

***National Information Infrastructure:
Overseas Executive Organization***

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NATIONAL INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE: OVERSEAS EXECUTIVE ORGANIZATION

PART 1 - INTRODUCTION

1. Background

1.1 The Legislative Council Panel on Information Policy has requested the Research and Library Services Division (RLS) to provide supplementary information on National Information Infrastructure (NII) policies. The request was made subsequent to the Panel meeting held on 27 April 1997.

2. Objective

2.1 This information note aims to provide further information on the structure and composition of overseas steering committees on NII policies. Information on the Hong Kong Information Infrastructure Advisory Committee (IIAC) is given in Appendix I.

3. Methodology

3.1 Requests on information were sent to governments and NII-related organizations of Canada, Finland, Germany, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Thailand, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US). While Canada, Finland, Germany, Korea, Singapore and the UK have responded, they did not provide information on the specific questions posed by RLS. As a result, much of the information in this paper is extracted from the Internet.

PART 2 - THE EXECUTIVE

4. NII Steering Committee

Within the Government Structure: top-led

4.1 It is noted from overseas experience that many governments assign the head of government or minister to be the chairman of the steering committee. This seniority is considered a factor to ensure a smoother progress in the development of NII. Table 1 summarizes the existing position in six countries.

Table 1 - Position of Steering Committee Within the Government Structure

Country	Steering Committee	Chairman		Government Structure
Japan	Advanced Information and Telecoms Society Promotion Headquarters	Prime Minister	↘	Head of the Executive
Korea	KII Policy Committee	Prime Minister	→	
Thailand	National Information Technology Committee	Deputy Prime Minister	↗	
UK	Ministerial Committee on IT	Lord Privy Seal	→	Cabinet
Germany	The State Secretarial Committee of Information Society	Secretary of State for Economics	↘	Ministry
US	Information Infrastructure Task Force	Secretary of Commerce	↗	

Sources:

1. <http://www.iitf.nist.gov/>
2. <http://www.nitc.go.th/>
3. <http://open.gov.uk/>
4. <http://www.ncb.gov.sg/nii/95scan2/KII.htm>
5. Department of Trade and Industry, UK
6. The German Parliament

No Steering Committee: one body

4.2 There are some cases where no committee is formed to steer the development of NII. Yet, there is one entity designated the responsibility to co-ordinate the NII development. For example, there is no NII steering committee in Finland¹, where the responsibility of developing NII is shared by several ministries. Nonetheless, there is one ministry (the Ministry of Finance) assigned as an overall coordinator of the development of the NII. In Singapore, where the government did not set up a committee to steer the development of NII, she has assigned the responsibility of guiding the development of the country's information technology (which includes the development of NII) to National Computer Board (NCB)².

Composition of Steering Committee

Wide Representativeness

4.3 Since the NII policies cover diverse interests, sufficient effort has to be made in order to ensure that the interests of all concerned parties can be adequately articulated and channelled into the consultation and decision making process of the steering committee and its subcommittees. One feasible way is to enlarge the representativeness of the committees. If the NII steering committee is within the government structure such as Germany, Korea, the UK and the US, the membership of the steering committee comprises representatives of relevant government departments. In the case of Singapore, the membership of NCB comprises government officials, representatives from academic, telecommunications, broadcasting and business sectors. It is also observed that each sector has similar number of representatives in the committee. Table 2 and 3 summarize the situation.

¹ Source: Ministry of Finance, Finland.

² The NCB is a statutory board under the Ministry of Trade and Industry and comprises members from different backgrounds.

Table 2 - Composition of the Steering Committee Within the Government Structure

Country	Steering Committee	Composition
Germany	State Secretarial Committee of Information Society	Secretary of State of Federal Ministry of Economics, Directors of Federal Chancellery, State Secretaries from the Foreign Office, Federal Ministries of Education, Science, Research and Technology, Post and Telecommunication, Justice, the Interior, Labour and Social Affairs, Health, Transport, Family, Elderly, Women and Youth
Korea	KII Policy Committee	The Prime Minister, Minister of Economic Planning Board, Home Affairs, Finance, National Defence, Education, Resources, Commerce & Industry, Construction, Health and Social Affairs, Transportation, Communications, Government Administration, Science & Technology, Environment and Public Information
UK	Ministerial Committee on IT	Lord Privy Seal from the Cabinet, President of the Board of Trade, Minister for Science and Technology, Minister for Public Service, Secretary of State for Education and Employment and Secretary of State for National Heritage
US	Information Infrastructure Task Force	Representatives of Federal agencies responsible for the development and application of information and telecommunications technologies

