

## **Final Report of the “What will be CIVIC” discussions held between January and September 2007.**

### **1. Members of the Working Group**

The members of the “What will be CIVIC” working group consisted of Deirdre Williams, Roosevelt King , Hallam Hope, Valerie Gordon, Yacine Khelladi, Rafik Abdesselam, Stephane Bruno, Felipe Noguera, K Mustafa Toure, Kimberley King-Burns, Valmikki Singh, Rudi Daniel and Vidyaratha Kissoon

### **2. Purpose and Methodology of the WG**

The group agreed to proceed with the task of consolidating the diverse views on "What will be CIVIC" to make some proposals as to how CIVIC can realise its potential as an active Virtual Community which could strengthen capacity to address ICT4D challenges in the Caribbean.

The agenda was to :-

1. Review survey results, and specifically the different member perspectives on civic mission, organization and mechanisms
2. Identify gaps and areas requiring improvement and /or redefinition
3. Review and reformulate as needed mission and objectives statement for CIVIC
4. Review the current organization model and mechanisms, the relative strengths and weaknesses and discuss and propose changes to it in order to effectively adapt to the reformulated mission and objectives, and increase efficiency
5. Identify appropriate performance indicators to facilitate future monitoring/ self evaluation of CIVIC

The original length of the discussion was intended to be one month, but there were changes at each stage and the discussion extended to eight months. The outputs of the discussions were intended to feed into the design of the CARISNET 2 project.

The outputs of the working group were a proposal for a new CIVIC charter which would reflect the changes and a list of indicators which CIVIC could use to evaluate its own progress.

### **3. Results of the Working Group**

There were different levels of participation from members of the group as work priorities changed. A document to reflect the new charter was eventually presented to CIVIC for approval in August 2007. This is in Appendix 1 to this report. Appendix 2 to this report lists some of the indicators which CIVIC would use to evaluate its progress.

Report submitted 2 September, 2008

## **Caribbean ICT Virtual Community (CIVIC)**

### **Proposed Structure and Organization chart**

7 September , 2007

1. *CIVIC Definition and Objectives:*
2. *CIVIC membership*
3. *Moderation*
4. *Multilingual support*
5. *Facilitation*
6. *Diversity Facilitator*
7. *Document approval – representation – mandates - votes*
8. *Tools available for the CIVIC members:*
9. *Access - public/private space – privacy rights*
10. *Thematic working groups*
  11. *Netiquette rules or how to participate in virtual communities*
  - 12.

*Annex 1. How To Participate In Online Forums*

#### **1. CIVIC Definition and Objectives:**

"The Caribbean ICT Virtual Community (CIVIC) is a dynamic online community of Caribbean ICT stakeholders. The community is open to people with an interest in contributing to the promotion/support of ICTs for the development of the Caribbean.

The community:

- engages in sharing information, discussing issues, advocacy, networking and linking actors, projects or initiatives on ICTs and development in the Caribbean.
- aims to contribute to the building of a common vision/perspective on ICTs, and to promote a Caribbean strategy and/or regional Caribbean-wide actions.

CIVIC was formed from participants of the Caribbean ICT Roundtable held in the Barbados on October 28-30 2002, but it is now open to all active Caribbean ICT stakeholders (see "CIVIC membership" below).

It is based upon an asynchronism, electronic conferencing platform, the ICA Caribbean mailing list and its related web tools (currently hosted on the Dgroup virtual platform). There will be additional webtools as CIVIC evolves.

It is a Caribbean managed and Caribbean owned virtual community.

The term 'Caribbean' refers to the following countries :- Antigua, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Trinidad & Tobago, St Vincent and the Grenadines, St Lucia, St Kitts Nevis, Suriname, Grenada, Bahamas, British Virgin Islands, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, USVI, Netherlands Antilles, Martinique, Guadeloupe, French Guyana, Puerto Rico, Montserrat.

Initial support for its organization was provided by Institute of Connectivity for the Americas (ICA).

