
INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

NATIONAL, REGIONAL, SUB-REGIONAL AND YOUTH IGF INITIATIVES



The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is a global multistakeholder platform that facilitates the discussion of public policy issues pertaining to Internet governance. The IGF was one of the most important outcomes of the United Nations World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), which requested the United Nations Secretary-General to formally convene the Forum on 18 July 2006 as a multilateral, multistakeholder, democratic and transparent platform for discussions on Internet governance issues.

Institutionally, the IGF is supported by the IGF Secretariat, administered by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), while the programme of the annual IGF meeting is developed upon advice from the IGF's Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG), appointed annually by the Secretary-General.

So far, fifteen annual meetings of the IGF were hosted by various governments¹. The 2021 annual meeting of the IGF will be hosted by the Government of Poland in Katowice from the 6th to 10th of December². The IGF 2022 is planned to be hosted by the Government of Ethiopia, IGF 2023 by the Government of Japan, and the IGF 2025 by the Russian Federation. The Host for IGF 2024 is yet to be confirmed.

IGF is a process

The IGF functions as a year-long process including annual meetings and intersessional activities. Each year, the IGF annual meeting brings together stakeholders from around the world to discuss some of the most pressing Internet governance issues. Participants represent governments, intergovernmental organisations, the private sector, the technical community, and civil society. The programme of the meeting is interactively developed through the active involvement of all interested stakeholders.



IGF 2019 in Berlin: Opening by the UN Secretary-General and the German Chancellor

In between the two annual IGF meetings, the community works on several substantive activities and discusses them at the annual IGF meeting. These typically include the best practice forums, dynamic coalition and policy networks focused

¹ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/funding>

² <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/>

on a particular Internet governance issue. Their work is also developed through active consultations with the community and invites everybody to contribute.

National, Regional, Sub-regional and Youth IGF initiatives



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Over the years, the IGF has inspired multistakeholder teams from various countries and regions to launch the national and regional IGF processes, mirroring the procedures and processes of the IGF. These National and Regional Initiatives (NRIs) are focused on facilitating dialogue and cooperation on Internet policy issues of utmost relevance for their respective communities. While being organic and independent, NRIs act in accordance with the IGF main principles, which means that the planning and organization of their IGF-like annual meetings, as well as all intersessional activities, is carried out in an open, consultative and bottom-up manner, by a multistakeholder team for non-commercial purposes. The recognition of the individual NRIs, as well as the NRIs collective work and cooperation, is facilitated by the IGF Secretariat.

To date, there are over 137 NRIs recognised by the IGF Secretariat.

- [National initiatives](#)
- [Regional initiatives](#)
- [Youth initiatives](#)

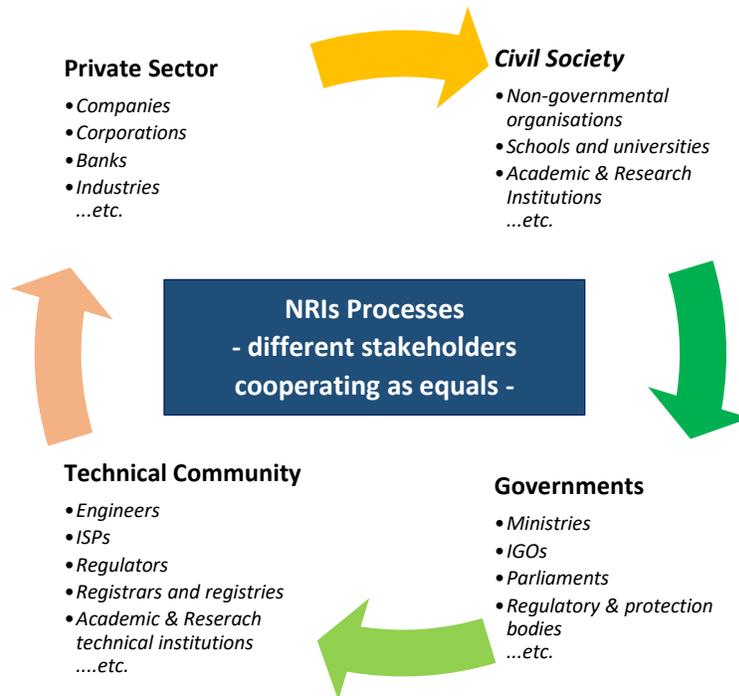
The NRIs create open and inclusive platforms for the engagement of stakeholders from all backgrounds, spanning governments, international and intergovernmental organizations, civil society, private sector and technical communities.

Through public consultations with the wider social community, they map the priority issues on Internet governance and ensure they are represented on their discussion agenda.