Remark: KII stands for the Korea Information Infrastructure and IT stands for Information Technology

Sources:

1. <http://open.gov.uk/>
2. <http://www.iitf.nist.gov/>
3. <http://www.ncb.gov.sg/nii/95scan2/KII.htm>
4. Department of Trade and Industry, UK
5. The German Parliament

Table 3 - Composition of NCB, Singapore

Country	Steering Committee	Composition
Singapore	National Computer Board	Academics: 1 Broadcasting: 1 Business: 2 Government Ministry: 2 Private Association: 2 Statutory Board *: 4 Telecommunications : 1

Remark: * statutory boards are within the government structure

Source: <http://www.ncb.gov.sg/>

Subcommittee

4.4 Since NII policies have an extensive coverage, many steering committees have established subcommittees to assist them to formulate policies, monitor progress and coordinate efforts. The subcommittees can also be viewed as an enlargement of membership of the steering committee. They can absorb expertise from different NII-related sectors in the respective subcommittee and enjoy the benefits brought about by division of labour. For example, in the US, three subcommittees covering different policy areas are formed under the Information Infrastructure Task Force and seven working groups are set up to assist the subcommittees. In the UK, though there is no subcommittee under the Ministerial Committee on IT, there is a corresponding group of officials from the government departments who are represented on the Ministerial Committee. This is the same as Germany. Figures 1 - 4 depict the structure.