#### **2. CIVIC Membership**

2.1 There are two types of membership: Full members or associate membership. **Full membership** of CIVIC is open to persons of Caribbean nationality or descent, and persons living or working in the region or doing research in the region. **Associate membership** is open to anybody who wants to be a member but who does not fit this criteria.

2.2 To subscribe, persons will complete:

- a voluntary registration (currently Dgroup) form; and
- send a self introduction message to the moderator. Shortly after membership confirmation it is required for the new member to post his/her self introduction to the CIVIC as a whole.

2.3 Following assessment of membership eligibility individuals will be subscribed to the virtual conferencing device/ mailing list and will have access to the web based tools. Membership is individual rather than institutional, but members can/should indicate when they are presenting institutional views, statements, etc.

2.4 All members have equal voice in the discussions, equal access to all tools, documents, archives, etc, and have to respect the same community approved rules and procedures. Voting rights however are reserved for full members (see above)

2.5 Members who repeatedly do not respect the commonly accepted behavior in virtual communities, called “netiquette” (see below), will have their subscription and membership cancelled with prior notification.

2.6 Members:

- can change their individual default settings and may receive digested messages instead of individual messages.
- when leaving for vacations, or being unable to read messages for a long period of time, it is recommended to change the settings to “read posts only through the web interface”.
- can change the email address to receive and post, their password, their user profile, etc., and unsubscribe from the list.

2.7 Members are requested to provide and maintain a functional email address. Emails that “bounce” (no longer existing) or present errors for a long period of time will be deleted, and membership will be lost.

2.8 CIVIC Members are expected to:

- Be active participants who share information, ask questions, respond to requests, share answers, approve or disapprove motions and proposal, follow the collectively established discussion agenda, etc.
- Maintain a functional email address
- Respect the netiquette (see below) and the rules outlined in this document
- Respect the cultural, linguistic, political, sexual and religious diversity of CIVIC constituency
- Not use the list for political, religious, or commercial propaganda

### 3. Moderation

The mailing list is moderated, to maintain a “clean” and safe info-environment and to keep a high signal-to-noise ratio. Technical Moderation may be applied for formatting and inserting translated versions of the posts.

3.1 The moderator's role is to:

- assist, redirect and process administrative requests (subscription, un-subscription, setting

changes, etc).

- approve messages and/or requests from senders.
- reformat message (attachments, HTML or special encoding) before approving
- avoid the circulation of email attachments, viruses, commercial advertising (“spam,”), email chains and hoaxes, administrative requests, non members submissions, etc.
- ask the sender of a personal message to state the person for whom the message was intended, and/or if the sender still wants it to be posted to the main list.
- avoid information overload by only accepting Caribbean-ICT related posts/discussions.

3.2 Posts related to non ICT/non Caribbean or global ICT issues shall be accepted only with a short introduction note relating it to the Caribbean or a group specific interest or ongoing discussion.

3.3 Personal messages, “flames”, insults, disrespectful posts, one to one discussions shall not be approved.

3.4 The acting moderator shall not censor posts but is charged with keeping a “healthy” working environment.

3.5 Any member who feels that they are being censored may openly discuss this problem in the community

3.6 All rejected messages are to be kept archived for future reference.

3.7 Any member may receive moderation administrative mails and monitor the work of the moderator(s).

3.8 The list shall be informed whether the moderator(s) are working voluntarily or working with a stipend.

The moderators at August 2007 are

Yacine Khelladi: [yacine@yacine.net](mailto:yacine@yacine.net)

Angelica Ospina: [aospina@icamericas.net](mailto:aospina@icamericas.net)

#### **4. Multilingual support**

4.1 The CIVIC is open to all Caribbean countries.

4.2 Postings, messages, discussions and documents are encouraged in all the languages used in the Caribbean.

4.3 Acknowledging the language barrier for regional networking, all reasonable efforts will be made to provide multilingual support for:

- translation of documents;
- multilingual web pages;
- automated translation of email messages for French/Spanish/English/Dutch;

4.4 Members of CIVIC undertake to give all messages equal attention, no matter which language was used by the sender.

#### **5. Facilitation**

5.1 To help attain its objectives, organize an agenda, guide the ongoing discussions, and articulate and document the inputs, the virtual community list shall be facilitated.

