

WG-WREP Final Report and Recommendations

October 2018

The Working Group on the Workshop Review and Evaluations Process concluded its work for this year by assessing the changes that took place to the IGF 2018 evaluation cycle, and putting forth some recommendations for the IGF 2019 cycle.

The WG identified the main changes that took place this year to be as follows:

- A poll was sent out to the community to vote on the most relevant issues they want to see on the IGF program.
- MAG members were asked to submit a list of expertise for workshop evaluation purposes.
- Program structuring took place in accordance with the list of issues previously identified by the community, taking into consideration different aspects of diversity.

The WG recommends the following for MAG consideration:

- Come up with an operational definition as to what each score on the evaluation scale means. The following is a start, which could be enhanced by further defining what is “excellent,” “good,” “average,” “weak,” and “does not meet criteria.”

The overall average score from 1 to 5 should mean the following in terms of ranking the session:

- 5: An excellent proposal.
 - 4: A good proposal overall, although could be enhanced.
 - 3: An average proposal.
 - 2: A weak proposal.
 - 1: Does not meet criteria.
- Given the problem of grade inflation, scores of 5 should be reserved only for exceptional proposals which fulfill all criteria with no recommendations for improvement.

- Have a trial evaluation session during a virtual meeting on how to use the scores and grade the proposals. Figure out what benchmarks determine the scoring. Please note that the aim is not to get each MAG member to agree to the scores given (this is almost impossible to achieve), but rather to streamline the process so that there is a common understanding of what score as a 3, or a 4, etc. This would be particularly beneficial to new MAG members, but also to the whole MAG to achieve reliability in scoring. The current Chair of this WG (Rasha Abdulla) is happy to run this meeting or help in any way needed even though she won't be a MAG member next year.
- Introduce the ability to edit scores of sessions already evaluated. Have MAG members evaluate sessions on an external Excel sheet, and upload it at the end of the process. The Excel sheet should be structured to calculate a rolling average of overall grades that would be displayed and updated as MAG members proceed with the grading. The aim is to stay aware of your average grading to avoid grade inflation.
- It would be very useful to have the number of overall slots available at the IGF estimated well ahead of the second face to face MAG meeting. Members can discuss the percentage (or number) of workshop to be approved with no reservations ahead of the meeting. The remaining number of accepted workshops would be subject to mergers, modifications, etc., but only to promote diversity of topics or speakers.
- Mergers should be used sparingly, only when it's beneficial to the content or diversity of the workshops, or for bringing in groups or topics that are not represented in the program.
- The WG recommends removing the step of MAG areas of expertise, and encouraging MAG members to recuse themselves from workshops they feel they are not qualified to grade. We stress that the Secretariat observes the diversity within grading groups, and make the breakdown of evaluation groups by multistalkholder public. Some members felt that assigning workshops according to expertise was not beneficial because MAG members are not chosen according to their areas of expertise, and it may be prohibitive to people whose names are not well known to make it through as speakers.
- Format should be given less weight than other content-related and diversity criteria.
- On the workshop proposal form, there should be a box next to each proposed speaker's name stating that this speaker has been contacted and initially agreed to participate in the session. The proposer should tick the box next to each speaker's name to confirm that they have been contacted, and submit a contact email for them. Upon submission, an automatic email is to be sent to each speaker to alert them that their name is listed on a workshop (stating the title and proposer name of the workshop) and ask them to click on a link to confirm their interest.

- The WG acknowledges the nature of the IGF as a UN forum, but still thinks that Open Forums should be limited and should have more structured criteria to abide by, so that it's not just an outlet to be featured on the program if the proposers have missed the deadline.

October 30, 2018

Submitted by Rasha Abdulla, WG-WREP Chair