

REPORT AND SUGGESTIONS ON IGF FORMAT AND PROCESS FROM THE MAG WG ON IGF STRATEGY AND STRENGTHENING

The [MAG Working Group on IGF Strengthening and Strategy](#) was established by the MAG at the beginning of 2020 to develop proposals of actions implementable in the short and medium term on how to strengthen the IGF and position it strategically in the evolving digital cooperation landscape.

The Working Group has around 60 members made up of MAG members, past MAG members and other individuals from all stakeholder groups who have been active in the IGF process.

The WG-strategy's starting point is two-fold: The IGF mandate in the Tunis Agenda (2005) and the UN Secretary General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation launched (June 2020).

Its scope of work includes developing strategies for:

1. A focused IGF agenda conducive to producing more tangible outcomes and better follow-up on proposed actions and recommendations emerging from IGF-based discussions.
2. IGF recognition, visibility, information and communications and outreach.
3. Increased participation from governments, parliamentarians and leadership from other stakeholder groups.
4. Etc...

The WG drafted the document titled [“Proposals on strategic improvements to the IGF and operational measures in 2021”](#) draw on the MAG's reflection on 2020 as well as on broader inputs from the community.

It includes as annex some “Proposals for IGF2021 process and design”.

Let me share the main ideas included in the mentioned Annex:

1. A more focused and inter-connected IGF agenda
2. Suggestions regarding workshops
3. Intersessional Work: Best Practice Forums (BPFs), National and Regional IGF Initiatives, Youth Initiatives, Dynamic Coalitions
4. Format and phases
5. Capturing and communicating messages/outcomes

1. A more focused and interconnected IGF agenda

The WG- Strategy suggests:

IGF 2021 should address no more than three focused policy issues or questions, defined by the MAG and based on community input and specific suggestions coming from NRIs, BPFs and DCs. The call for workshop proposals can invite further exploration of these questions from multiple and diverse perspectives. The High Level Leaders Track and Parliamentary can then also address these questions.

Opportunities for “pre or side events” which can cover other issues but which are not linked to the focused policy questions around which the core programme is built. A limited number of open fora will be also part of the side-events programme.

IGF programme development should be **more comprehensively issue-driven**. The WG-strategy proposes that the MAG works with issues in a more comprehensive and consistent manner, selecting fewer issues and then analysing and refining these in a manner that integrates diverse perspectives on these issues (including regional, thematic, gender, multidisciplinary and stakeholder-specific perspectives).

The response to the MAG call for issues can be used as a basis for the MAG to define what two or three policy issues that will be dealt with by the annual IGF (main sessions, high level sessions and workshops).

An open call for participating in the organization of the corresponding workshops would then be issued, which would be guided by the work of the “issue-team”.

The high-level track would also address these issues.

Increasing the involvement of relevant decision-making bodies in the planning for IGF 2021 can be linked to the issue-driven program management. The MAG could invite them to contribute issues, and to participate in "issue teams" and these teams can reach out to them as part of their standard activities.

2. Suggestions regarding workshops

The WG-strategy proposes that the call and selection of workshops be shaped by the comprehensive issue-driven approach reducing the number of workshops and avoiding duplication of content of workshops.

3. Intersessional work

Best Practice Forums (BPFs)

The suggestion is that links between the issues that frame the agenda of the annual forum and BPFs are welcome but not mandatory. The BPFs should develop and follow their own work programme in discussion with the BPF participants and kick off their activities before the MAG concludes its discussions on the topics and streams for the annual meeting. The WG-strategy endorses the findings of the [BPF on BPFs](#), including the recommendations to enhance future BPF work, summarised in the [IGF2020 BPF on BPFs Overview of Recommendations](#).

National and Regional IGF Initiatives

WG-strategy proposes that:

- NRIs are invited to address the issue-driven policy questions in their own contexts and that they organise a session at the IGF to report back on their perspectives on these questions.
- NRIs are invited to join the above-mentioned “Issue teams”.

Youth IGF Initiatives:

WG-strategy proposes that:

- Youth IGF initiatives and other youth structures are invited to address the issue-driven policy questions.
- The MAG convenes the consultation on youth integration

Dynamic Coalitions (DCs)

WG-strategy supports the MAG proposal to conduct a learning study of DCs during 2021. It also proposes that:

- DCs are invited to address the issue-driven policy questions that the IGF will address.
- DCs are invited to join the above-mentioned “Issue teams”.

4. Format and phases

It was suggested to design a hybrid IGF that includes virtual components and use the call for issues to develop a headline programme which can then form the basis for organising sessions (rather than just an open call for workshops).

5. Capturing and communicating messages/outcomes

The suggestion is to improve style of reporting from IGF sessions, the annual communications and outreach strategy (setting out key milestones and deliverables).

The WG- Strategy suggests:

- As done for IGF 2020 the IGF Secretariat should produce a “Guide to IGF issues and themes” that elaborates the focused policy questions. It can also list stakeholders and institutions to whom these questions/issues are relevant.
- Each IGF session linked to the focused policy questions should have an independent rapporteur (ideally identified by the MAG and/or the Secretariat).
- Five or ten minutes before the end of the session the rapporteur should read to the room three or four session messages or key takeaways from the discussion and invite participants to comment.
- Session messages or takeaways should be consolidated into a concise, single set of thematic messages, organized according to the thematic main tracks and policy questions as defined in the pre-meeting Guide to IGF issues and themes.
- The outcomes will strive to be actionable, i.e. identify as far as possible the kinds of decision-making for which the kinds of actions proposed might relate to.

Then next step will be for the MAG to consider the proposals presented by the MAG WG-strategy in the context of the synthesis of the response to the call for input.

You can find more details on the proposals on the IGF website. I have just mentioned some of them.