Building the Global Legal Information Network (GLIN)

Janice S. Hyde

SUMMARY. Although the quantity of sources of foreign and international law available on the World Wide Web is rapidly growing, users quickly discover that everything is not available, and the quality of much of what exists is suspect. Driven by its mission to collect, preserve and provide access to reliable legal information from around the world, the Law Library of Congress is developing the Global Legal Information Network (GLIN), a database containing statutes, regulations and related legal materials from countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas. This article describes the history of this effort; the future plans for development; standards for quality, and the organizational structure of the GLIN network. The article concludes that although the creation of a comprehensive digital law library is a mammoth undertaking, the need for GLIN is obvious.

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INTRODUCTION

The explosion of information available on the World Wide Web includes a rapidly growing number of sources of foreign and international law. National legislation from many countries is available through web sites hosted by legislatures throughout the world. Treaties and international agreements are offered online by the United Nations (http://www.un.org/Depts/Treaty/collection/series/search.htm) and the Organization of American States (http://www.oas.org/en/prog/juridico/english/treaties.html) to name just two sources. Although the quantity of information available through the Internet is astounding, users quickly discover that everything is not available, and the quality of much of what exists is suspect.

The Law Library of the Library of Congress (hereafter LLC) has a longstanding interest in foreign, comparative, and international law. Since its founding in 1832, LLC has assumed the daunting responsibility of collecting legal material from all over the world to carry out its mission.

The mission of the Law Library is to provide high quality, timely and innovative research, analysis and reference services to the United States Congress, as well as to the Supreme Court, other courts, executive agencies, the legal profession, academic community and the general public, based on the strength of the world's largest and most complete collection of international, foreign and national legal resources. 1

Because of its unique mission to collect, preserve, and provide access to legal information from around the world, LLC embarked upon the development of the Global Legal Information Network (GLIN), a database containing statutes, regulations and related legal materials from countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas. It has joined other interested legislative information centers from around the world with the goal of providing electronic access to primary sources of the law of all nations. This article will describe the history of this effort, which is critical to understanding the current content of the database, the future plans for development, standards for quality, and the organizational structure of GLIN.

HISTORY OF GLIN

The Law Library of Congress has always relied on primary sources of law wherever possible to respond to requests from the U.S. Congress, the courts and executive agencies. For foreign countries, the fundamental source of law is generally the “official gazette.” In general, “an official gazette is the
official legal newspaper of a jurisdiction in which, usually, the texts of new laws are published. The contents are not limited to major laws, but may also include various types of related decrees, regulations, treaties, legal notices, and texts of court decisions.2 Many nations statutorily declare the gazette as the official source of law.3 Starting in 1858, with the acquisition of the official gazette of Mexico, the Law Library of Congress has endeavored to collect official gazettes from as many nations of the world as possible. For federal jurisdictions, it collects gazettes from the subnational level as well. One can easily imagine how much paper this has amounted to in one-and-a-half centuries. For preservation purposes, LLC microfilms gazettes from the countries of Latin America and Northern Africa and has partnered with other institutions, primarily New York Public Library, to film other regions of the world.4

While committed to the use of the official sources, there have been two major problems: difficulty in acquiring these sources in a timely fashion and a general lack of indexing for these sources. The latter is a particular problem for the foreign law specialists in the Law Library of Congress who handle numerous jurisdictions. LLC currently employs two attorneys to handle over 26 Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking nations. Requests for the laws of multiple jurisdictions are common as are immediate deadlines. Consequently, an obvious task was the creation of an index for the gazettes.

In 1950, in what was then the Hispanic Law Division of the Law Library of Congress, the foreign law specialists began to create an index for the official gazettes of Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking nations. Using 3” x 5” index cards, the attorneys drafted short summaries of legal instruments published in the gazettes, and they included basic bibliographic information about the source of publication. To access the information quickly, the attorneys began to assign subject terms to the cards—initially only one term was used for each instrument.

