

ICP Council Issues

Background

1. The governance structure of the International Comparison Program (ICP) as approved by the United Nations Statistical Commission reflects the model used by public corporations: there are both shareholders, who own the stock of the company and a Board of Directors (supported by corporate management). Communication between the two is provided partly by periodic meetings that are open to all shareholders and provides them with information about the company's activities, presents plans for the future, and provides an open forum for shareholder questions and input.
2. Under this model, the World Bank, through the Global Manager, provides the corporate management for the ICP, while the ICP Executive Board represents the Board of Directors.
3. This note concerns the make-up of the other group: the shareholders or "stakeholders", encompassing both sponsors of the program and users of its output, all of whom have a stake in its success. The sponsors include donor organizations and the international organizations. Users cover researchers, whose use of ICP data advances the application of the program's results, the large number of private individuals and companies engaged in the global economy, and the news media. While there is some interest from these latter two groups there is great potential for more engagement.
4. One way to encourage this is to provide a forum through which they can observe and comment on the ICP process. The proposed governance structure for the ICP suggests that an ICP "Council" represent these stakeholders. The report to be presented to the 2003 meeting of the United Nations Statistical Commission includes the following proposal. *"The ICP Council, with its broad representation of sponsors, users, donors, and other stakeholders, will be the ultimate owner of the ICP equivalent to the annual general meeting of shareholders in a corporation."* Here, the governance document defines the ICP Council as both the ultimate custodian and the main client of the ICP—two roles at odds with each other as the customer of a service is usually not the producer. It also clearly says the Council is not an executive body and will not be involved in day-to-day decision making. The report goes on to suggest that membership be inclusive and be as wide as possible. The governance budget does not contain funds to pay travel expenses for the members which means they would attend meetings at their own expense the same way shareholders would attend annual general meetings.

5. The following suggestions regarding invitation to, composition of and procedures for such a body are put forward for further discussion.
 - i. The ICP council become the **ICP Forum**, the members of which will promote the ICP and supply momentum to keep the program alive for future rounds. The ICP Forum will provide the vehicle through which users and sponsors can interact and influence the ICP practitioners.
 - ii. Participation should be open and not restricted in number. Everyone with an interest in the ICP will have a chance to participate.
 - iii. Participants on the invitation list should include:
 - a. All donors
 - b. All international organizations providing resources
 - c. All known researchers
 - d. Editors of news associations such as the Economist, Financial Times, Wall Street Journal, etc.
 - e. International Corporations and banking institutions.
 - f. Others _____-
 - iv. The regional coordinating offices may nominate possible participants (organizations or individuals) whom the Global Office, on behalf of the Executive Board, can invite to the Forum.
 - v. The meetings should be held annually. An example of an agenda for the first meeting would be:
 - a. An introduction to the ICP.
 - b. Review of the annual report submitted to the Executive Board.
 - c. Scope and coverage of the current ICP round.
 - d. Timetable for data collection, analysis, and dissemination.
 - e. Overview of data to be published and made available for research.
 - f. Review of resources and funds required and what the stakeholders can do to help raise funds.
 - g. Open forum for stakeholder questions, concerns.
 - vi. The invitees will be encouraged to submit questions and concerns in writing ahead of time in case they cannot attend the Forum.
 - vii. The Chair of the Executive Board or the Global Manager would chair the meeting. Other members of the Executive Board may attend if they wish.
 - viii. A formal proceedings report would follow the Forum meeting and would be distributed to all attending the Forum and also posted on the ICP website.