



Brussels, 10 June 1999
ISTAG-99/2-1

DRAFT “OPERATIONAL CONCLUSIONS” OF THE MEETING OF THE INFORMATION SOCIETY TECHNOLOGIES ADVISORY GROUP (ISTAG)

Held in Brussels, May 31, 1999

1. WELCOMING REMARKS - MR. C. WEYRICH

Mr. Weyrich opened the meeting and proposed a revision to the draft agenda to allow more time for discussing the working group reports and in particular follow-up steps for preparing a workprogramme 2000 draft. This revised agenda was adopted (in annex). He also announced that Mr. C. Horn (vice Chairman) and Mr. R. Bausch had resigned from ISTAG on account of business commitments. The Commission will propose new ISTAG members and nominate a replacement vice-Chair.

Mr. Weyrich then summarised ISTAG's activities from the preceding months starting with the members' suggestions of “hot topics”, their grouping and prioritisation, through to creating three working groups (WG's) covering : “Convergent IST applications and services”; “Ambient Intelligence”; “User Friendliness”. Each WG was chaired by an ISTAG member and ISTAG members and their invited experts participated.

2. COMMISSION AND DGXIII UPDATE - MR. R. VERRUE

Mr. Verrue announced that a “salle d'écoute” had been installed so that IST Heads of Unit and senior staff members had the opportunity to follow the meeting “on-line”. ISTAG agreed that this was a good idea.

On operational matters, Mr. Verrue indicated that the resignation of the Commission had no direct impact on the programme since the decision on the IST Specific Programme had already occurred. The first call for proposals, its evaluation and contracting procedures were proceeding according to plan. He remarked that the reorganisation of DGXIII had been extensive and included horizontal resources and directorates that reflect the structure of the programme and its Key Actions. Seventeen new heads of units are nominated and will take up their posts in mid-June. He also anticipated that an extensive and thorough review of the EU regulatory framework will soon take place, taking account of convergence and the “pressure” of technology. It would also not be surprising to see a new initiative on “the information society” being high on the agenda of the new Commission.

3. IST OPERATIONS UPDATE - MR. METAKIDES

Mr. Metakides stated that the evaluation of the first call would start at the end of June with an overview of the response being available by mid-July. In parallel with the evaluation, there will be a “Programme Integration and Management study (PIM) looking at short-listed proposals and providing an overview and characterisation of the response to the call – the PIM report will be made available to ISTAG.

Preparations for the second call (400 M Euro) are well advanced and publication is expected on September 16, 1999. The 1999 workprogramme is unchanged and the call will include both RTD action lines and take-up measures as foreseen in the roadmap, as presented at the 13th January ISTAG meeting.

For workprogramme 2000, the architecture provided by the Key Actions and “bullet points” as described in the Specific Programme cannot be changed. However, the workprogramme content can and will be revised in line with the orientations and recommendations of ISTAG. One of the primary inputs to this process is a consolidated report from ISTAG. ISTAG should also present its report to the IST Programme Committee on July 8, 1999. Drafting of the 2000 workprogramme will take place from mid-September to mid-October and will be presented to ISTAG and ISTC at the end of October. A final draft should be ready to present at the IST conference in Helsinki on 22-24 November 1999.

4. WORKING GROUP REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS.

The three working group chairmen (Mr. Mossotto, Mr. Schuurmans and Mr. Werthner) presented their reports to the meeting. ISTAG members have full access to the presentations and working group reports which are accessible via ISTAG’s “CIRCA” groupware website.

Some of the central issues emerging by the presentations and discussions included :

(i) “Convergent IST applications and services”:

- a comprehensive report, recommendations need prioritising
- the technology “push” needs to be balanced with the user orientation
- can capitalise on European strengths in mobile communications and incentives in the development of high quality open source software products
- convergence of mobile/fixed applications and infrastructure (incl. next generation internet)
- emphasises the role for standards (may need a new approach)

(ii) “Ambient Intelligence”:

- strong vision linking “lean forward” (work) and “laid back” (home) user modes
- technology is key, but for the user it should be in the background
- “test-beds” provide a practical way forward (e.g. intelligent schools & homes, call centres)
- closely connected with user-friendliness

(iii) “User Friendliness”:

- introduces usability testing laboratories for products and services
- includes the notion of assistive technology, personalisation and specific interfaces
- user acceptability and trust are important issues
- a need for “user friendliness” criteria to assess proposals

Summing up the morning session, Mr Weyrich noted that the reports have a measure of overlap and inter-dependence and offer different levels of granularity in terms of analysis and recommendations. Consequently there is a need for homogenisation and focusing into a single ISTAG report providing the necessary input to the workprogramme 2000 drafting exercise. We may also consider how “questions” raised by the working groups could be deepened, perhaps through workshops. Clearly, ISTAG’s presentation to the ISTC on July 8 should include, a vision, market opportunities, drivers, scenarios, Europe’s position and a concrete set of recommendations. These will form the core of the afternoon discussions.