5.2 The facilitator(s) is (are) mandated by CIVIC with defined goals and deliverables.

5.3 The facilitator is not necessarily the same person as the moderator.

Facilitators could be volunteers and/or sponsored by CIVIC supporting partners. Guest facilitators can agree to lead discussions in an area that interests them/where they have special knowledge for specified periods.

## **6. Diversity Facilitator**

6.1 Among CIVIC members a specific facilitator may be chosen and mandated to:

- Promote a balanced participation from all Caribbean cultural/linguistic sub regions in the main virtual community (CIVIC) and the thematic working groups (TWGs)
- Ensure that concerns, views, and interests of all Caribbean cultural/linguistic sub regions are reflected in the CIVIC and TWG outputs
- Promote actions that formalize collaboration and vision sharing among participants from different Caribbean cultural/linguistic sub regions

6.2 He/she will:

- participate in the facilitators co-ordination group
- observe all ongoing thematic discussions
- propose and eventually implement, with the facilitators group and all the members, actions and mechanisms to have balanced participation
- follow up and report to the CIVIC

## **7. Document approval – representation – mandates - votes**

7.1 CIVIC constituency approval shall be sought in order to:

- ratify a document, public position or action proposal, and identify it as an official CIVIC document or position
- authorize any of its members to represent CIVIC in any event or meeting
- define a mandate for working groups, commissions, negotiators, representatives, project or fund administrator, etc., to enter in any discussion, take any decision or work on its behalf
- approve or modify any chart or organization document.

7.2 Any item for decision shall be submitted to the main CIVIC list, with a clear subject line including "decision" or "approval request".

7.3 A "grace period" of at least five (5) working days should be reserved to receive comments, disapprovals, amendments, alternative proposals, etc. The "grace period" shall be respected in each instance that a decision item is rewritten or amended and resubmitted for approval.

7.4 An abstention shall be considered to be an "assent" unless the voter openly opposes the matter before the community

If there is no opposition, amendment or counter proposition on a decision, then it will be considered approved by consensus.

7.5 If no consensus can be reached, a vote shall be organized by the moderator as follows:

- A mail message with "vote" in the subject line should contain all voting instructions, options, references and any other relevant information.
- The moderator may be assisted by a volunteer member for vote scrutiny.
- In voting no quorum is required but five (5) votes shall require a reformatting of the decision.
- Votes shall be recorded as: Approved; Against; and Abstain.
- Any opposition to a decision item shall require no less than four supporters with reasons for rejection

## **8. Tools available for the CIVIC members:**

8.1 The mailing list:

- contribution and posting to the Mailing List are allowable by:

- sending an email to < [icacaribbean@dgroups.org](mailto:icacaribbean@dgroups.org) >
- the web interface logging in at <http://www.dgroups.org/groups/icacaribbean/>.

## 8.2 The online archive:

- the CIVIC memory is made up of all the messages that are archived and shall be made accessible to all list members through the group web page.
- The moderator(s) shall at no time alter, modify or delete archived messages.

## 8.3 The members web page

- members may post and modify:
  - a short bio
  - their work
  - references and/or other resources.

## 8.4 Resource page

- documents, links and news may be posted by participants.
- Reorganization of a thematic structure for the references shall be done as required.
- the site <http://clearinghouse.carisnet.org>

8.5 Other tools which could take advantage of emerging technologies will be added to support the efficiency of CIVIC

## 9. Access - public private space

9.1 Posting and receiving messages, accessing CIVIC web site, mail archives, resources, etc., is for registered members only.

9.2 As a matter of courtesy, it is preferable, but not mandatory, that members ask permission to forward any email, partially or totally, to non list member(s).

9.3 List owner(s) and moderator(s) shall not erase or modify a member(s) archived post, profile data or posting history without the expressed permission of the particular member(s).