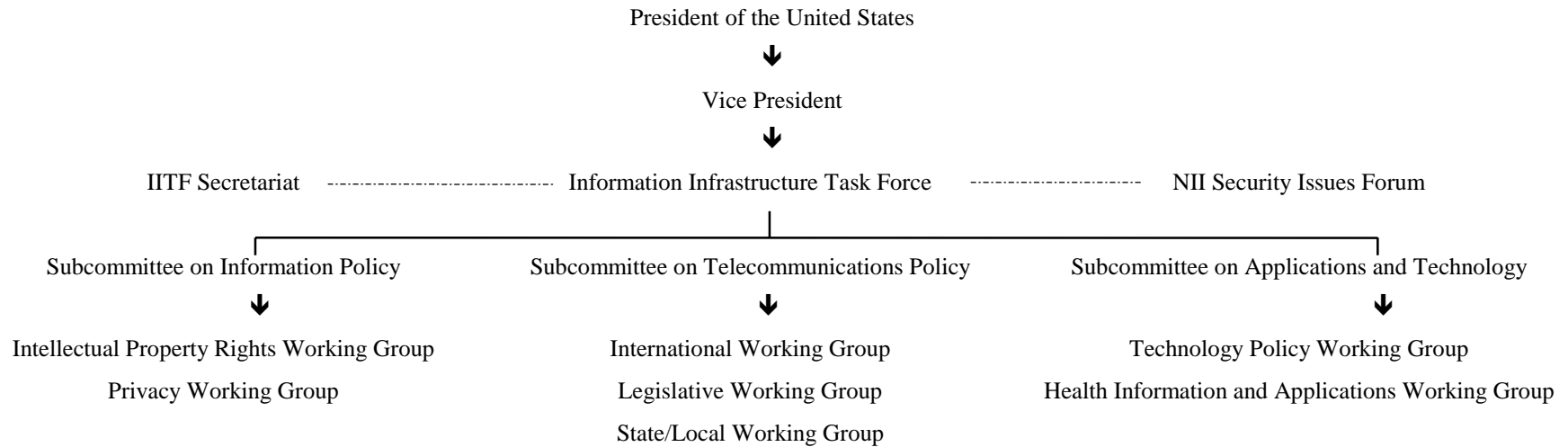
With Subcommittees

Figure 1 - Structure of NII Steering Committee in Korea



Source: <http://www.ncb.gov.sg/nii/>

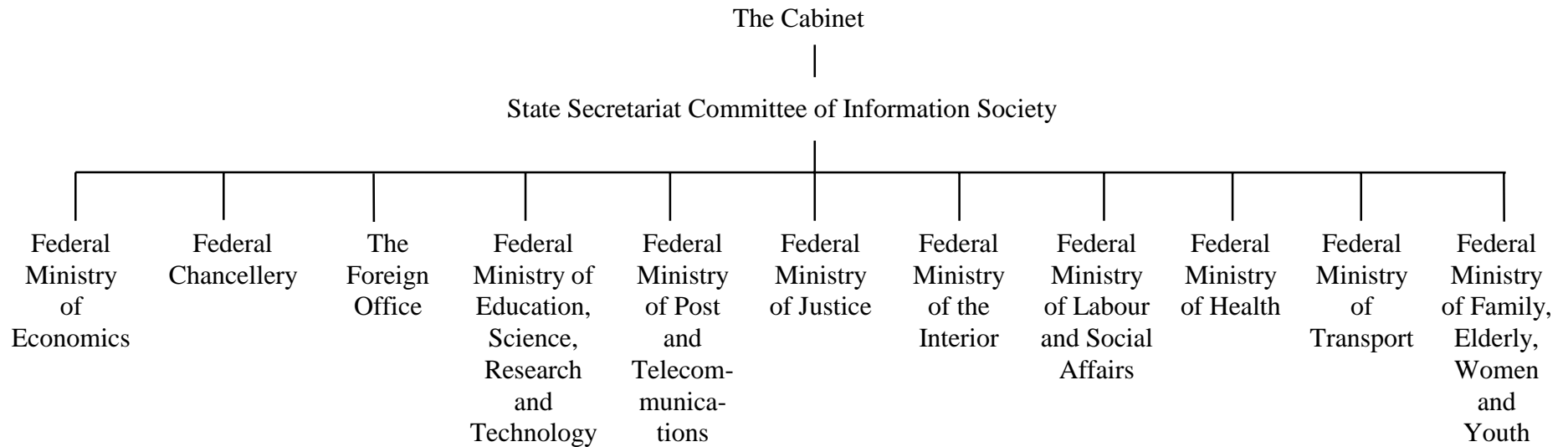
Figure 2 - Structure of NII Steering Committee in the US



Source: <http://www.iitf.nist.gov/>

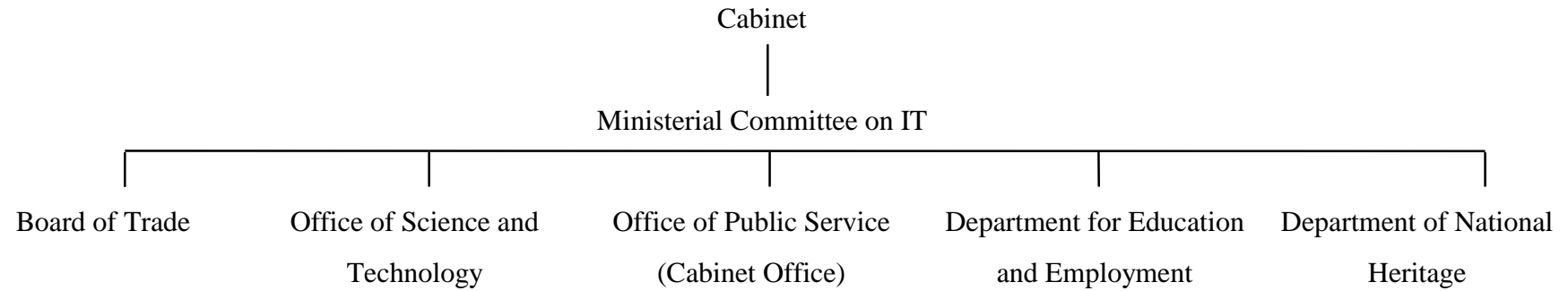
No Subcommittees

Figure 3 - Structure of NII Steering Committee in Germany



Source: The German Parliament

Figure 4 - Structure of NII Steering Committee in the UK



Source: <http://open.gov.uk/>

Support to the Steering Committee

4.5 The development of NII demands a high level of coordination and liaison among different parties and concerned groups. Therefore, every steering committee and its subcommittees need a secretariat to assist its operation. It is noted from the overseas experience that it is usually the corresponding ministry which acts as the secretariat for the steering committee and its subcommittees. Table 4 summarizes the findings.