5. ISTAG GROUPWARE WEB-TOOL CIRCA

During lunch members were introduced to CIRCA, a web-browser based tool. Using password access, CIRCA provides ISTAG members with access to common documents (both download and upload) for workgroup or meeting preparation, and a “threaded” e-mail facility for member discussions. The website is now ready for use.

6. FINALISING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKING GROUPS

Mr. Weyrich proposed that the writer who worked on the “ambient intelligence” report should be selected to draft a consolidated report alongside himself and the three working group chairmen. The draft of this consolidated report would be circulated to ISTAG members for comment. This proposal for a next step was accepted.

After an animated discussion, ISTAG decided that the consolidated report should project a clear vision. Whilst the horizon of the vision could extend beyond the next workprogramme, the report should be focussed in terms of its specific recommendations for WP2000.

The “vision” which emerged, and which bound together the three main strategic issues was :

“Start creating the ambient intelligence landscape (for delivery of services and applications) in Europe using test-beds and open source software, develop user-friendliness, and develop and converge the networking infrastructure in Europe to world class.”

There were some concerns expressed that “ambient intelligence” is a rather abstract concept which may be misinterpreted or misunderstood. It was concluded that this concern could be overcome if the vision was preceded by a skilfully written introduction.

A discussion on possible follow-on technical workshops concluded that it would be better to wait until the draft of the consolidated report was available (end-June).

Mr. Werthner was nominated to present ISTAG’s recommendations to the ISTC (July 8) based on the draft of the consolidated report.

The final version of the ISTAG report (with working group reports in annex) will be finalised at the September 17 meeting.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

During the process of preparing three initial working groups, it had also been proposed to set-up a working group on “impact and innovation”. ISTAG decided that this could be addressed at their next meeting. Mr Weyrich asked Mr. Bravo to prepare with him the “mission” for this working group and to include competitiveness issues in its scope.

For the next meeting, the Commission were asked if they could find a room more suited to group discussions.

Future ISTAG meetings are scheduled for:

17-September-1999

29th-October-1999 (*re-scheduled from 15-November-1999*)

Members are also reminded that the IST Conference will be held in Helsinki, 22-24 November 1999.

List of participants at the ISTAG meeting of May 31, 1999

ISTAG	Claus	Weyrich	(Chairman)
	Alain	Bravo	
	Tarja	Cronberg	
	Michel	Feneyrol	
	Christos	Halkias	
	Paul	Lagasse	
	Bernard	Larrouturou	
	Cesare	Mossotto	
	Ann Marie	Nilsson	
	Ursula	Pachl	
	Ian	Purves	
	Martin	Schuermans	
	Javier	Uceda	
	Hannes	Werthner	

<i>Unable to attend</i>	<i>Hans</i>	<i>Berthelsen</i>
	<i>Angelo</i>	<i>Airaghi</i>
	<i>Jose</i>	<i>Alves</i>
	<i>Peter</i>	<i>Cochrane</i>
	<i>Paolo</i>	<i>Galluzzi</i>
	<i>Rosemary</i>	<i>Horwood</i>
	<i>Juhani</i>	<i>Kuusi</i>
	<i>Wolfgang</i>	<i>Merker</i>
	<i>Arnoud</i>	<i>De Kemp</i>

Commission	Robert	Verrue
	Frans	De Bruine
	Guilio	Grata
	Spiros	Konidaris
	George	Metakides
	Michel	Richonnier
	David	Talbot
	Jacques	Bus
	Gerard	Comyn
	Mike	Reeve
	David	Broster
	Khalil	Rouhana

Information Society Technologies (IST) Programme Advisory Group

ISTAG

Monday, 31 May, 1999

Centre de Conférence A. Borschette, rue Froissart 36, 1040 Brussels

Agenda

- 10:00 Welcome and Opening remarks Claus Weyrich
- approval of the agenda
- 10:15 Commission and DGXIII update..... Robert Verrue
- 10:30 IST update..... George Metakides
- Working group reports***
- 10:45 Working group #1 Cesare Mossotto
- 11:30 Working group #2 Martin Schuurmans
- 12:15 Working group #3 Hannes Werthner
- 13:00 *Buffet Lunch*
(including presentation of " CIRCA" Web-tool) Augusto Burgueno
- 14:00 Finalisation of recommendations of WGs 1,2 & 3 ...ISTAG Members
- 16:00 *Coffee break*
- 16:30 Discussion - WP2000 next steps and activities
- 17:00 A.O.B
- dates of future meetings
- 17:30 *Close of Meeting*
- 19:30 Dinner (Hotel Metropole, 31 Place de Brouckere, Bruxelles)