9.4 No person is authorized to use the members list or email addresses for any purpose other than for CIVIC business.

## 10. Thematic Working Groups

10.1 CIVIC members may work in groups:

- in thematic channels mandated by the CIVIC;
- in specific working groups which are task oriented and facilitated to produce specific outputs within specific time frames

10.2 Thematic channels shall be permanent and organically linked to the main group and shall have access to the tools available for collaboration.

Examples of thematic channels are :-

1. CIVIC Capacity Building
2. Advocacy
3. Regional Governance forum
4. Human resource development
5. Private sector Development
6. Trade and Commerce
7. E governance and regulatory issues
8. Gender issues
9. Education and Youth
10. E finance
11. Regional network infrastructure

## 12. e-Health

## 13. Use of Free and Open Source Software.

10.3 Working groups may be created by members and the outputs of these working groups shall be validated by the CIVIC. Each working group shall have specific mandates and shall produce outputs within set timeliness

## 11. Netiquette rules or how to participate in virtual communities

### 11.1 General Requirements (See Annex 1):

1. Do not send attachments (place them in our resource center or send a web link)
2. Do send Plain Text (change the settings of your mailer)
3. Write a good subject line (change it if necessary)
4. Make your subject line readable
5. If replying, don't leave the whole previous message below your answer, just specific parts to which you are responding
6. Include contact information- Mention the source(s), web links, copyrights, etc.
7. Be careful not to spread viruses and do not send "spam".

### 11.2 Good practices for newcomers

- Consult the list archives or FAQ, if available, before posting a question; this is a good way to become familiar with a list.
- Lurk, listen and learn what's acceptable before posting to the list.

### 11.3 The Art of the Subject Line

Make sure that the 'subject' field of your email message is meaningful as it can be very frustrating to others not to be able to judge the content of a message from its subject.

When you use the 'reply' option, ensure that the subject still accurately reflects the content of your message (like the title of a book). If it doesn't, change it.

Try to restrict yourself to one subject per message; send multiple messages if you have multiple subjects.

One subject per message allows recipients to use the 'subject' field to judge the importance of the messages they have received.

Sometimes groups develop code words to make it even easier to identify the purpose or content of messages.

Appending the words [News](#), [FYI](#), [URGENT](#), [Update](#) etc. to your subject line can help people judge the importance/relevance of your message.

### 11.4 Message Formatting

- Whenever possible, keep posts to the list brief.
- One or two screens is a good space to use.
- It's always better to give recipients the option of reading more with a link or attachment, rather than forcing them to read a lot in your message.
- Do not send HTML, rich text, or stylised email, or messages in "quoted-printable" format; not all email programs of list members will recognize such formats.
- Send messages in plain text aka: ASCII.
- When sending to mailing lists, send a link instead of attachments (especially large ones); the majority of Internet users (even in the "North") have relatively slow modem connections.
- Sign your name. Sometimes, your name will appear in the "From:" field.
- If you are quoting someone else's message, quote sparingly, and try to eliminate any leftover or unnecessary headers.
- If responding to many parts of a single message, you may alternate between original quotes and your responses.

- DON'T SHOUT! WHEN YOU TYPE IN UPPER CASE, IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE YELLING ONLINE.
- When you want someone's attention, hard-hitting and lowercase words are more effective than simple, but uppercase, words.

#### 11.5 Other

- If you are forwarding an email from someone to a mailing list, always ask for permission first to make their thoughts public.
- If you do use information that is not your own, give proper credit.
- We highly recommend you to consult other sources; some are listed in the Annex 2 below.

**N.B.** The above content was partially taken and then modified from:

\* <http://exodus.oucs.ox.ac.uk:8123/salamander/rules3.html>

\* <http://list-etiquette.com>

\* [http://www.idrc.ca/acb/showdetl.cfm?&DID=6&Product\\_ID=177](http://www.idrc.ca/acb/showdetl.cfm?&DID=6&Product_ID=177)

END



## **Annex 1**

The following was written by Shady Kanfi Senior Program Officer - Bellanet:

