

Internet Governance Forum 2022

Proposal for the continuation of the Policy Network on Environment (PNE)

3 March 2022

Relevance of the issue

The matter of intersection between environment and digitalisation is relevant from several aspects, including the international processes and the IGF's point of view, as explained further below.

The [mandate](#)¹ of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) calls for discussing digital public policy issues in order to foster sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet and to facilitate discourse between different stakeholders. The Forum is further mandated to facilitate the exchange of information and best practices, strengthen and enhance the engagement of stakeholders in existing and future Internet governance mechanisms, particularly from developing countries, as well as to develop capacity.



The United Nations Secretary-General's [Roadmap for Digital Cooperation](#)², as well as the [Our Common Agenda Report](#)³ envisages a strengthened IGF with a view to making it more responsive and relevant to digital issues, and inter alia, foresees "93.(e) Better integrating programme and intersessional policy development work to support other priority areas outlined in the present report;"⁴; and the Forum "to adapt, innovate and reform to support effective governance of the digital commons and keep pace with rapid, real world developments"⁵.



Para. 10 of the Roadmap for Digital Cooperation also stresses the importance of environmental issues: "10. Though not explicitly indicated in the Panel's report, advancing technology has always been coupled with significant impacts on the environment. Operations related to information and communications technologies (ICT) are expected to represent up to 20 per cent of global electricity demand, with one third stemming from data centres alone. On a positive note, the recent advances in technology offer ground-breaking opportunities to monitor and protect the environment, as well as overall planetary health. By harnessing them appropriately, the digital revolution can be steered to combat climate change and advance global sustainability, environmental stewardship and human well-being."

Also, among the 12 commitments of the Our Common Agenda Report for a better, more sustainable,

¹ Tunis Agenda for the Information Society: <https://www.itu.int/net/wsis/docs2/tunis/off/6rev1.html>

² <https://www.un.org/en/content/digital-cooperation-roadmap/>

³ <https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/>

⁴ <https://undocs.org/A/74/821> para. 93(e)

⁵ <https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/> page 63

common future for all, is the concept to “Protect Our Planet”⁶. Furthermore, environment is deeply anchored in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a number of sustainable development goals directly reflecting ways digital technologies can support the overall environmental sustainability.



Finally, environment as a topic is among priorities for the IGF. Namely, since 2020, environment has been identified as one of the main thematic areas for the IGF cycle, which culminated in 2021 with a dedicated [Policy Network on Environment \(PNE\)](#)⁷. The [IGF 2022 Call for thematic issues](#)⁸ saw a significant increase in the community’s interest about topics related to environment and sustainability.

For reasons above, it is proposed that the IGF 2022 looks in-depth, through multistakeholder expert lenses, into how digital technologies and digital policies can support the overall sustainability. This year’s work should build on the achievement from 2021 PNE.

PNE 2022 Focus

This document proposes that the 2022 work builds on the achievements of the last year’s Policy Network on Environment (PNE) gathered under its final output document: [Recommendations on Using Digitalisation for Our Common Future](#)⁹.

⁶ Ibid. page 7 commitment 2

⁷ <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/policy-network-on-environment-pne>

⁸ http://intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/249/20768

⁹ https://www.intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/249/20850



The 2021 PNE provided expert advice on the following areas:

- *Environmental Data*
- *Food & Water Systems*
- *Supply Chain Transparency and Circularity*
- *Overarching Issues*

The 2022 work would be a spin-off on the above areas, and would gather experts from all regions, stakeholders groups and disciplines to advise on a sharp issue-focus within the areas the community expressed interest in, during the period of post-PNE 2021 consultations, which are:

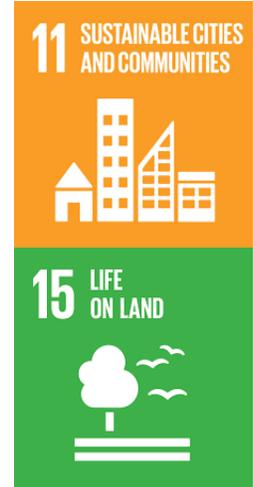
- *Data-tell stories for our sustainability: FAIR and CARE data management*
- *Environmental sustainability: focus on circular and digital economy to provide sustainable and responsible consumption for everyone in the world. Looking into consumer behaviour.*
- *ICTs as accelerators of climate crisis and drivers of socio-environmental unrest around common goods*
- *Norms and standards around transparency reporting and environmental impact assessments of the Internet and digital technologies. Are we using the best metrics to measure and understand the environmental impact of the Internet?*

Its work will also carefully consider relevant SDGs and commitment number 2 from the Our Common Agenda.



2. Protect our planet

- Leaders meeting ahead of the global stocktaking in 2023
- Commit to the 1.5-degree Celsius goal and **net zero emissions by 2050 or sooner**
- Declarations of **climate emergency** and **right to a healthy environment**
- **Package of support to developing countries**
- Measures for adaptation and resilience
- No new coal after 2021 and phasing out fossil fuel subsidies
- **Account for the environment in economic models**, carbon pricing mechanisms and credible commitments by financial actors
- **Post-2020 biodiversity framework**
- **Transforming food systems** for sustainability, nutrition and fairness
- Action by the General Assembly on **territorial threats of climate change** and to prevent, protect and resolve situations of environmental displacement



The prime objective of the PNE would be to continue raising awareness on the impact ICTs have or can have on environment, as well as to bring insights on their potential for achieving sustainability. At the same time, the PNE 2022 would continue strengthening and enhancing the “intersessional policy development work”, as proposed by the Secretary-General’s Roadmap, through building on the success of the so far implemented IGF’s intersessional work including its best practice forums (BPFs) and Dynamic Coalitions (DCs). Through the PNE, the IGF could continue contributing to the overall goal of protecting the environment and planetary health, as the Roadmap recommends.

