

The Policy Entrepreneurship Advisory Committee
A Short History of the World's Most Influential
Global Governance and Policy Network
2008-2015

This Paper, a work of fiction, is based on a similar paper prepared for a September 2007 conference at Poet's Cove, Pender Island, British Columbia. The intent is to inspire action corresponding to the events presented as historical fact.

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The Gleam in the Eye “The idea is there, locked inside. All you have to do is remove the excess stone.” Michelangelo

Paul Martin, former Prime Minister of Canada, had the original inspiration for the idea of a network of influential research institutions to support an expanded Leaders summit process. Mr. Martin, ably assisted by Jonathan Fried (Mr. Martin’s Finance G20 Deputy) was inaugural chair of the G20 Finance Ministers. Having chaired the G7 Finance Ministers process, he was impressed with the constructive activity of the G20 Finance Ministers. More inclusivity (than the G7) was a necessary but not sufficient condition for productive meetings. To be productive, the Finance Ministers’ meetings must be well prepared. Martin’s conjecture was that the G20 Ministers would be more effective if supported by a shadow network of independent policy research institutions, each influential in their own countries. When Mr. Martin introduced the idea of raising the G20 to Leaders’ level (www.L20.org), he suggested the idea of the policy research institutions network to underpin and strengthen the preparatory process for Leaders meetings.

The founding proposal emerged from a CFGS-CIGI meeting at Poet’s Cove, British Columbia in September 2007. The meeting devised an approach to create a new non partisan network of independent members to provide substantive analytic and policy support to the G8+5 deliberations.¹ The group included representatives of business, civil society, legislators and the OECD. They were convinced that there was a need for a structured “Track II process”, an informal or unofficial process working outside official “Track I” negotiation, mediation, or government to government processes. Track II multilateral dialogues of private actors, NGOs, research institutes and universities can improve communication and understanding. The consensus was that there is value in an organized process of communication and information sharing in an informal, unofficial but systematic structure.

The intent was to establish a network, based on the model of the airline industry’s Star Alliance – where each participant remained completely independent, but agreed to share information and policy research results. Most meeting participants had coincidentally read Louis Menand’s New Yorker article on James Surowiecki’s “The Wisdom of Crowds” (2004). Surowiecki argued that a large number of people with partial information and varying degrees of intelligence and expertise will collectively reach better or more accurate results than will a small number of like-minded, highly intelligent experts.² The key things that make “crowds” intelligent are diversity (of information and opinion) and independence.³ By “crowd”, Surowiecki was referring to *a collection of individuals*. Individuals whose independent knowledge (and “independent” is a key word in what makes the crowd “smart”) is aggregated in some way, not smushed into one amorphous Consensus Result.⁴

¹ Starting with the Gleneagles Summit, Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa were invited to join the G8 Summit meeting and a G8+5 process was initiated in the climate change area.

² http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/books/2007/07/09/070709crbo_books_menand?currentPage=2

³ <http://www.danieldrezner.com/archives/001531.html>

⁴ http://headrush.typepad.com/creating_passionate_users/2007/01/the_dumbness_of.html

The new network's intended mandate was inspired by Simon Maxwell's four functions of policy entrepreneurs: story teller, networker, engineer and fixer.⁵ It was refined by the Club of Madrid/UN Foundation approach to establishing a focused constructive dialogue.⁶ This led Rolf Alter to christen the proposed network the Policy Entrepreneurship Advisory Committee (PEAC).

John English put forward the idea that any network activity needed a state of the art information and communication utility. English could arrange access to the library and services of the Centre for International Governance Innovation;⁷ Xue Lan offered a physical location for the network's secretariat at Tsinghua University, one of China's premier universities. Rolf Alter proposed organizing an informal "constitutional convention" in Paris to secure a "godparent" in the official world. A mutually convenient date was agreed.

The Courtship "Nearly every man who develops an idea works it up to the point where it looks impossible, and then he gets discouraged. That's not the place to become discouraged."
Edison

There were four barriers to the proposal. First, proponents would have to develop a concrete proposal that would convincingly explain the merits of a new networking initiative. Second, it needed a patron, an endorsement that provided legitimacy, but maintained independence. Third, an effective entity would need a convincing non partisan business case. Fourth, nothing happens without financial resources.