The cards were accumulated into folios published in eight volumes as the Index to Latin American Legislation, covering the period from 1950-1975. LLC has not yet digitized this information, and it is in the process of determining the size and potential cost of the task. These volumes remain the primary source for locating pre-1976 laws from Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking nations.5

In 1976, LLC decided to take advantage of the prevailing technology of the time, the mainframe computer system. The Library of Congress’s proprietary SCORPIO system was adopted for the Law Library’s legal indexing system, and the LAWL system was born. LLC attorneys began keying indexing information into the LAWL system, providing an online index that could be searched by country and subject. To locate the law itself, however, a researcher still needed to locate the paper or microfilm.
Although the LAWL system helped speed access to the information that the Law Library of Congress had acquired, timely receipt of official gazettes remained, and continues to be, a major problem. In the best cases, the Law Library might receive material in as little as two weeks (from Mexico, for example), in the worst cases, it may take as long as two to three years (certain African nations, for example). The importance of currency in legal information will not be belabored here, but an institution cannot claim to be a reliable source of information if its source material is out of date. The Law Library used whatever means it could, including acquisitions trips to various nations and contact with the Library of Congress’s field offices (Cairo, New Delhi, Jakarta, Karachi, Nairobi, Rio de Janeiro) to minimize the lag time between publication of laws and their receipt at LLC.

In the early 1990s, the Law Library convened three meetings of librarians and staff of legislative research services from around the world to share information about the development of a number of online systems of legal information and to discuss possible cooperative efforts. For its part, the LLC coordinated the creation of a union list of gazette holdings for a number of institutions in the U.S. and Europe. The two publications stemming from these meetings describe efforts of the time to define and create the International Legal Information Network (ILIN) as it was then called. The premise of ILIN was that different institutions around the world would develop legal databases that would somehow be linked together. In the days before the World Wide Web, this notion seemed fanciful, and the working metaphor was a patchwork quilt—the “stitching together” of disparate databases into a “seamless” blanket.

In 1992, the Law Library of Congress began an experiment with Mexico and Brazil in which these nations transmitted scanned images of the texts of their laws electronically to LLC. The process was painfully slow but proved the concept that LLC could acquire texts of laws electronically. Moreover, the LLC’s partners in both Mexico and Brazil expressed an interest in receiving texts in the same manner. The idea of an electronic exchange of laws between nations thus became the foundation for the Global Legal Information Network (GLIN). Today, GLIN member nations contribute official texts of laws and related legal materials to a common database housed at the Library of Congress; and in exchange, each member has access to the contributions of all other members.

CURRENT STATUS OF GLIN

GLIN is a cooperative, not-for-profit federation of government agencies or their designees that contribute national legal information to the GLIN database (http://www.loc.gov/glin). It is an automated database of statutes, regu-
lations and related material that originate from countries in the Americas, Europe, Africa and Asia. The data are in a central server at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. Access is equally shared by all participating national GLIN stations. Anyone with Internet connections can access summaries of and citations to over 75,000 laws from forty-six nations, although copyright and distribution-rights issues currently preclude public access to full texts. A distributed network is envisioned, and the database will reside on servers in other member nations as well as the Law Library of Congress.

Elements of GLIN

One important element of GLIN is its global focus. All countries are invited and encouraged to participate in the network as the usefulness of the database increases and membership expands. Since there is no subject that is not of potential interest to LLC's clients, there is global subject coverage as well. Finally, the aim of GLIN is to be chronologically complete. As nations join GLIN, they are expected first to maintain the currency of their files, while LLC works with partner nations on a plan for the inclusion of retrospective material to insure a complete record.

GLIN is currently a non-commercial venture. There are no fees for joining GLIN and no portion of the database is sold or presently available for subscription. The entire database, including the full-text of laws, is available to contributing members for free, or more precisely, in exchange for their contribution of legal information. Membership in GLIN does not in any way preclude a country from doing whatever else it may wish with its own laws, including selling its laws in electronic or other formats.

One of the features that distinguishes GLIN from most other legal databases of foreign law is that the database is being built cooperatively. No one country owns the database, and all members are responsible for making decisions related to the network. GLIN member nations are encouraged to participate in further research and development activities. Building a network cooperatively requires agreement on a set of standards. There are both technical standards and content standards for GLIN that members have agreed to follow. The standards for selecting the texts, analyzing them, producing summaries, assigning index terms, and the testing and selection of applicable hardware and software were developed originally at the initiative and as the contribution of LLC.