Table 4 - Secretariat Support to NII Steering Committee in Thailand and the US

Country	Committee	Secretariat
Thailand	National Information Technology Committee (NITC) ↓ Subcommittee on Information Infrastructure	National Electronics and Computer Technology Center (NECTEC), a government statutory agency under the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment ↓ representatives from NECTEC appointed as secretary or assistant secretary
US	Information Infrastructure Task Force	IITF Secretariat (National Institute of Standards and Technology of Department of Commerce)

Sources:

1. <http://www.nitc.go.th/>
2. <http://www.iitf.nist.gov/>

Appendix I

Hong Kong Information Infrastructure Advisory Committee (IIAC)

IIAC

I. Hong Kong does not have a blueprint or policies on Hong Kong Information Infrastructure (HKII). Different policies of HKII are left to different policy branches and departments. Recently, an Information Infrastructure Advisory Committee (IIAC) was established under the Office of Telecommunications Authority to coordinate the development of HKII. This is viewed as a first step towards the development of HKII. Nonetheless, the IIAC remains as an advisory committee and cannot be regarded as a steering committee of HKII.

Terms of Reference of IIAC

II. The terms of reference of IIAC are listed below³:

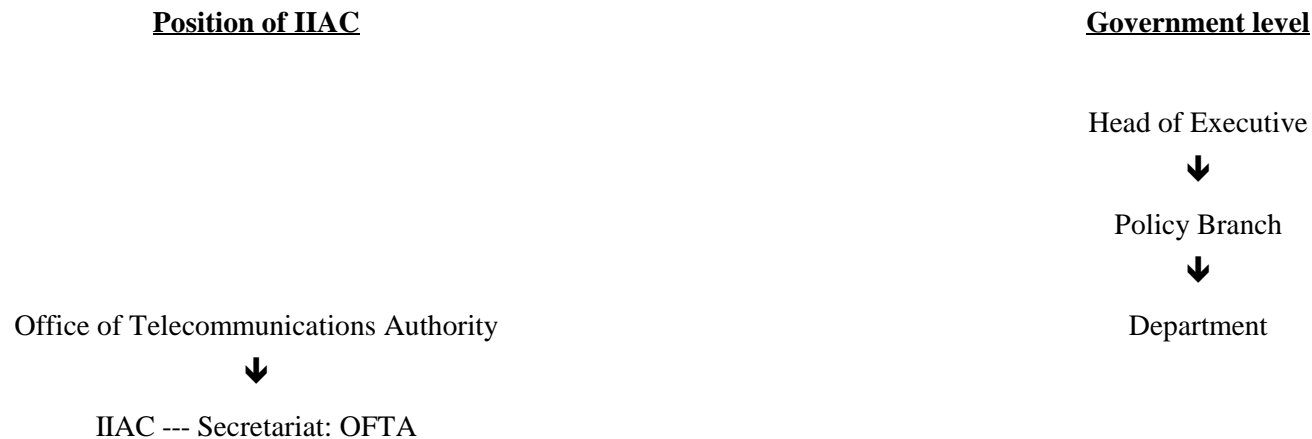
- (a) To advise on the development and regulation of the information infrastructure in Hong Kong
- (b) To advise on the promotion of the effective use of the information infrastructure for various possible applications in Hong Kong
- (c) To advise on technical standards and related issues in the development of the information infrastructure in Hong Kong
- (d) To advise on the formulation of Hong Kong's position at, and contribution to, international and regional fora on issues relating to the global and regional information infrastructure

³ Sources: LegCo Paper No. CB(2) 1993/96-97 and <http://ofta.gov.hk/>

Structure

III. Figure I shows the position of IIAC within the government structure. Unlike the overseas NII steering committees as illustrated in Table 1, the IIAC is formed under a government department. It is learnt from OFTA that the IIAC would provide direct input in making the telecommunications policy through OFTA to the Economics Services Branch. For other HKII-related policies, the IIAC would make recommendations to the relevant policy branch.

Figure I - Position Within the Government Structure



Sources:

1. LegCo Paper No. CB(2) 1993/96-97
2. <http://ofta.gov.hk/>
3. Office of Telecommunications Authority

Composition

IV. Table I shows the composition of IIAC. It is noted that a relatively large membership of the IIAC comes from the telecommunications sector.

