



IGF 2016 - Best Practice Forum on IXPs

Scope and Goals Version 3 Final draft¹

I. Introduction

After last year's focus on creating and establishing Internet exchange points (IXPs), this year's Best Practice Forum (BPF) will focus on growing and further developing an IXP. IXPs play a critical role in improving the affordability, performance, and reliability of the Internet. They therefore play an important role in enabling inclusive and sustainable growth in their communities.

The BPF output will document and acknowledge the benefits of an IXP, and identify, via case studies, factors that can contribute to the development and success of IXPs as well as the broader Internet ecosystem. The outcome of the BPF should be a living and flexible resource intending to inform all kinds of policy debates on IXP related issues in a neutral way.

II. Background

In December 2015, the United Nations General Assembly endorsed the remarkable progress of the Internet and information and communication technologies (ICTs) at the overall review of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+10). As part of the outcome of WSIS+10, the General Assembly acknowledged the role of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) as a multi-stakeholder platform for discussion of Internet governance issues and extended the IGF mandate for 10 years.

Bridging the Digital Divide

The recognition of the role that ICTs hold toward bridging the digital divide was an intrinsic part of the endorsement of the IGF. For more than 10 years, the IGF has been a catalyst for facilitating dialogue and sharing knowledge around key Internet public policy areas. Over the course of the years, there have been numerous additions to emerging policy issues; however 10 years later, there are still numerous challenges that affect access, availability, and affordability. Internet exchange points (IXPs) contribute substantially to the creation of an accessible, available, and affordable Internet and as such help to bridge the digital divide.

¹ The BPF considers version 3 as a stable draft and basis for its work, but decided to keep the draft status and allow for further fine-tuning as the BPF proceeds. [BPF IXP 2nd Virtual meeting, 9 Aug 2016]

Concrete Tangible Output of the IGF

As the IGFs progressed, the Working Group on Improvements to the IGF² called for the development of more tangible outputs to enhance the impact of the IGF on global Internet governance and policy. The IGF's intersessional work program, which includes the Best Practice Forums (BPFs), was designed to enrich the potential of the IGF and develop more tangible outputs which can serve as resources and provide input into other pertinent forums.

III. The 2015 BPF on IXPs

The first BPF on IXPs (IGF 2015) produced a report on Internet Exchange Points (IXPs) titled [Enabling Environments for Establishing Successful IXPs](#). The report explained why IXPs matter, identified the primary stakeholders, and outlined some of the conditions which can help them develop and flourish. It also contained a number of examples related to how IXPs cope with various challenges in their environment.

The 2015 BPF on IXPs resulted from an open, collaborative, and bottom-up iterative process which culminated in a [Best Practice workshop](#) at the 10th IGF meeting in João Pessoa, Brazil, and the [Best Practice outcome document](#).

IV. Scope and Goals of the 2016 BPF on IXPs

Enabling Inclusive and Sustainable Growth is the overarching theme of the 2016 IGF that will be held in Guadalajara, Mexico, between 6-9 December 2016. In its work, the 2016 BPF on IXPs will identify linkages to the general theme and the IGF's intersessional work on Policy Options for Connecting and Enabling the Next Billion. The the outcome of the 2016 BFP will serve as a resource for its target audience: policy-makers, regulators, governments, and the private sector.

How can the BPF on IXPs contribute to enabling inclusive and sustainable growth?

Estimates by the 2015 Global Commission on the Internet³ predict that the Internet's contribution to the global economy will be as high as \$4.2 trillion this year. Moreover, an estimated 20 billion devices will be online within five years, and the Internet of Things (IoT) could result in economic growth of \$11.1 trillion by 2025.

The Internet infrastructure needs to be prepared for future growth in the number of connected devices, and an ever-increasing volume of data traffic. At the moment, however, many countries are still struggling with poor penetration and affordability, as well as challenges to online freedom and security. IXPs play a critical role in improving the affordability, performance, and reliability of the Internet. They therefore play an important role in enabling inclusive and sustainable growth in their communities and can significantly contribute toward the achievement of the [UN's Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#)⁴.

² Mandated by the UN General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

³ <https://www.ourinternet.org>

⁴ and in particular SDG 9.c, which focuses on increasing access to information and communications technology by providing universal and affordable access to the Internet.

Scope and Goal

The BPF will acknowledge work that is done by other Forums in order to minimise duplication and will also incorporate the knowledge and expertise from other external organisations such as regional IXP Associations, the IXP Toolkit, PCH, and individual IXPs. The outcome of the BPF should be a living and flexible resource intending to inform all kinds of policy debates on IXP related issues in a neutral way.

The BPF output will document and acknowledge the benefits of an IXP, and put them into this perspective by addressing the following questions with evidence from concrete case studies:

- A. How do IXPs contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic growth?
- B. What are case studies that show tangible evidence of this contribution to inclusive and sustainable economic growth?
- C. How have IXPs contributed to the growth of local content and services?
- D. How have IXPs impacted innovation?

The 2016 BPF aims to list factors that can contribute to the development and success of IXPs, identify factors contributing to the successful management and operation of IXPs⁵, as well as the development of the broader Internet ecosystem around the IXP. IXPs and their stakeholders often look for experiences of other IXPs in order to identify what made them flourish. The BPF will take into account the following perspectives.

- Geographic perspective:
Isolated areas (small islands, landlocked countries), villages in remote regions, etc.
- Development perspective:
Developing countries, underdeveloped regions, big cities, etc.
- Regulatory environment⁶:
Strongly regulated, not regulated, etc.
- Telecoms market environment:
Level of competition, relative size of operators, etc.

The BPF outcome document will target policy, business, and regulatory stakeholders within the IXP environment. After last year's focus on creating and establishing IXPs and identifying an IXP's relevant stakeholders, this year's BPF will focus on growing and further developing an IXP after this initial period.

V. Participating to the work of the BPF and Call for contributions

The BPF on IXPs is seeking to widen its group of contributors and obtain best practices and lessons learned from different stakeholders and organizations, different geographic regions,

⁵ 'identify factors contributing to the successful management and operation of IXPs', addition [BPF IXP 2nd Virtual meeting, 9 Aug 2016]

⁶ The BPF can explain how, in specific cases, specific regulations affect(ed) the development of an IXP. The BPF does not intend to formulate prescriptive policy recommendations. [BPF IXP 2nd Virtual meeting, 9 Aug 2016]

and from individual IXPs. The BPF invites stakeholders to share policy and regulatory experiences, and wants to explore the mindset of the business community.

Volunteers and experts are encouraged to join the BPF and participate in the discussions on the mailing list and during virtual meetings. Subscribe to BPF on IXP's mailing list (bp_ixps@intgovforum.org) at:

http://mail.intgovforum.org/mailman/listinfo/bp_ixps_intgovforum.org

Kindly note that the work of the BPF is voluntary and pro bono.