Reliability of GLIN

GLIN does not seek to replace existing legal databases developed by nations around the world. However, navigating the World Wide Web to find
and use these databases is far from seamless. The need to understand different search engines, the difficulty of locating information in different languages, and retrieving and displaying this information can frustrate anyone trying to locate legal texts from different nations. Moreover, the quality of much of the information found on the Internet is questionable.

On the World Wide Web, straight facts can be hard to find. After plowing through dense and recalcitrant search engines that offer more sites than you can point a mouse at, after enduring delays, lost links and dead ends and arriving at a site that looks just right, Web surfers must deal with uncertainty: Is the information true, unbiased and free of hidden sales pitches?8

The development of GLIN was driven largely by the LLC’s need for reliable legal information.

Given that the attorneys at the Law Library have always relied on primary sources of law, it is imperative, when developing an electronic law library, that the information be as reliable as published paper sources. Authenticity of the texts in GLIN is critical. GLIN does not accept re-keyed texts of laws, commercial publications, or other versions that are not from the official sources. Users should be able to verify quickly, by sight, that the legal instrument is from the official publication of the nation. GLIN should be an authoritative source for foreign law. Consequently, texts remain in the vernacular.

The current content of the GLIN database very much reflects its origins. As of December 1999, there were over 75,000 records in the database. Of these, approximately 50,000 are summary records only from the LAWL file, covering the period of 1975-1995; and a preponderance of these records are for Spanish and Portuguese speaking nations. As an outgrowth of a project initiated to index instruments found in official gazettes, GLIN contains primarily statutory material. Plans exist to expand the database to include other categories of legal information and these will be discussed below.

**GLIN Summaries and Thesaurus**

The indexing tools used in the early 1950s have been retained in the GLIN system. The full texts of legal instruments in the vernacular are accessible through English-language summaries and English-language subject terms derived from the GLIN thesaurus. The summaries are not meant to be provision-by-provision digests of the law, but the goal is to reflect, where possible, the “anatomy” of the law: subject, enforcement agency, procedure, penalties, and transitory provisions. As the bulk of laws enacted are amendatory, not all of these elements may be present in every summary.

The GLIN thesaurus has been developed specifically as a finding aid. The
terms first assigned by attorneys in the 1950s form the base of the thesaurus, and terms are added as needed to index specific pieces of legislation. There are, therefore, no "blind entries" in the thesaurus, so every term in the GLIN thesaurus will be assigned to at least one record in the database. The GLIN thesaurus uses a multi-national, multi-system approach, using legal concepts from various legal systems. Legislation from civil law nations can be located by using legal terms specifically appropriate for this system, but can also be located in the database through terms unique to common law systems.9

A great deal of thought is given to the adoption of terms for inclusion in the thesaurus. A GLIN thesaurus committee comprising some ten attorneys representing different jurisdictions and legal cultures meets weekly to consider candidate terms. There are often lively debates about how best to render complex legal concepts with a term or phrase. Indeed, there are "culture-bound" terms that defy the designation of an equivalent term or phrase in English. These terms must be maintained in the vernacular in the GLIN thesaurus. Examples of two such terms from the GLIN thesaurus include the Spanish term, "amparo," and "kafala" from Arabic-speaking jurisdictions.

Familiarizing oneself with the GLIN thesaurus is vital to conducting successful searches of the GLIN database. Although free text searching is a common search method, and one that makes users comfortable because they feel they can get instant results-type in a word, get back a list of "hits," the resulting list is often excessively large. Some systems allow refinements of the initial search, and provide hints on how to do this, but these are the exceptions rather than the rule. The option of conducting free text searches on texts across a comprehensive, multilingual database such as GLIN is not yet technically viable, although UNICODE and XML are promising developments.

Even if it were available, there is great value in descriptive metadata, such as that found in the GLIN summaries, and in the use of a controlled vocabulary as found in the GLIN thesaurus. The attorneys who compose GLIN summaries and assign subject terms are trained to follow specific standards for format, style, content, and representation of legal concepts with specific GLIN thesaurus terms. A few minutes of browsing through the GLIN thesaurus in advance will enable a targeted search that is more likely to yield desired results more quickly than sorting through a lengthy list of hits. In anticipation of the future when full text searching of multilingual texts becomes common, GLIN will nonetheless insist on offering summaries and a controlled vocabulary method of searching.