Table I - Composition of IIAC

Committee	Composition
Information Infrastructure Advisory Committee	Academics: 4 Government: 3 Telecommunications: 8 IT-related: 4 Others: 3

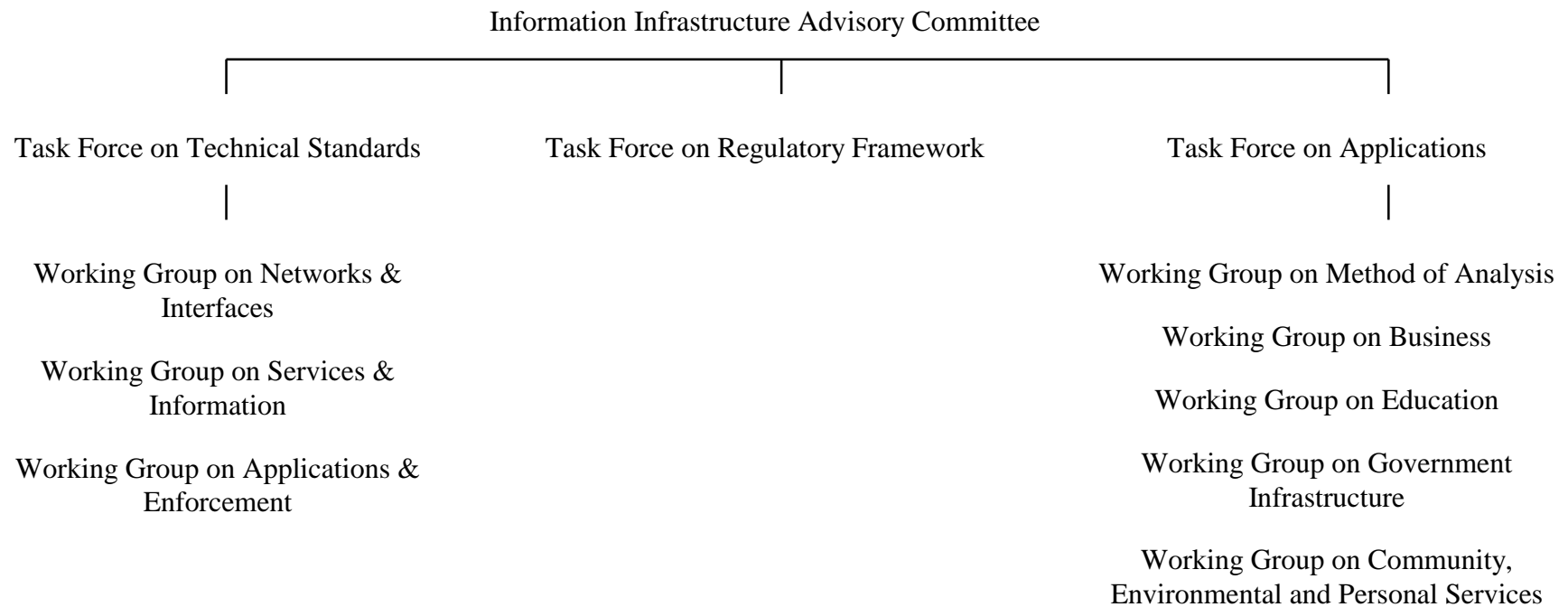
Sources:

1. LegCo Paper No. CB(2) 1993/96-97
2. <http://ofta.gov.hk/>

Subcommittee

V. Like the overseas NII steering committees, the IIAC also forms three subcommittees and eight working groups to assist its operation. Figure II depicts the structure.

Figure II - Structure of IIAC



Sources:

1. LegCo Paper No. CB(2) 1993/96-97
2. <http://ofta.gov.hk/>
3. Office of the Telecommunications Authority

References

1. <http://www.iitf.nist.gov/>
2. <http://www.ncb.gov.sg/>
3. <http://www.nitc.go.th/>
4. <http://open.gov.uk/>
5. <http://vn.fi/vm/suomi/muuta/tyk/english.htm>
6. <http://www.nic.go.kr/MIC>
7. <http://www.mic.go.kr/MIC/paper.html>
8. <http://ofta.gov.hk/>
9. The German Parliament
10. UK Department of Trade and Industry