

IGF 2021 HYBRID PROCESS IMPLEMENTATION

Proposal for the consideration of the IGF MAG, 5 March 2021

This proposal responds to the input received during the stock taking on IGF 2020 and subsequent discussions at the Open Consultation of 9 February and the Open Consultation and MAG meetings of 22 to 24 February. Proposals discussed during this meeting are included as Annex 1 and discussions are reflected in the [summary report](#) of these meetings.

It is proposed that the IGF 2021 process be composed of two components: (i) a preparatory component or phase which includes build-up sessions on the IGF 2021's main focus areas, development of the intersessional work as well as a series of capacity development activities; and (ii) the 16th Annual Internet Governance Forum. Both these components should be implemented in a hybrid format taking full advantage of virtual platforms and participation to achieve the goal of making the IGF as inclusive as possible.

In light of the still ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and related epidemiological measures including travel restrictions, the process format's implementation should take into account three possible scenarios:

- A. Travel restrictions have been lifted, vaccinations are widely available, and there are no constraints to convening a large, traditional IGF-like, gathering with stakeholders from all over the world in Katowice (6-10 December)
- B. Some travel restrictions remain but enough have been lifted so that the Katowice gathering allows for a limited number of stakeholders to travel and participate onsite, but large numbers will need to participate through online means; and
- C. An international onsite gathering will not be possible and the forum would need to be hosted fully online.

Below is a proposal that assumes the best-case scenario, scenario A. However it is designed in such a way that the preparatory component can be implemented in all three scenarios. This will enable the MAG to finalise dates and share them publicly. Should Scenario B or C materialise, the same overall structure can be maintained with the second component, the Annual Forum, being modified as needed. Please note that this proposal, or any variant of it that the MAG decides on, would still need to be assessed and adapted taking into account available capacity and related resources and constraints which the host-country and the UN are impacted by.

IGF 2021 HYBRID PROCESS IMPLEMENTATION - PLAN A

COMPONENT	SCOPE	IMPLEMENTATION	TIMELINE
<p>IGF 2021: Preparatory Phase 15 June to 1 December 2021</p>	<p>Intersessional work including that of: BPFs; Policy Networks; DCs; NRIs</p> <p>Preparatory sessions on IGF2021 primary focus areas held virtually (regionally and issue-based). These could be organised cooperatively by the MAG with intersessional fora including</p>	<p>1. Preparatory phase to be launched during the June Open Consultation and MAG meeting (e.g. at an intersessional work roundtable or one-day virtual conference)</p> <p>2. BPFs and PNs to run discussions on their work areas and draft output documents as needed. They can also be invited to provide input into the IGF 2021 main focus areas as appropriate.</p> <p>3. NRIs and DCs invited to host substantive exchanges on the IGF 2021 priority issue areas; and/or to share progress on their work.</p> <p>4. The 2020 innovation of a 'guide to IGF issues and themes' to be used as a living document that includes the MAG's initial scoping of IGF2021's priority focus areas as well as outcomes of discussions from preparatory sessions.</p> <p>Important considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time zones should rotate in response to the community call and as a means to ensure inclusion • The number of preparatory sessions should be limited so as not to overburden the community or clash with NRIs that take place during this period but should include at least one such event per region. • Option of convening some of these sessions in languages other than English to be considered. 	<p>June- November</p>

	NRIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation of these sessions and even transcripts might not be possible unless additional resources are found. • NRIs can be encouraged to host preparatory sessions back to back or in the framework of regional IGF meetings. • Outcomes of preparatory discussions on main IGF 2021 issues can be documented and feed into the deliberations at the annual forum. 	
	Capacity Development	<p>1. Capacity development trainings for session organizers on effective moderation with a particular focus on the meaningful inclusion of online and onsite participants as equals. This process to be driven by MAG with community input and facilitation by the IGF Secretariat.</p> <p>2. Specific capacity development workshops to be hosted on substantive issues, in collaboration with intersessional workstreams and possibly other partners. Also, host youth capacity development sessions on topics emerged from last year’s youth engagement process, in cooperation with the host country.</p> <p>**Develop guides for the organizers and participants (on process and substance – advance like last year’s formats, e.g. the above-mentioned Guide to Issues and Themes).</p>	<p>September-October</p> <p>April-November</p> <p>July-August</p>
IGF 2021: 16th Annual Internet Governance Forum, 6-10 December 2021 Katowice, Poland	<p>Annual IGF forum focused primarily but not exclusively on IGF 2021 priority issues.</p> <p>1 day of pre-events and 4 days of annual forum</p>	<p>1. Host meeting during the venue’s work hours: 8-11 and 13-16 UTC UTC.</p> <p>2. Consider introducing floating lunch breaks, to take advantage of the CET lunchtime slot as it is convenient for the majority of the time zones. This means that some online sessions could be organised during the “official” lunch break.</p> <p>3. Optimise virtual participation through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hybrid session design and introduction of optional shorter session formats • Use of online platforms in a way that ensures participants are able to see one another and interact with one another. • Develop guidelines for moderators on how to treat online and onsite participants equally. 	

	sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage organisers to include virtual speakers etc. • The MAG to work with the WG-Hybrid Meetings to develop guidelines on the above. <p>4. Sessions numbers and parallel tracks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to have no more than 3 parallel tracks BUT also utilise creatively the availability of 10 rooms in parallel that have been booked at the venue, for example for networking sessions, lightning sessions etc. • Avoid thematic overlaps. • Consider two types of tracks: IGF main focus area track/s AND a track for 'other' issues. These can be treated differently in order to achieve the goal of a more focused IGF, but not at the expense of inclusion and encouraging large numbers of participants. • Proposed target session numbers, to be confirmed once focus areas have been finalised by the MAG. <p>Possible types of sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory sessions on main focus area/s • Concluding sessions on main focus area/s • Workshops linked to main focus area/s • Workshops linked to an 'open' or 'other issues' track • Lightning sessions • Networking sessions • Town hall sessions • High-level track sessions • Parliamentary track sessions • DC sessions
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BPF sessions • PN sessions • Open Forums <p>Consider possible new formats: Inter-institutional dialogues; learning sessions including hands-on sessions on e.g. digital safety, repair and recycling of ICT devices, machine translation etc.</p> <p>Also include 'other' sessions such as the DC or NRIs coordination session, donors meeting, MAG farewell etc. and networking sessions.</p> <p>5. Produce outcome documents/key messages building on and further improving the process used in 2019 and 2020.</p> <p>6. Evaluation: introduce a more formalised participant evaluation process that is anonymised and that provides feedback both to the MAG and to session organisers.</p>
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SOME OF FOLLOW-UP TASKS FOR THE MAG

✓ EVALUATE THE PROPOSAL AND ADVISE ON NEXT STEPS

✓ INVEST IN ADVANCING QUALITY ONLINE PARTICIPATION

- o WG-Hybrid Meetings to develop guidelines on this for MAG's consideration
- o WG-Workshop Process to advise on workshop formats improvements related to online participation section

✓ DECIDE ON SESSION FORMATS AND PRODUCE GUIDELINES FOR SESSION ORGANISERS

- o Guide session organizers through various formats and encourage using shorter sessions (e.g. a 45-minute option)
- o Session organisers to prepare briefing materials beforehand to help orient participants - WG Communications to develop guidelines for this working with the Secretariat.

Annex 1

PROPOSALS FOR IGF 2021 PROCESS AND FORMAT FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE MAG from 23 FEBRUARY 2021 DISCUSSED AT THE IGF 2021 OPEN CONSULTATIONS AND MAG MEETING (24-26 February)

Key considerations to take into account based on stocktaking feedback:

- Develop a more focused and outcome oriented programme BUT not at the expense of inclusivity and participation.
- Better integrate intersessional work and youth participation in the overall programme
- Adopt an “issue-driven” approach to programme development (MAG WG-strategy proposal)
- Decide on format and process early on in the year
- Adopt a hybrid format and do not revert to only previous forms of a face to face event with “remote” participation for those not present which, in spite of everyone’s best efforts, still results in reduced participation. This would mean ensuring equal participation opportunities for in situ and online participants. To reinforce this make it a requirement that all sessions have at least one remote speaker. This could contribute to changing the usual way of remote people just listening in to people at the venue. Also consider having at least one session being projected in Katowice with only remote speakers.
- Accommodate non-CET time zones
- Limit parallel sessions. Having no more than 3 in 2020 received positive feedback. Definitely no more than three.
- Have fewer sessions as a whole.
- No more than three thematic tracks and a limited number of sub-themes within each thematic track.
- Reduce the length of the face to face event to no more than the previous format of 5 days (4 days for the main event plus one additional day).
- Distinguish clearly between pre-events and the “main event”.
- For virtual participation/events ensure a more participative and friendly platform.
- Simplify the registration process and access to the platform.
- For the online platform, make sure that participants can see who other participants are in the room and be able to chat with them. This will provide further networking opportunities.
- Facilitate inclusion of sessions that address topics that are not related to the primary programme issues and themes.
- Re-introduce lightning talks to unburden the programme (and to accommodate urgent and new issues not part of the primary thematic focus).
- Retain the pre-meeting guide to issues and themes introduced in 2020 but ensure it is available earlier in the cycle.
- Maximum duration of any session to be 90 minutes.
- NETWORKING SESSIONS

Proposals from the Secretariat and the MAG chair for IGF 2021

1. An issue-driven approach to the selection of themes and issues

- a. Consider the MAG WG-strategy's proposals for "A more focused and inter-connected IGF agenda". This approach is not entirely new. The MAG has always looked at issues.
- b. The difference is that this approach would start with identifying specific issues and then based on those agree on main thematic tracks - as opposed to starting with broad generic tracks and then looking for specific issues.
- c. The WG-strategy proposals include detailed suggestions on how the MAG can use the initial call (which was closed on 31 January) to identify specific policy issues, and then to proceed with a further call for more specific input from the community on these issues prior to putting out a call for session proposals.
- d. Use this issue-driven approach to integrate the IGF programme more closely with that of NRIs, as well as of other policy fora including the WSIS Forum, multi-stakeholder events, stakeholder specific events (e.g. RightsCon) and intergovernmental fora.
- e. A vehicle for facilitating this would be the "guide to issues and themes" which was introduced in 2020.