Standards for Full Texts

In developing GLIN, LLC very early confronted the need to store, retrieve, and display texts in multiple languages. The need for authenticity led
to the adoption of images of texts that were transmitted to the database in the early experiments with Mexico and Brazil. The size of images resulted in slow transmission as well as storage issues. Additionally, there was no single standard for creating or viewing images, and as a result, a digital image might look very different when viewed on computer running different operating systems (e.g., Windows, UNIX, Macintosh).

In searching for the solution to some of the problems GLIN encountered in its earliest tests, the usefulness of Adobe’s Portable Document Format (PDF) was immediately apparent, and the current standard for full texts in GLIN is PDF. The fact that there is a single standard for creation and display of PDF texts, coupled with the need to display all languages, made this format an obvious choice for GLIN.

**Quality Control and Maintenance**

Insuring compliance with GLIN standards for quality of information (both metadata and texts), currency, and completeness is an important and time-consuming responsibility. Attorneys at the Law Library are often asked to review the quality of the material being sent to the database by countries for which they are responsible. As users of the information, the attorneys are indeed interested in the quality of the data. Over the last decade, however, LLC has lost foreign law specialists for some jurisdictions that are currently contributing to GLIN. The contribution of laws from these “orphan” jurisdictions, with the corresponding English-language summaries, has been an important benefit for the LLC; but it means that LLC must rely heavily upon contributing partner nations to maintain GLIN standards of quality, currency, and completeness—with mixed results.

**Members and Partners**

Building the Global Legal Information Network cannot be done alone, although this was not immediately apparent to the Law Library of Congress. Accustomed to acquiring material from all over the world for its paper collections, the early tests of GLIN were predicated on the concept of doing essentially the same thing in a new medium. When LLC’s early test partners in Brazil and Mexico noted their interest in the same material from other countries, the idea of a cooperative, international network was born.

At present, twelve nations contribute their legal information directly to the GLIN database: Argentina, Brazil, Guatemala, the Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Lithuania, Mexico, Romania, Tunisia, Ukraine, Uruguay, and the United States. LLC continues to abstract and scan texts for Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking nations, although for these nations, the original problems of lack of currency and completeness remain.
GLIN members represent a nation's information unit, governmental agency in charge of printing the official version of that nation's laws, or other governmental, quasi-governmental, or government-designated agency responsible for generating, collecting, publishing, or disseminating official publications of that country's laws, regulations, or court decisions. The most successful partnerships tend to be with those institutions that are eager to participate in GLIN for the same reason as the Law Library, i.e., because they need the information. It is suggested that new GLIN directors consider making GLIN the center of a robust legal information delivery service for their legislatures. In Uruguay, for example, GLIN served as the centerpiece for the development of a comparative legislative research department for the legislature.

Recruiting new member nations to contribute information to GLIN is an ongoing task. GLIN has been adding new member nations at the rate of two to three new countries per year and ultimately aims for a core of forty to fifty member countries. The most frequently asked question about GLIN is about the current membership content—why certain countries are members and not others. In fact, the Law Library of Congress has not had the luxury of being proactive in the area of recruitment. Rather, it has reacted to interest as it has been expressed by individual nations or sponsoring institutions (about which more will be said below).

It is clear that the membership of GLIN needs to be expanded to include both the economically powerful nations and the less economically well-off countries, but for different reasons. While there is certainly interest in laws of nations that have similar economic standing to the U.S. (including G8 nations), LLC has the most difficulty obtaining current legal material from the least developed countries. To make their laws available through GLIN would be enormously useful and would fill obvious gaps in existing online sources of foreign law.

Joining GLIN can be extremely useful for those countries that are considering some form of digitization but have not the time nor resources to invest in the development of a tailor-made system. For the majority of nations that already have legal databases, GLIN is meant as a complement, not a replacement. Countries should consider contributing to an international effort for international consumption. There is great value in making the laws of nations available in one place where comparative searching is possible.

