



Global Economic Governance Programme

Centre for International Studies | Department for Politics and International Relations



Expert Taskforce on Global Knowledge Governance

The Challenges Facing Global Knowledge Governance

Knowledge plays a central role in empowering societies to address the multiple, political, economic and social challenges they face. With globalisation, revolutions in communications and information technologies (ICT), and a myriad of scientific advances, knowledge has become an increasingly important factor in achieving innovation, growth and competitiveness and in sustaining cultural creativity.

The ability of people to harness knowledge is, however, dependent on the structure of knowledge ownership. At present, intellectual property (IP) rules are the predominant tool for regulating the creation, diffusion and use of knowledge – and related goods and services. However, the unprecedented strengthening of IP rules in the past two decades has become a source of profound tension. Indeed, current arrangements for global knowledge governance face a range of challenges, including:

- A complex and expanding patchwork of multilateral, regional and bilateral regimes, institutions, processes and rules, both intergovernmental and private;
- Developing country demands for greater voice and for rebalancing the global IP system;
- Multiplying calls from stakeholders for greater transparency, accountability and participation;
- A proliferation of global policy debates with an IP dimension – ranging from debates on climate change, food security, the internet and innovation to those on how to expand access to affordable medicines, knowledge, and education and on traditional knowledge; and
- Ongoing debates on how best to stimulate innovation and creativity and to share their benefits, and on the appropriate balance between proprietary knowledge and the public domain.

Aware that the contest over the scope and distribution of IP rights – and appropriate governance arrangements - is set to intensify, Oxford University's Global Economic Governance Programme has convened an independent Expert Taskforce on Global Knowledge Governance to propose a set of principles and options for reform.

The Expert Taskforce on Global Knowledge Governance

Launched in November 2009, the taskforce will publish its report in late 2010. The taskforce's work will address the following questions:

- What are the most critical current and emerging global trends and challenges relating to knowledge generation, access and use? What are the issues that matter most to different kinds of stakeholders?
- How effective are the current arrangements for global knowledge governance in facing these challenges? Are they adequate for responding to emerging trends and future challenges?
- What are key principles that should guide reform of the global knowledge governance and what are the options for reform?

The taskforce is led by a small, core team of experts participating in a personal capacity, supported by several distinguished Honorary Advisors. The work of the taskforce will include consultations and interviews with a diversity of academics, policy experts, and stakeholder communities around the world. The report will be peer-reviewed by a group of leading international scholars working on the intersection of issues covered in the study.

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