Nothing could be consummated unless these four barriers were credibly addressed. Four "marriage brokers" acted to lay the groundwork to overcome the four barriers.

⁵ Maxwell identified four styles of policy entrepreneurship informed by an image of how the researcher can best contribute to the policy process, to inspire and inform policy and practice. The storyteller provides narratives to help get over to policy-makers what the problem is and what the solution might be. The networker must oil his (or her) way around the floor, oozing charm from every pore, interacting with the policy and epistemic communities: "If you are inside the tent, your voice is heard and you will have an influence." The engineer works not just with the senior level policy-makers, but also with the 'street-level bureaucrats', to avoid implementation gaps between what politicians and policy-makers think that they are doing and what actually happens on the ground. The 'fixer' understands the policy and political process, knowing when to make the pitch and to whom. Simon cautions that use the right styles at the right times. That is both a question of choosing between the styles and about getting the sequencing right. There is no point in rushing to present narratives in a very forceful way and claiming expert power if you have not done the research. There is no point in trying to play political games unless you are safely inside the network.

[http://www.chronicpoverty.org/CPToolbox/PolicyInfluence_MediaEngagement/4.1%20What%20to%20do/1-%20Four%20Styles%20of%20Policy_Entrepreneurship%20\(SM\).pdf](http://www.chronicpoverty.org/CPToolbox/PolicyInfluence_MediaEngagement/4.1%20What%20to%20do/1-%20Four%20Styles%20of%20Policy_Entrepreneurship%20(SM).pdf)

⁶ <http://www.clubmadrid.org/cmadrid/index.php?id=911> and http://www.unfoundation.org/media_center/press/2006/pr_122006.asp

The mandate was inspired by a 2007 initiative of Club of Madrid with the UN Foundation. They established a High-Level Task Force to Seek a New Climate Change Framework. It was "to provide support and leadership for a dialogue taking into account the concerns and needs of different regions, levels of development, and the role that parties involved – in government, politics and institutions – should and can play in stopping climate change."

<http://www.clubmadrid.org/cmadrid/index.php?id=964>

⁷ See www.igloo.org and www.governancevillage.org

First, Gordon Smith offered to demonstrate the proof of concept for the idea of a global policy and governance network. He arranged three “matchmaking” Chatham House rule dialogues between serving policymakers on the one hand and a group representing leading policy researchers on the other. In this privileged context, the policymakers had access to state of the art thinking and unfiltered access to experts from across the globe, at little cost to their own organization. The researchers had face-to-face access to high ranking officials interested in their ideas and views. The first meeting was co-hosted in February 2008 by the Japan Institute of International Affairs to dialogue with Yoshi Nishimura, Japan’s chief climate change negotiator in the process of preparing the Hokkaido Summit. The Second meeting, March 2008, was co-hosted by the Mexican Foreign Ministry to dialogue with Lourdes Aranda, the Foreign Ministry head who was the coordinator for the G5 in their preparations for the Hokkaido summit. She was interested in an exchange on global governance mechanisms and institutions across the spectrum of multilateral issues. The third event, April 2008, chaired by the Secretary General of the OECD, was in Paris, to dialogue with the Secretariat on the economics of climate change policies – preparing the Secretariat for a conference they were hosting later that spring.

Second, Rolf Alter resolved the question of a patron. He agreed to pitch the idea of the network to OECD Secretary General Angel Gurría.⁸ The OECD was focused on the G8 leaders’ Heiligendamm request for them to act as “a platform for dialogue” between G8 countries and Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa. Alter noted that the OECD had its own useful model – the Business/Industry and Trade Union Advisory Committees. The Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) to the OECD, an interface for trade unions with the OECD, is an international trade union organization that has consultative status with the OECD and its various committees. BIAC brings together the advice and counsel of the business communities of the member countries of the OECD.⁹