In addition to the contributing member nations, another important group of GLIN partners includes supporting institutions. The World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank have provided start-up costs that enabled several GLIN member nations to fully participate in the network. The strategy of the banks is simple: knowledge of laws related to business establishment, financial institutions, and commercial transactions is needed to spur investment, economic growth, and loan repayment.
Technical assistance to GLIN has been provided by another institutional partner, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Advice in the area of telecommunications has been particularly important as GLIN seeks ways to involve all nations, including those with undeveloped terrestrial communications links. Plans for testing a high-speed intranet for GLIN members are almost complete and will be outlined below.

**Current Network Organization**

The current GLIN organization might best be described as a federation of contributing members and institutional partners. The Law Library of Congress has developed a set of standards for the digitization and exchange of legal information that it thinks is reasonable at this time. Members of the network agree to adhere to these standards, although there is no way to enforce adherence, and much is left to the good will of the members.

Upon joining the GLIN network, designated representatives of member nations are asked to sign the *GLIN: Guiding Principles* document (Appendix). This document outlines the fundamental rights and obligations of members, and it has served, to date, as a general agreement on the goals of GLIN and has set the framework for how the members would work together. Although there is no way to enforce member adherence to the principles, nor to expel them if they do not comply, a cooperatively built database cannot succeed unless there is a commitment to a shared set of goals and standards.

**FUTURE PLANS FOR GLIN**

The Global Legal Information Network is far from complete. Over the next few years, the Law Library plans to introduce several new features and types of content.

**Expanded Content**

Although GLIN is essentially an outgrowth of an in-house effort to index statutes and regulations found in official gazettes, the Law Library is well aware that legal information encompasses much more. In March 1999, a new category of legal information, legal writings, was added to the database. Intended to include law review articles, opinions, and commentaries from legal scholars and national and international organizations, this portion of the GLIN database now houses the opinions of the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations.

An input form for entering information on judicial decisions or cases has
been drafted and is being circulated to GLIN members for comment in preparation for inclusion of this category of legal information, which is particularly critical for common law jurisdictions. The goal was to incorporate this information into the database in the year 2000. The debate leading to the enactment of laws is extremely useful information, and the future GLIN database will contain legislative records or parliamentary debates as they pertain to particular statutes that are in the GLIN database. Handling the information in this category may present different challenges because some countries are moving in the direction of adopting different media (e.g., video) as the official records of their parliamentary proceedings.

The statutory material remains at the center of the database, and although each category of legal information can be searched independently through the common GLIN thesaurus, they are meant to be linked together. A user of GLIN who has retrieved the summary of a law may now see a reference to “related legal writings.” In the future, this user will also see references to related judicial decisions and related legislative debates.

Distributed Network

In addition to expansion of the content of the database through the addition of both new countries and new categories of legal information, the GLIN network architecture will move from the centralized structure that currently exists to a truly distributed network. The first step toward this move is the creation of GLIN “regional centers.” Regional centers will first be located in GLIN member nations that have proven to be in compliance with all GLIN standards for the quality of English-language summaries and original language full texts in PDF format, timeliness of data entry, and currency of the national file. They would also have the requisite hardware and software needed to first house GLIN data from neighboring countries (a loosely defined “region”), and ultimately to become a mirror site for the entire GLIN database. The establishment of a truly distributed network with multiple mirror sites that could be refreshed in real time is technically complex but remains the aim of GLIN.

Inclusion of Retrospective Material

Work needs to be done to digitize the texts of laws that correspond to approximately 50,000 summaries that are in the GLIN database for the period of 1975 to 1995. Since most of this material is now on microfilm, the Law Library has been dealing with a number of issues related to the digitization of that material. A small pilot project was started in 1999 to selectively digitize laws from Brazil, Mexico, and Uruguay in the area of environmental law. The
Law Library has discovered that the quality of the microfilm may not be high enough to render clear digital images. Whether this is due to the poor quality of the original gazettes, the microfilming standards for preservation, or some combination of both is not clear; but the result is a labor-intensive conversion process that may, in some cases, never yield acceptable results.