View the proposals here: https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/filedepot_download/11159/2418

2. Adopt the practice of a phased IGF consisting of:

- a. Phase 1 [6 to 1 month before IGF]: Preparatory phase consisting of virtual events as well as face to face components - where possible - in collaboration with NRIs.
- b. Phase 2 [IGF - 2 weeks] : A few key pre-events which are held virtually prior to the IGF
- c. Phase 3 [Day 0 + IGF]: A hybrid event made up of 4+1 days in Katowice from 6 to 10 December

Note: the week before IGF [week IGF -1] to be kept clear for travelling and other practical preparations

3. More about the proposed "Preparatory phase" - Phase 1

- a. Maximise inclusion by being virtual.
- b. Include a mid-year virtual event for intersessional modalities such as BPFs and DCs and PNs to present ongoing work, for outreach, get feedback, and to facilitate closer cooperation between modalities and with NRIs.
- c. Include capacity building for session organisers.

4. **More about the proposed “Pre-event phase” - Phase 2**

- a. Host a SHORT virtual preparatory phase. In this phase, organise webinars on intersessional work in a leadup to the IGF 2021 in other than CET major time zones, as well as hosting of some sessions (TBD which ones. Maybe offer a choice to session applicants?)

5. **More about the proposed “Annual Forum” - Phase 3**

- a. Add a shorter session format to the options currently available. Shorter sessions can help session organisers and participants to be more focused in planning and running the session, for instance through avoiding long speeches/presentations, staying to the point and focusing primarily on the discussion. This can work well with a more focused agenda where shorter sessions can tackle a specific aspect of the main issue/s.
- b. No more than three parallel sessions
- c. Reduce total number of sessions. One way to achieve this could be to encourage organisations to team up and apply for workshops together. Some have already done this in the past, but if we say from the start that this year there will be fewer sessions, and then we encourage submissions for co-organised sessions (maybe even give them some sort of priority /extra points in the evaluation), that might result in less submissions (making it easier for the MAG to select fewer workshops).
- d. Reintroduce “flash sessions” to unburden the programme and to accommodate topics not covered by the overall focus
- e. Hybrid format to be integrated by for example the IGF Village having both face to face and virtual elements.
- f. All session organised to make use of the online platform even if they are present ‘face to face’ and session moderators to ensure online participants have a priority in the onsite meeting when intervening. Guidelines on this to be developed.

6. **More about the hybrid format**

The MAG WG on Hybrid Meetings has just started to do its work but are already recommending the following:

- a. MAG to endorse guidelines for organizers and moderators on how to ensure session interactivity with speakers and other participants; and how to treat online and onsite participants equally. (For instance, the online chats should also benefit from a moderator, someone who can not only engage online participants, but also ensure that what is discussed in the chat is fed into the main debate - (not only direct questions, but the whole discussion in the chat, which often is very rich)
- b. Session organisers to be familiarised with how to maximise interactive nature of different formats and dedicated capacity building to be made available beforehand.
- c. Each session to prepare briefing materials on what to expect from the discussion and gather questions beforehand from those prevented to participate at the annual meeting sessions due to time zone challenges.

Points made in Under Sec. Gen Liu's letter to the MAG:

In this regard, I hope the MAG will continue the ongoing efforts to strengthen the IGF. These include, but are not limited to the following:

- Elaborating and adopting a focused, strategic programme with clear action-oriented outputs while avoiding duplication of activities;
- Strengthening the cooperation of the IGF with other institutions—to this end UN DESA is committed to do its share of work for deepening the linkages of the IGF with other UN agencies and programmes;
- Stepping up our joint efforts in supporting active engagement of high-level stakeholders and parliamentarians, as well as those not traditionally present in the IGF discourse;
- Developing effective online mechanisms to ensure those who cannot travel to Katowice can still effectively participate remotely;
- Strengthening the ongoing cooperation between the Host country—the Polish Government—the MAG and the United Nations, to ensure an efficient organization of the 2021 IGF and its successful outcomes;
- Ensuring continuous and inclusive consultations and inputs from all stakeholders from all parts of the world.
- Strengthening the intersessional activities and promoting coherence and synergies between MAG's activities and other relevant processes and initiatives.