OECD Secretary General Angel Gurría hosted a working breakfast in his Boardroom at the OECD’s Chateau offices. Present were representatives of CFGS (Gordon Smith), IUCN (Erich Vogt), CIGI (Ramesh Thakur and Paul Heinbecker) and the Mexican Council on Foreign Relations (Andrés Rozental). Alter suggested that for subsequent events, the Secretariat would provide custom tailored background briefings and be represented by one of its policy experts. Eventually, why not an independent committee under the Secretary General’s patronage, defining its own mandate and governance, to bring together the advice and counsel of research institutions, from all OECD member countries, not just the G8 members? To conclusively demonstrate the utility of the concept, the Secretary General invited Gordon Smith to organize an outreach event of the “excluded”, policy experts from (both OECD member and non member) countries outside the G8+5. Jessica Byron and Susan Park co-chaired the Program committee. This event took place in April 2009.

⁸ Gurría’s “+5” credentials included terms as both Foreign Minister and Finance Minister of Mexico.

⁹ TUAC’s origins go back to 1948 when it was founded as a trade union advisory committee for the European Recovery Programme - the Marshall Plan. TUAC’s role is to help ensure that global markets are balanced by effective social dimension. Through regular consultations with various OECD committees, the secretariat, and member governments TUAC coordinates and represents the views of the trade union movement in the industrialized countries. It is also responsible for coordinating the trade union input to the annual G8 economic summits and employment conferences. TUAC’s affiliates consist of over 58 national trade union centres in the 30 OECD industrialized countries that together represent some 66 million workers. TUAC operates through a small secretariat, based in Paris, of 5 policy staff and 3 administrative staff.

Third, in spring 2009, Rohinton Medhora offered that IDRC would prepare the business case for the network. IDRC was ideally placed to draft the proposal, including options for mandate, envisioned work products, partnerships, staffing and governance. IDRC had long been in the business of promoting the establishment and support of networks across the developing world. IDRC was an acknowledged leader in promoting evaluation and evidence based policy. IDRC was a respected partner of other official donors (e.g. DFID) and Foundations (e.g. Hewlett & the UN Foundation). As a non-departmental corporation, IDRC was arms length from the Canadian government. Medhora commissioned Martin Lees (Club of Rome), Denise Gregory (CEBRI) and Diana Tussie (FLACSO) to draft a synthesis proposal and the business case for the network. They worked with Erich Vogt and Ramesh Thakur. Vogt brought to the table the IUCN's experience networking with Southern partners. Thakur, representing CIGI, brought a wealth of experience from his years as UNU Vice Rector. The proposal was produced by mid October 2008.

The Network's emerging purpose was to support member institutions to independently brief their own government officials and to input into G8+5 legislators, IUCN, WBCSD activities. The founders were informed by Simmons and de Jonge Oudraat's analysis of the five factors necessary for success on the global stage.¹⁰ In addition to cohesiveness of coalitions, adequate money; and appropriate timing, the new organization would focus on effective choices in framing issues so as to grab public and elite attention. It would be composed of partnerships including key players capable of effecting change at a particular moment because of their bureaucratic, symbolic or moral authority.

John English was the fourth marriage broker. He dealt with the critical issue of resources. To assure independence and truly incremental resources, the required financial could not come from governments or the OECD. In spring of 2009, after the Paris meeting on "Including the Excluded", English agreed to approach Jim Balsillie, the generous patron of the Centre of International Governance Innovation and the Balsillie School of International Affairs. Balsillie agreed to fund the set up costs and the first year's operating costs.¹¹

The Ceremony "Promise is most given when the least is said." George Chapman

The Policy Entrepreneurship Advisory Committee was formally inaugurated at a conference in Beijing in summer of 2009 choreographed by John English, Martin Lees and Gordon Smith, who arranged for representatives of the G8+5 Sherpas to be present. Angel Gurría chaired the gathering. The program agenda was organized by a committee co-chaired by Lees and Xue Lan. Thirty research institutions from OECD and "+5" countries, as well as WBCSD, IUCN, GLOBE, and IIASA, participated as founding members. Gurría chaired the session at which the catalytic outcome was an agreement that the G8+5 Sherpas would meet with the PEAC members early in

¹⁰ See their book "Managing Global Issues" p 667

¹¹ In 2009, IDRC, DFID and the Hewlett Foundation agreed to join Balsillie in each funding 25% of the Secretariat expenses for the next five years. There was a sense that financing independent of the OECD would be wise. Some Ambassadors to the OECD may have opposed the OECD extending its efforts to serve non member countries. The "+5" countries would be suspicious if the OECD, "the rich man's club" were seen to pay the bills and hence control the initiative.

the Summit preparatory process.¹² In addition, the “bylaws” or “marriage contract” was approved.