On average, national IGF meetings welcome around 150 stakeholders per year, while sub-regional and regional IGFs welcome over 300 participants.

Who are stakeholders affiliated with NRIs?

Individuals and organizations from different stakeholders' groups and disciplines, from different parts of the country and/or region are actively engaged with the NRIs. The engagement models are different and can relate to formal membership in the NRIs multistakeholder organizing committee; or active participation in the NRIs-led events such as the roles of session organizers, moderators, rapporteurs or expert speakers. **Illustratively**, as an example from some of the NRIs, the mosaic of the involved stakeholders could be:



Why engage with NRIs?

The Internet is all-pervasive. Its services and tools are becoming increasingly integrated into people's lives and are intersecting with their rights and freedoms. Further, its impact on the world's economy is growing each day. When compounding this with the Internet's complex nature, its governance requires the involvement of everyone- from those that understand its technical operations, to those understanding policy aspects.

By engaging in the NRIs processes, stakeholders can:

- ✓ *Meet experts with different backgrounds in Internet governance: governments, international and intergovernmental organizations, civil society, technical communities and the private sector*
- ✓ *Understand their community's digital policy issues and requests*
- ✓ *Learn from other countries good policies and bad experiences and improve local ecosystem*
- ✓ *Build trust with people through communicating and discussing the state of affairs*

NRIs and parliaments: learning from good NRIs practices

Kenya IGF Week

KENYA INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

Kenya IGF's multistakeholder organizing committee, composed of stakeholders from different backgrounds, represents a nexus of comprehensive knowledge of the Internet, its technological and policy aspects, as well as societal, cultural, economic and legal implications. Understanding all aspects to consider any form of possible governance of the Internet is critical. This is why some of the legislative entities, in their efforts to discuss and decide on the governance of the Internet, turn to these sources of knowledge for advice. For example, the national Parliament of Kenya, with its Senate and National Assembly, cooperates closely with the Kenya national IGF.

This cooperation helps the Parliament to:

- **Understand** Internet governance priorities for the people of Kenya
- **Exercise its accountability** toward people, by reaching out to the national community through the Kenya IGF
- **Learn more** about Internet governance area of interest from different aspects
- **Test the proposed legislation** before it is officially adopted to accurately model possible consequences and mitigate potential harms

By actively engaging in the Kenyan IGF's annual discussions facilitated among all stakeholders from different parts of the country, the Parliament's Internet governance agenda is inspired and informed. For example, the Data Protection Act was enacted after more than eight years of continuous exchanges and witnessed cybersecurity incidents, thanks to, among other factors, continuous substantive exchanges between members of the Parliament with the Kenyan IGF and its School on Internet governance.

SEEDIG

The subregional IGF for South Eastern Europe (SEEDIG) has fostered forms of cooperation with parliaments in the region. For instance, the SEEDIG 2018 meeting was held under the patronage of the President of the National Assembly of Slovenia (the host country for the meeting). This patronage also enabled SEEDIG to contribute to activities of the parliamentary dimension of the South-East European Cooperation Process. In 2019, when SEEDIG held its annual meeting in Romania, the dedicated ICT parliamentary committees in the two chambers of the Romanian Parliament (Senate and Chamber of Deputies) acted as institutional partners.

The mentioned forms of cooperation served a double purpose:

- **Ensure parliamentary representation** in SEEDIG activities
- **Raised the visibility** of IGF processes and multistakeholder forms of Internet governance within parliamentary bodies

Parliamentary track at the annual IGF meeting

The annual IGF meeting gathers members of parliaments from different parts of the world to one table to exchange views on a topic of mutual interest. Participation of members of parliaments through national and regional IGFs is excellent preparation for understanding the process and for bringing specific inputs from multistakeholder communities at national or regional levels, to the global level of Internet governance on substantive matters.



Parliamentary Session at IGF 2020, hosted online

The parliamentary track at the IGF is usually organized collaboratively between the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) with the IGF Secretariat, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Host Country.



The [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) underlines the potential of *information and communications technology and global interconnectedness to accelerate human progress, bridge the digital divide and develop knowledge societies, as does scientific and technological innovation across areas as diverse as medicine and energy.*³ This potential is dependant on good digital policies, which is the priority for the national, regional and youth IGF processes. And on this journey to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and sustainable development, the role of national parliaments, as well as of governments and public institutions is *essential.*⁴ This high goal of long-term transforming our world is the reason more for active engagement of parliaments and governments in the multistakeholder processes of the NRIs.

Get in touch!

Contact the IGF Secretariat and explore engagement with NRIs and IGF 2021.

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³ https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E

⁴ Ibid.