GIPI Overview

GIPI works in developing countries to promote the adoption of legal and regulatory frameworks that will support the growth of an open, affordable and user-controlled Internet – an Internet that can drive economic growth and advance human development. GIPI's local policy coordinators are working in 15 countries to convene dialogue and build informed consensus among all stakeholders, providing objective expertise on policy issues, commenting on draft legislation, and assisting policymakers and civil society in achieving a better understanding of the legal environment needed for the Internet to develop.

The Need for GIPI

The Internet does not grow by accident. To the contrary, it is dependent on the legal and regulatory framework of individual countries. Consequently, nations around the world are revising their legal systems with a desire to participate in the global information economy. But misunderstandings abound:

- In a number of countries, the Internet is already subject to tight controls and arbitrary regulation. In others, disturbingly, governments are moving from a posture of "benign neglect" toward the Internet to one of intervention and control.
- On the ground, there is a policy vacuum. There is a critical need for a project to assist government officials, emerging Internet companies, and NGOs to craft policy frameworks and country-specific strategies for creating the environment conducive to Internet development.

The GIPI Approach

GIPI works at the local level, country-by-country, to develop and advocate Internet policy reform based on rule of law, transparency, democratic principles and market-based solutions. Our approach is to work from the top down and the bottom up. In each country where GIPI operates, we set up a local office with a full-time policy coordinator. While the specifics vary in response to local conditions, we usually aim to create a roundtable or dialogue involving all stakeholders - ISPs, content providers, telecommunications and wireless service providers, NGOs, universities, government officials, and foreign investors. The Center for Democracy and Technology (CDT) provides the policy back-up and training.

GIPI's Role in Policy Development

Working through local partners and an open, consultative process based on objective legal analysis, drawing on international models and best practices, GIPI's activities include:

- Educational seminars for government officials, the private sector and non-profits.
- In several countries, the GIPI coordinator has been chosen as chair or secretariat for a government-sanctioned ICT council, policy roundtable or strategy development process.
- Reviewing and commenting upon local policy proposals – GIPI has already provided expert analysis and recommendations on dozens of draft laws, including digital signature bills in the NIS, the Indian convergence bill and a comprehensive draft cyberlaw in Indonesia.
- Advocacy at the international level for open Internet principles.

- A global website collecting materials and analyses – www.internetpolicy,net -- and local websites on Internet policy development such as www.gipi.uz.

Partnerships

GIPI has a global Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to cooperate locally on policy and regulatory reform, design and implementation of ICT strategies, capacity development, entrepreneurship support and awareness building.

In September 2001, the dot-GOV Consortium headed by Internews and built around the GIPI project was awarded a five-year USAID grant for ICT policy reform in developing countries, as part of the US government's broader foreign assistance efforts to use ICT to advance human development.

GIPI Funding

GIPI was launched at the beginning of in 2001 with generous grants from the AOL Time-Warner Foundation, the Markle Foundation, George Soros' Open Society Institute (and its affiliated national foundations), and the US Department of State.

Further support has been provided by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the GE Foundation, Microsoft Corporation, RealNetworks Foundation, VeriSign Inc., the Swedish International Development Agency, the Armenia Chapter of the Internet Society, and the World Bank. GIPI has also received financial support for work in Indonesia and Vietnam from the European Union.

About Internews and CDT

An effective Internet policy project must combine three components: Internet policy expertise, an on-the-ground capability, and an understanding of and commitment to the consensus-building process. The partnership between Internews and CDT meets all three criteria.

Internews (http://www.internews.org) is an international non-profit organization that supports open media worldwide. Internews fosters independent media in emerging democracies, advises on media and communication policies and laws, trains journalists and station managers in the standards and practices of professional journalism, produces innovative television and radio programming and Internet content, and uses the media to reduce conflict within and between countries. Internews programs, currently operating in 45 countries worldwide, are based on the conviction that vigorous and diverse mass media form an essential cornerstone of a free and open society. Founded in 1982, Internews has non-profit status in the US and France and is funded by grants, contracts and other awards from governmental and non-governmental funders.

The **Center for Democracy and Technology** (http://www.cdt.org), located in Washington, D.C., was founded in 1994 to promote democratic values and human rights for the digital age. With a mix of expertise in law, technology and public policy, CDT combines the roles of convener, advocate and think tank, working for practical, real-world solutions that enhance free expression, privacy, open access and democracy in the rapidly evolving global communications networks. CDT is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, supported by foundations and a broad cross-section of the computer and communications industry.

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