The Marriage Contract “Marriage: The state or condition of a community consisting of a master, a mistress, and two slaves, making in all, two.” Ambrose Bierce

Marcos Azambuja, Andres Rozental, and Elizabeth Sidiropoulos drafted the “bylaws” of the new PEAC entity for the founding conference. Aside from BIAC and TUAC, the model for structure and governance was the European Network on Debt and Development (EURODAD), registered since 1990 as a non-profit organization in both the Netherlands and Belgium.¹³

The Secretariat’s first Executive Director (ED) was Martin Lees. He served for twelve months to establish the organization. Subsequently, the Executive Director resident in Beijing was selected on a rotational basis, from the member institutions in the country hosting the L14 Summit.¹⁴ A troika was established, an ED and two Deputies. One Deputy ED is selected from a member institution in the country hosting the next years Leaders summit, then assumes the ED position in the calendar year of his/her country’s chairmanship, and returns to be a Deputy in the year following.

The Secretariat staff is formally accountable to the network members through two main routes: the General Assembly and the Board. The General Assembly of members meets once per year in Beijing, to determine the strategic direction and management. They elect Board members; accept new PEAC member institutions; approve financial reports and budgets; and debate and approve strategic plans, prepared by the Secretariat.

The Secretariat work is overseen by the Board (from 7 organizations from 7 different countries) drawn from member organizations and elected for three-year terms by members at the General Assembly. The Board provides guidance to the staff on the substance, priorities and modalities of the network's programme, as well as on financial management and reporting issues.

The Offspring "If you have an apple and I have an apple and we exchange these apples then you and I will still each have one apple. But if you have an idea and I have an idea and we exchange these ideas, then each of us will have two ideas." G B Shaw

¹² The idea was modeled on the two hour discussion between BIAC and TUAC and the presiding Ministers of the OECD annual Ministerial Meeting. The key was to meet early in the cycle – most sherpa outreach activities are empty courtesies, because they are performed too late in the preparatory process to affect the substantive discussions.

¹³ Eurodad is a network of [53 non-governmental organisations \(NGOs\)](#) from 16 European countries working on issues related to debt, development finance and poverty reduction. It offers a platform for exploring issues, collecting intelligence and ideas, and undertaking collective advocacy. Communication is at the heart of Eurodad activities. Obtaining and circulating information from members, official bodies, other NGOs, the media and academia is the key task. Staff at Eurodad’s office in Brussels monitor and analyse policy debates at the international level, and link with members and Southern groups to gather and disseminate experiences from the national level. They also analyse policy trends and options to feed into work by their members and other contacts around the world. The one exception was that unlike Eurodad, the PEAC Secretariat staff would not undertake direct advocacy with media, governments or international institutions.

¹⁴ The composition of the L14 is another story. It started with the G8+5. See Gordon S Smith’s Book, “The Story of the L14”, published in 2012.

Ged Davis, Jennifer Layke, Fariborz Zelli, Yash Tandon, and Katie Mandes arranged for IIASA, WRI, the Tyndall Centre, the South Centre, and the Pew Centre to be founding partners. The Brookings Institution, the Carter Center, TERI, the Brazilian Center for International Affairs (CEBRI), the Cato Institute and the Heritage Foundation soon followed. A few institutions joined in each subsequent year, drawn by the reputation of PEAC for providing a venue for substantive discussion with people of influence.

