

POLICY POSITION DEVELOPMENT: ISOC'S PROCESS

Policy Development Approach

According to the Internet Society's mission: ISOC "... supports and promotes the development of the Internet as a global technical infrastructure, a resource to enrich people's lives, and a force for good in society". This mission statement allows ISOC to be flexible, yet remain focused for maximum impact. The organization's **shift to a sustained advocacy approach** means that sharp focus is ever-more important.

As an organization, the Internet Society made a clear strategic decision to focus its work on:

Access: Connect the unconnected to enable economic, social, and human development (enrich people's lives); and,

Trust: Increase trust in the Internet to deliver its full benefit (as a force for good in society)

In this context, the Internet Society **advocates for policies** that enhance security and privacy, enable the growth of Internet access, and promote the ecosystem of transparent, multistakeholder Internet governance. The Internet Society believes that the Internet is a place of opportunity for the benefit of people around the world. To this end, the Internet Society strives for public policies that enable the Internet to grow and benefit *people*.

ISOC's policy positions and approaches are grounded in its core principles and values, enhanced by community input, and true to the core technical invariants of the Internet. In the public policy space, we find that ISOC's unique is most effective when we can speak to the **intersection of technology and policy** - where we can highlight the implications of a policy decision on the future of the global, open, secure Internet. To be globally relevant, our positions must be topical, scalable (i.e. relevant in Brussels AND Jakarta), and actionable.

ISOC is not a policy-making body but we have found that approaching issues through frameworks and core principles is both impactful and enables members to tailor the positions to the specifics of their local or regional environments. In addition, events like the Regional Internet Development Dialogues allow the regions to address challenges that are unique to the regions.



How topics are chosen:

1. **Annual Plan:** Each year, the Internet Society's policy focus derives primarily from the **Board-approved strategic plan.**

In 2018, our primary policy advocacy is rooted in our four campaigns:

- Securing the Internet of Things
 - Strengthening the Global Routing System
 - Innovating to Connect the World (Community Networks)
 - Promoting Collaborative Governance
2. **Future Issues:** At the same time, the Internet policy environment is complex and fast moving and doesn't lend itself easily to detailed predictions. Thus, we know that, in addition to the above topics, ISOC must be ready to speak up on emerging policy issues that are at the forefront of the policy debate worldwide. **The 2017 Internet Futures report** and the **UN Sustainable Development Goals** offer an additional lens by which we identify key emerging issues that our community has identified as crucial for the future.
 3. **Core Technical Issues:** Finally, we are an active member of the **Internet technical community** and must remain engaged in issues that impact the ability of this community to do its work. While many of the issues are technical and/or operational, ISOC has a role to examine topics from the perspective of the health of the Internet and interests of Internet users at large.

Consultation approach:

Chapters, Organizational Members and individual members are all key parts of ISOC's global community that have a role in advancing ISOC's work and Mission. ISOC benefits from the insights and expertise of its diverse membership and seeks to be as inclusive as possible in its policy development processes. Members help inform policy positions but also help identify the kinds of issues ISOC tackles, bearing in mind the need to remain focused on its core mission and strategic plan/goals.

1. **Membership Consulting within a relevant scope:** ISOC staff seeks input from members prior to the publication of new position papers in a systematic and predictable fashion. Members are also informed when policy papers are submitted to outside entities. Internet Society Staff is responsible for the implementation of this process, while retaining sufficient flexibility to be responsive to the fast-moving environment. The staff is responsible to determine the final position of the Internet Society. As always, the ISOC BoT may direct the staff to conduct further consultations on positions if appropriate.



2. **Sending policy alerts:** ISOC staff provides monthly policy alerts to the membership including information about forthcoming ISOC submissions, meetings or policy documents. Through this communication channel, members know what to expect, when input is sought, and can, in return, share information and opportunities that arise from their own network.
3. **Supporting our community in advocacy:** ISOC's goal is to support its members and Chapters in their own advocacy by providing messaging they can use to deliver meaningful on-the-ground gains. Some of these include policy frameworks, toolkits and background information, talking points, power points, outreach assistance and more.

Steps of the Policy development process for new issues:

Fundamentals: Guiding Principles for ISOC Policy Development

- ISOC Mission Statement
- ISOC Principles (invariants, abilities)
- Annual Strategic Plan

Step 1: Development

- Identify issues, many flagged by members, aligned with our strategic agenda
- Create an internal team charged with the development of the policy position.
- Conduct preliminary analysis, external outreach to experts & develop initial policy position (ISOC staff)
- Alert members via monthly policy alerts of policies under development

Step 2: Consultation

- Distribute to members (and additional experts as appropriate) for review (~14 days)
- Comments evaluated and, as appropriate, incorporated;
- Final approval by Executive leadership

Step 3: Multi-layered communications – raising awareness; advocacy

- Community engagement on implementation
 - tailoring the position to local context (RBDs, chapters, Org members and/or partners)
- Public / media outreach
- Policy outreach

Step 4: Maintenance & staying current

- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of positions
- Leverage position to address current policy events
- Updates to policy positions as appropriate