1. Be aware that whenever you post you always have two options: you can send to the list, or you can send to individuals.
2. When your message veers away from the purpose of the list, or from the principle discussions, or when it gets personal, send your message to an individual and not the whole group.
3. Follow the norms set by your community and/or facilitator.
4. Everyone has freedom of speech on the Internet, but nobody has the right to say anything they want “anywhere” they want.
5. If you join a group, and then don't follow group norms, that group has the right to kick you out.
6. If you feel the need to flame, send hate mail, or otherwise reprimand another list member, do it off-list.
7. Such messages destroy the tenuous sense of trust and community that group facilitators try so hard to encourage.
8. Be courteous to other list members. It's OK to disagree, but always be respectful of the person even while you debate the issues.
9. Sometimes what you say is lost when the way you say it is seen as disrespectful.
10. Be cautious when responding to messages that make you passionate. Email lacks the other cues and clues that convey the sense in which what you say is to be taken, and you can easily convey the wrong impression.
11. It is good practice to wait before responding, or to draft your message and review it sometime later before posting.
12. It is always easier to edit a message you drafted earlier in the day, than it is to compose a new message with explanations for those who misunderstood the intent of your original post.
13. If you meant something in jest, use a 'smiley' :-) to convey that meaning. The subtleties of sarcasm are different from culture to culture, and it may inadvertently cause offence.
14. If you engage in a debate, try not to debate in order to change a person's mind, it happens less frequently than you might expect.
15. Be satisfied with presenting your point of view clearly and thoroughly, so that others in the group understand what you are saying.

## **Annex 2**

Mailing List Manners 101: <http://db.tidbits.com/getbits.acgi?tbart=05386>

E-mail Tips & Techniques how to send e-mail without burning bridges or closing doors:  
<http://www.planetfriendly.net/emailtips.html>

General Rules and Procedures Inside the MISTICA Virtual Community:  
<http://funredes.org/mistica/english/emec/rules/proceedings.html>

How To Participate In Online Forums: <http://www.planeta.com/ecotravel/tour/onlinetips.html>

This guide is also available in Spanish: <http://www.planeta.com/ecotravel/tour/onlinetips2.html>

From Workplace to Workspace: Using Email Lists to Work Together - by Maureen James & Liz Rykert: <http://www.idrc.ca/books/848.html>

Intro to Mailing Lists -- Int'l Federation of Library Assoc:  
<http://www.ifla.org/I/training/listserv/lists.htm>

Netiquette Guidelines. - Hambridge, Sally: <http://www.ifla.org/I/training/listserv/rfc1855.txt>

Rinaldi, Arlene H. The Net: User Guidelines and Netiquette. July 1994:

<http://www.fau.edu/netiquette/netiquette.html>; URL

<http://www.ifla.org/I/training/listserv/netiquet.pdf> PDF

Brochure suitable for classroom use: <http://www.ifla.org/I/training/listserv/netbroch.pdf> PDF

AT&T Netiquette Notes: <http://www.ifla.org/I/training/listserv/netqtel.txt> URL

## **Appendix 2 : CIVIC Monitoring and Evaluation**

The following indicators were proposed by the “What will be CIVIC' working group to measure the achievement of CIVIC goals and objectives, and to monitor the processes within CIVIC.

The What will be CIVIC working group consisted of

Deirdre Williams, Roosevelt King , Hallam Hope, Valerie Gordon, Yacine Khelladi, Rafik Abdesselam, Stephane Bruno, Felipe Noguera, K Mustafa Toure, Kimberley King-Burns, Valmikki Singh, Rudi Daniel and Vidyaratha Kissoon

These are the proposals :-

- number of thematic working groups and outputs
- number of thematic channels and outputs
- number of CIVIC submissions to decision making fora (eg the WGIG experience, CARICOM ICT Steering Committee, etc)
- number of proposals submitted and accepted via CIVIC collaborations

Other group indicators

- number of members and increase in number of members
- number of persons leaving/unsubscribing
- number of posts, different language
- activity of members, for instance how many members have more than 10, 5 or 2 posts per week / month and how many have less than 1 or 2 posts per week / month etc.

Diversity

- number of posts in languages other than English

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