In 2010, Canada chaired the G8 Summit. As G8 Chair, with the blessing of the new US Administration, it worked with China towards an agreement for an experimental G8+5 Summit to be co-chaired in New York City by Canada and China just after the UN General Assembly. In anticipation of agreement, Canada had worked through 2010 to prepare the meeting, establishing a “non Sherpa” process to prepare “non papers” and “non proposals” for a possible summit. The June G8 summit meeting endorsed the recommendation for the September Leaders Summit meeting, with the “+5” being full partners rather than second class guests. PEAC met informally with the G8+5 Sherpa teams several times in 2010.

Each year the Secretariat organized strategy meetings, public meetings and advocacy meetings. Once a year, in collaboration with one of its members, it held its annual conference to discuss ideas and plans for the coming period. The first annual conference was held in Beijing in 2010. Subsequently, the host of the annual meeting was a member organization in the host country of the Leaders Summit. All PEAC information became available through its web site and through periodical electronic newsletters.

The 2010 meeting was the subject of Pulitzer prizewinning work by Laurie Garrett. Her articles generated great interest and enhanced the effectiveness and influence of the dialogue and efforts of PEAC. In 2012, Garrett published a book, translated in 5 languages, detailing the origins, operations and contributions of the PEAC network. It was a best seller world wide. Garrett succeeded in communicating a presumably dull story in the manner of a compelling thriller. The many rave reviews of her book led to extraordinarily wide coverage and another Pulitzer Prize.

In a state of despair (none of his advisers, while technically expert, could tell him how to manage the politics of a deal on climate change), President Obama invited retired Ambassadors Yoshi Nishimura and Shyam Saran to privately brief him to prepare for the Chicago Summit of 2012. This briefing was organized on board the Presidential Yacht, Honey Fitz (President Obama bought back the Honey Fitz which was refitted as a hybrid to save oil). The two former chief climate change negotiators held preparatory meetings with the network. They then worked out an ingenious, extensive package deal that was endorsed and promoted by the President in his capacity as chair of the 2012 Summit. In exchange, Ambassador Shyam secured for Bollywood the exclusive film rights of the story of how they broke the deadlock. The Chinese were so pleased they provided the Chicago summit with the biggest ever fireworks display in history.

The Anniversary "No man, who continues to add something to the material, intellectual and moral well-being of the place in which he lives, is left long without proper reward." Booker T. Washington

In 2014 near the end of his second term as Secretary General of the OECD, Angel Gurría was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his instrumental work in creating and nurturing what is now the world's most influential global policy network. The Norwegian Nobel Committee citation, released October 11 in Oslo read:

[“The Norwegian Nobel Committee](#) has decided to award the Nobel Peace Prize for 2014 to Angel Gurría, for his decade of untiring effort to strengthen the international organization architecture to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, and to promote economic and social development. Since he assumed the position of Secretary General of the OECD in 2006, he was the vital catalyst to outreach efforts that resulted in a more inclusive, well prepared Leaders summit process, in itself a great enough achievement to qualify for the Nobel Peace Prize. At a time when there was dialogue fatigue and distrust of multilateral diplomacy was still predominant, he placed renewed emphasis on substantive exchange of ideas to attack global commons problems. The highly successful Policy Entrepreneurship Advisory Committee is an example of his innovative efforts proving that outreach, dialogue and multilateral cooperation is the route to breaking global deadlocks.”

F I C T I O N

Overheard at the Taj Mahal – November 2008

The proverbial cynic: You guys are not postmodern enough. The age of networks with institutions as nodes is past. The range of issues the G8+5 is likely to confront over the next decade or so is going to vary immensely. And for each issue, each country and the G8+5 will have to mobilize the best available knowledge which will, most likely not be covered by the list of institutions named. Why create a network? Why not just a very small team that is good at scoping out what is required from each country at a particular moment? At times this might mean going to Harvard rather than Princeton, Hong Kong rather than Tsinghua and so forth.