One of the biggest issues related to this conversion from microfilm has been the lack of standards for long-term preservation and archiving of digital images. Many institutions have collectively spent billions of dollars to create digital items, whether "born digital" or converted from paper. The future of these items is in question. The Law Librarian of Congress has convened two meetings of stakeholders within the federal government and law library community to attempt to establish a set of fundamental, functional requirements, and convey these to the industry so that a set of standards might be developed for archiving digitized legal records. Just as LLC has been committed to preserving print information, it remains committed to continued preservation and access to GLIN information while, at the same time, acknowledging that it will not be able to invest in multiple formats (paper, microfilm, and digital) indefinitely.

As noted earlier, the eight-volume *Index to Latin American Legislation* is an invaluable resource that is not currently available in digital form. Efforts have just begun within the Law Library to determine the scope of work needed to input approximately 96,000 card entries into the GLIN database—and to digitize the corresponding texts. The cost and magnitude of the effort preclude a good estimation of a target date for completion.

**Developing a GLIN Intranet**

The development of a high-speed GLIN intranet to better serve GLIN members is also being planned. Two satellite antennae were recently installed at Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland, and tests were set to begin in early 2000 to determine the feasibility of using satellites to transmit and receive GLIN data. The hope is that a GLIN intranet might attract the participation in GLIN of additional countries that still have problems with traditional terrestrial communications links.

**Future Network Organization**

The current, informal cooperative arrangement has worked fairly well, but the need for a more formal organizational structure is being driven by two major factors. The first is growth of the network. The current membership of twelve nations may be managed by an ad hoc Advisory Council and the GLIN staff of the Law Library of Congress, but additional members will require an agreed upon set of rules with firmly defined rights and obligations.
Not surprisingly, the second factor propelling the need for a more formal organization is the need for revenue. Although initiated by the Law Library of Congress, GLIN is not "owned" by the Library. The need for current, complete, reliable legal information to carry out its mission justifies the staff time spent working on GLIN. However, there are a number of administrative activities that require resources above and beyond what the Law Library is able to commit. For the past two years, members of the network have discussed the possibility of incorporating as a not-for-profit organization as the first step toward the creation of an entity that could enter into contracts and raise funds through various means. It is not hard to imagine that the members have not yet agreed to take this step.

Some membership organizations request dues or membership fees; however, GLIN members already provide a valuable contribution to the network in the form of legal information and the concomitant commitment of resources (primarily staff time) needed to provide this information to the database. Through annual meetings, GLIN Directors have a say in the way that the network is administered but do not yet feel the sense of responsibility for its continued sustenance.

Access to GLIN

The question of expanding access to the GLIN database remains an open one. Currently, only GLIN members are allowed unrestricted access to the complete contents of the database while "guests" are entitled to view only the summaries. This difference is due, in part, to restrictions of copyright and/or distribution that some countries have placed on their laws. One option is to identify everything in the GLIN database that is clearly in the public domain and offer it freely to anyone. Given the increasingly urgent need to recover the costs of developing and operating the network, some kind of fee-based system of distribution is currently a more attractive option.

CONCLUSION

The Law Library of Congress has a mandate to provide reference services to the public in the area of foreign, comparative, and international law. GLIN remains its most important reference tool in this area. When the Law Library collected its first official gazette from Mexico, it is not likely that anyone would have been able to guess the magnitude of its holdings a century and a half later. Collecting this information electronically through the Global Legal Information Network should, theoretically, be easier than collecting paper, and the need for GLIN should be obvious.
NOTES

3. Two examples are Panama (Decree 26, 19 February 1990, Gazeta Official, art. 1, p. 2) and Peru (Unnumbered regulation, 6 March 1998, El Peruano, art 80, § 3, p. 160318).
APPENDIX
The Global Legal Information Network (GLIN): Guiding Principles

We the Project Directors of the Global Legal Information Network (hereinafter GLIN), desiring to promote the orderly development of laws, understanding the need for ready access to the laws of other nations, and believing that a current database of national laws shared by member nations will assist these ends, do hereby adopt the basic tenets that will guide our cooperative endeavor.

Chapter 1: Definition and Purpose

GLIN is a non-commercial database established to enable the exchange of full-text primary legal materials via the Internet. GLIN is also the name used to designate the partnership that has been established to make possible the database.

The purpose of GLIN is to share the benefits and burdens of acquiring, processing, and making retrievable the text of national laws in the vernacular and in English. After the texts are captured and processed, the partners are responsible for creating a summary of each statute and/or regulation selected for inclusion in the database and assigning subject headings from a controlled vocabulary approved by the partners for use with GLIN. The partners contribute to an electronic central file of legal texts.