Additionally, the PNE would help strengthening the IGF processes by engaging stakeholders not traditionally engaged in Internet governance discussions. It will further contribute to better understanding local specificities when it comes to environmental matters; assessing good practices and creating frameworks for long-term cooperation.

Implementation process

1. Working group. The PNE 2022 would build on the IGF’s existing network of contacts and 2021 PNE [multistakeholder working group of experts](#)¹⁰. It will aim at engaging stakeholders not traditionally present in the IGF discourse. As in 2021, the PNE would be led by a dedicated multistakeholder working group of experts that gather and assess good and not so good practices and advise on ways further. Its membership would include leading intergovernmental and international organisations, UN member states, parliaments, research academic institutions, leading private sector companies and representatives of technical communities, national, regional and youth IGFs (NRIs) and other stakeholders whose work is relevant for the PNE. Careful research will be carried out to globally map the stakeholders that could be members of the working group. It will aim to map the stakeholders on regional and international scene that deal with the intersections between environment and digital technologies, in collaboration with relevant helpdesks and observatories. In addition to a balance across stakeholder groups and disciplines, the working group would be regionally and gender-balanced and would include stakeholders from developed and developing countries. It is advised that the working group is composed of between 15 and 30 members.

The working group would work under the facilitation of the IGF Secretariat, while having a few interested members of the MAG and the MAG Chair, as liaisons with the full MAG and their respective stakeholder groups and networks. A neutral editor (*expert consultant under the supervision of the IGF Secretariat*) would act as penholder. The IGF Secretariat, as a neutral process facilitator, would conduct outreach and reflect discussions and decisions into a unique output document. The IGF Secretariat would support the working group to liaise with relevant helpdesks and observatories for providing relevant information, expertise and advice. The overall substantive process would be based on broad community consultants.

2. Community consultations. The process for gathering inputs would be bottom-up, open and continuous throughout the IGF 2022 preparatory process. Inputs would be gathered through the resources of the working group in addition to a community’s input. All working group meetings would be open to the community for a broader discussion. The community will be able to communicate inputs through different outreach forms, ranging from surveys, monthly webinars and online meetings, bilateral meetings etc. During the face-to-face IGF 2022 Open Consultations, the group would update the broader community on the progress made and seek for feedback.

¹⁰ <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/pne-multistakeholder-working-group>

Also, the network of the 147 national, regional and youth IGF initiatives ([NRIs](#))¹¹ would be invited to provide feedback to each phase of the output document work, as well as to the final version of the output document. The NRIs would be invited to designate one or two liaison resource persons for this process. The liaisons would be the key communicator between the local communities of the NRIs and PNE. This would also help raise awareness on the local/NRIs levels and equip stakeholders with knowledge and experience to independently continue work on discussing issues at the intersections between environment protection and digital technologies.

Particularly, the PNE would have close linkages with the IGF's high-level and parliamentary tracks, that would receive the output document for their collective round-table consultations organised at the annual IGF 2022 meeting. These discussions would provide a feedback to the document and aim for developing a follow-up actionable recommendations.

When appointed, the PNE results could also be put forward for discussion with the IGF Leadership Panel.

3. Output document. The proposed structure of the output document could reflect the local specificities, identify issues, gather and elaborate on best practices and conclude with a set of recommendations. It will be agreed by the working group. The work would be carried out through regular online meetings and decisions made on the basis of a consensus. The goal would be to have its proposed policy approaches and recommendations relayed from the IGF to the appropriate normative and decision-making fora, and be broadly disseminated to the community.

The final output document would be presented at the IGF 2022 annual meeting in Ethiopia, ideally in the framework of an IGF plenary session as done at the IGF 2021 in Poland.

4. Impact strategy. Entities whose work is significant for raising awareness or which have decision-making power will be identified and invited to consider endorsing the recommendations developed by the working group and integrating them into their work (*e.g. governments could discuss implementation of the recommendations in cooperation with technical communities and businesses; universities could integrate the recommendations in their curriculums etc.*).

As said above, the output document would also be communicated to the IGF 2022 high-level and parliamentary tracks that would further be invited to develop collectively agreed actionable recommendations during their round-table discussions at the annual IGF 2022 meeting and follow-up steps.

Also, the PNE will cooperate with the NRIs on the output document's follow-up actions. The NRIs could help to build a database of all processes and entities that could make a difference in terms of awareness raising and decision making. The IGF Secretariat would map the regional and international processes that could endorse the document's recommendations and integrate them into their work.

Further, the recommendations could be presented and explained in dedicated webinars or at larger local and global community-meetings, to raise awareness and foster understanding of the matters covered by the document.

The continuation of the PNE aims at 'setting the foundations' process for building a firmer, more impactful process and stronger cooperation networks, long-term, through a possible Dynamic Coalition which would not be limited to a particular IGF cycle.

¹¹ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-regional-and-national-initiatives>

5. Timeline

March-April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host open consultations to understand what a sharp focus of the PNE could be • Map stakeholders for outreach and possible representatives for the working group and form the PNE multistakeholder working group • Agree on a specific methodology and modus operandi
April-October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the project through open, bottom-consultations including planned webinars, surveys, regular monthly meetings and communication over open mailing list
October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First draft of the report subject for public consultations
November 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize and host a dedicated session at the 17th IGF • Communicate key takeaways to the high-level leaders and parliamentary tracks
December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the report and publish the final version • Broad targeted dissemination of the report as above said

6. MAG Liaison(s)

The last year's MAG liaisons will facilitate the handover to the new MAG members who could act as liaisons. The work will also be supported by a dedicated multistakeholder working group of experts