to use a web resource, an information push (e.g. through e-mail) is potentially much more effective (this, combined with a thematic focus to sites, such as Fibre for Africa).

12.4.3. Defining APC's relationship to the national sites

At top-down approach to the development of the national sites is neither desirable nor practical. Each site has different content needs, and approaches. As a result, the national sites need to be self-defining on the issues of editorial policy, thematic focus, content development and technical needs.

APC needs to create a context of support for the national sites, and encourage their participation in broader processes. However, the real capacity does not exist to micro-managed the technical and content development of the sites – at least in the medium-long term. While this may be effectively how APC is operating, it is useful to spell it out as a policy guideline. The paradigm shift is from a national site “created” by APC, to a national site “supported” by APC.

Support processes could include:

- General technological support;

---

44 An approach that would need to be balanced with countries in Asia that are less connected (e.g. Cambodia and Fiji).
45 The possibility of developing the current Africa policy monitors into archived libraries has been suggested. The would require a process of checking data integrity according to a particular cut-off date (e.g. May, 2006), and updating various content categories so that the content is comprehensive and representative up until that point. Important documents that are absent from the site can be added. From this point, the site can be treated as a library that is continually linked to from thematic advocacy specific sites (e.g. Fibre for Africa), and which is updated from time to time, rather than used as an active news or information portal in itself.
• Content training and advice;
• Developing generic content for content pooling;
• Encouraging content feeds (from global, thematic and regional sites);
• A context for participation in editorial discussions (developed by regional sites);
• General information-sharing on policy matters.

At the same time, the national sites need to be encouraged to form like-like clusters for content collaboration and support – most obvious at the level of the CATIA sites, but also at the level of regional-national content sharing.

12.4.4. An approach to content pooling

Content pooling would be one of the key focus areas of the editorial management team. This is not necessarily a simple task, and requires a lot of editorial intervention. However, a number of content areas across the policy websites suggest that a strategic approach to content pooling is possible. Key areas where generic content can be developed, or where content can be pooled include:

Beginners information: While some beginners or introductory content included on the sites is already generic (such as content from the APC policy handbook), other thematic areas where introductory content could be developed exist. These include content relating to all the key thematic areas identified in the content scope (e.g. Gender and ICTs; Access, WSIS or post-WSIS content etc.)

Jargon: Some sites offer a glossary of key terms. This should potentially be a standard feature of all the policy websites, and could be developed and updated centrally.

Directory: A directory of policy organisations and initiatives (including a summary, contact details and urls) could be centrally developed and managed.

Events: A central repository of policy events could be developed.

Policy library: A central policy library could be developed, containing all the available policy documents. Websites could link to this library, or the relevant categories in the library.

46 As the content pooling experiment on the global APC site has suggested.
Generic APC policy network page: An introduction to the APC policy network needs to be developed (or lifted from the APC global site). This could also contain links to all the policy websites. This should be a standard feature of the sites.

Thematic content: Content can be shared between the key thematic areas of the sites identified in the scope of the policy sites.

While there may be challenges in developing the above content collectively, much of these due to geographic and language concerns, it should be possible through technology.

12.5. Brief guidelines for future development of sites

This report tries to highlight some of the key challenges APC currently faces in developing a collective approach to the development of its online policy monitors. It also suggests a potential solution, which has been strongly informed by the workshop held at Ithala in March. However, the specific direction APC wants to take obviously needs to be decided by the organisation, and this document can only offer suggestions in this regard.

To some extent, the development of the sites is in flux, and many of the details of the management strategy need to be developed by an editorial manager him or herself (e.g. how is it best to organise a collective editorial forum? Is a style-guide desirable, and what would its contents be?). The outcome of this, would also inform the future development of APC online initiatives. By developing editorial management capacity, the context for the strategic future development of sites is created.

However, key issues for consideration are suggested below. Although these are potentially first-base questions in developing an online project, and APC certainly is aware of them, is it useful to state them clearly:

- What is APC’s post-WSIS strategy? While the WSIS has inspired site development, APC needs to determine its post-WSIS strategy and focus areas. This will provide clear guidelines for future site development;

- Define a collective vision and mission. It may be necessary to define a collective vision and mission for the policy sites. This may also help identify gaps in online content development;

- Spell out clearly how a proposed project fits into the network of policy sites. What are the organic relationships? Are the co-ordinators of those sites involved in the proposal or project development?
• Define target users clearly, with a narrow rather than a broader focus;

• Define what online advocacy tool is appropriate to the target users (e.g. website, newsletter etc.);

• How should the content be presented to most effectively reach the target users? Spell that out;

• What content has already been developed in the focus area? How can that be re-used? Have those websites been involved in the proposal development?

• Spell out how the content development will be sustained. What mechanisms are necessary to ensure this and what capacity is necessary? Are there any content or advocacy partners who need to be involved from the start?