Chapter 2: Membership

The charter members of GLIN are those countries who sent a representative to the preliminary organizational meeting held at the Law Library of Congress on November 28-30, 1994: Argentina, Kuwait, Paraguay, Poland, and Ukraine. Brazil, which also sent a representative to that November meeting, and Mexico, which did not, are also charter members that have earned a special status in the project by virtue of their role as pilot partners in the first GLIN experiments.

All nations are welcome to become a GLIN member country. There are no special legal requirements for a country’s membership in GLIN other than they have a sincere willingness to be a complete participant and partners in the project be sponsored by their governments as official representatives. This is necessary to ensure the authenticity of the sources as well as continuing access to the full legal texts. To initiate participation, partners must be willing to establish a GLIN Project Team, to permit a feasibility determination to be made, and to obtain their own funding for the project.
Chapter 3: Project Teams

Each GLIN member country is represented by a Project Team consisting of a Project Director, a Lawyer Analyst, and a Technical Information Specialist.

The Project Director is responsible for implementing the policies, standards, and procedures adopted by the GLIN partnership. Each Project Director has one vote and decisions are made for the partnership by the Project Directors.

The Lawyer Analyst is responsible for analyzing the legislative and regulatory enactments, preparing a summary/abstract, and assigning subject terms from a controlled vocabulary.

The Technical Information Specialist is responsible for providing technical support to build the national database of abstracts and full texts and for providing quality control for the contents of the database.

The Project Team is responsible for ensuring that their national data is analyzed and added to the database on a current basis.

The Project Team members must be able to understand and communicate in English because among GLIN partners the common language used is English. Training and periodic meetings held for the partners require that they use and understand English.

The Lawyer Analyst and Technical Information Specialist members of the Project Team must be prepared to engage in intensive training at the Law Library of the Library of Congress and must be willing to take follow-up training as needed.

Chapter 4: GLIN Central

The central coordinator of the GLIN project is the Project Team at the Law Library of the Library of Congress (hereinafter GLIN Central). GLIN Central holds this position by virtue of its development of the GLIN prototype and procedures over a long period of time. GLIN began in the 1950s as an in-house, working card catalog of legal abstracts filed by subject that helped the staff of legal specialists retrieve the laws of thirty nations. In 1976, the file was automated and the Law Library continued to experiment with varied technology to find the best way to combine the GLIN thesaurus and the full text of the legal materials.

GLIN Central has devised a training program for GLIN Project Teams that is given at the Law Library of the Library of Congress. At present, GLIN Central absorbs the cost of providing this program as well as the cost of experimenting with new technology to make GLIN more efficient and effective for the partners.

GLIN Central also may provide suggestions about possible funding sources for potential partners, but cannot provide any funds for another Project Team.
GLIN Central currently will store the central data contributed by each Project Team and will continue to test new technology as it becomes available with a view toward improving the GLIN database.

Chapter 5: Access to GLIN

At present, access to all abstracts/summaries prepared by the legal analysts will be available to all. Access to the complete file of legal texts is available only to GLIN partners. Redistribution rights for a national file remain with the partner who creates the national file, and a partner may not redistribute the data and records of another partner without the express written permission of the partner whose data is to be redistributed.

Any other access or redistribution of data not provided for in these Guiding Principles is to be agreed upon by all of the partners concerned, including GLIN Central.

Chapter 6: Access to GLIN for Special Affiliates

Access to GLIN may be given to special affiliated organizations who are helping to fund the GLIN project in foreign countries or who make other contributions to the goals of the project. These currently include the Inter-American Development Bank, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Goddard Space Flight Center), and the World Bank. These affiliates are given access to GLIN for the use of the affiliate staff who are involved in projects to assist one or more member countries or in some other agreed upon, limited manner; they are not permitted to redistribute the data to others.

Chapter 7: Miscellaneous Provisions

This is a basic agreement subject to correction, amendment, or other necessary changes that the participants may adopt by simple majority vote or by unanimous consent. Country representatives also may make reservations to any policy adopted by the majority.