PM: The problem with cynicism is that it undermines itself. First, the network is just the small team you are thinking of. We are looking to partner institutions to be that small team scoping out the best available in their country on a given subject. Admittedly, the “sharing of research” sometimes gives the impression that the G8+5 TTNW (Think Tank Network) will be limited to drawing intellectual resources from partner institutions. Rather, these institutions will facilitate the mobilization of talent, not limit their activities to sharing what they might happen to produce. The network will facilitate interaction with an unbounded universe of knowledge; it will not set boundaries on it.

Cynic: Well put, but your institutions are of vastly different kinds. Princeton brings a whole world with it; University of Victoria another world, only more temperate. But on the other hand of the spectrum, there are small institutions in India and South Africa, neglected by governments and not quite in an environment where corporate money flows. So how will this asymmetry be handled? In and of itself this asymmetry may not matter, but at some point David Victor is going to ask: What’s in it for my program at Stanford? Mr Alter and Gurria’s support is most welcome, but won’t governments ask the question: Why would the OECD be interested? Doesn’t the OECD have as much research firepower as these think tanks are likely to muster? Do you think networks have to be created by planning? That is old socialist thinking. If a network is needed it will emerge, and the configuration will be tailored to the circumstances. If it has not emerged, we need to wonder why not?

PM: But a network, like a market has to be brought into being.....

Cynic (Shaking his head vigorously): In a literal sense, what you say is true. But if the network is supply driven, the risks of misallocation and creating the wrong kind of network are serious; it is one thing to have a demand driven network; another to have it driven by the noble dreams of a few wise men. The Nobel Committee may buy this stuff, but why should funders?

PM: If you build it, they will come

Cynic: Maybe not. After all, governments are often “knowledge proof”. I can see a Secretary in the Government of India or an esteemed Comrade in the ANC, or successors to esteemed Dick Cheney all saying: “I don’t need a bunch of thinking types to prepare me.” Or “if I need them, I will select my own.” The difficulty with the network is the weakness of its strength. A network has no niche. If someone asks: “What does this network do?” it is not good enough to say: “It will provide intellectual support for whatever G8+5 issues might be;” these issues will range from water to nuclear policy, from air to hot air. Governments usually draw upon think tank networks when they are known for something specific – this network sounds too omnipotent to be accessible. How will you brand yourself?

PM: Perhaps you over interpret. Our assumption is that G8+5, if it is to work will need corresponding forms of socialization amongst intellectuals, policy makers etc. This will be different from the existing proliferation of networks. It will provide the basis for G8+5 officials to talk to each other, so that the intellectual framework for an “all things considered” view emerges. Right now, there is no network that provides and exchange amongst this particular set of countries simultaneously. It is true that a government could draw upon any resource it wanted, but it is not easy for them to acquire sounding boards for how other countries might react and the reasons behind them. So it may be that the government of Mexico could, in principle, find it easy to draw upon the best experts on Climate Change if it wanted, but surely it will help Mexico to know and understand how India and Brazil or Canada might be thinking. The sense of knowledge here is not the knowledge that we associate with official meetings – which are usually well crystallized proposals. The sense of knowledge is at the prior step – what is likely to be the thinking on various issues? What are the hooks to leverage a change in position? The simple fact is that we take this sort of activity for granted at the level of bilateral relations or among G-8, but not for this particular grouping. As for demand: We assume that once there is a grouping called the G8+5, it will create the demand. This is not a group of wise men creating a think tank, it is a group of people anticipating changes in global governance and finding the right institutional analogues in the policy space.

The problem of niche can be interpreted two ways. The first is in terms of subject areas. It is true that it will be difficult to define a subject niche. But that may not matter so much, if this network is able to mobilize whatever is needed. That does involve thinking harder about partner institutions and capacity. But its niche will be to service the intellectual dialogue a new governance framework will require.

Cynic: What you are actually proposing is a post modern coffee/salon culture, except that the entrants are drawn and mixed from a more unusual context. Instead of the European Republic of Letters, this is now G- whatever. The hedonist that I am, I am all for this.

PM: This is not about pleasure.....

Cynic: Everything is. The relation between knowledge and power is always tricky to define in advance. But what does a coffee culture do? Create Enlightenment..... Go for it. We haven’t had one since the eighteenth century. And the official patrons of the idea may be awarded the Nobel Prize.