

ANNEX I. Some ideas on how to operationalize the MHLB outlined in para. 93 (a) of the UNSG Roadmap for Digital Cooperation

Developed by member of the MAG Working Group on IGF Strengthening and Strategy, September 28, 2020

Paragraph 93 of The Roadmap for Digital Cooperation: *“(a) Creating a strategic and empowered multi-stakeholder high-level body, building on the experience of the existing multi-stakeholder advisory group, which would address urgent issues, coordinate follow-up action on Forum discussions and relay proposed policy approaches and recommendations from the Forum to the appropriate normative and decision-making forums;”*

Approach “A”: operationalize 93(a) through a new body within the IGF, separate and complementary to the MAG

Purpose of the MHLB:

The Multistakeholder High-Level Body (MHLB) will be part of the IGF architecture. The MHLB’s main function would be to build bridges at a high level between what is discussed and prepared by the IGF and the fora and institutions where decisions are taken, by contributing to improved awareness among high-level decision-makers of the discussions and proposals emerging from the IGF. It would also be a place for the UNSG and/or the Tech Envoy to discuss at a high level pressing issues, which then may be dealt with in detail by the IGF Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG), the Best Practice Forums (BPFs) etc. These functions require high-level people in the MHLB, who are able to both as a group and as individuals effectively liaise between IGF discussions and decision-making fora. They will be normally supported by their own organizations, with "Sherpas", advisers etc., while the IGF Secretariat will organize the logistics of the meetings. Probably, some senior people sitting in the MHLB will have a bigger incentive to consider funding the IGF Secretariat, without making this a requirement at all.

The MAG, according to its ToR, would continue to be the program-developing committee of the IGF, i.e. on the annual program and on intersessional work. This function requires, as today, an “expert-level” profile. This would be maintained, with the advantage of the MHLB providing strategic advice on the program, on intersessional work, and with the MHLB performing, as said above, a liaison role with other organizations etc. at a high level.

The MHLB would, hence, be composed of senior-level persons nominated by IGF stakeholders following a process informed by the MAG's experience and practice (see below), and contribute to filling some gaps identified both by the High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation (HLP)'s Report and the UNSG Roadmap by performing the functions identified in §93 (a) of the Roadmap.

It shall not act as gatekeeper or as top-down control mechanism of or within the IGF. The MHLB would be bound and perform its functions within the mandate of the IGF as laid down in §72 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society. It would not take decisions on behalf of the IGF, but mainly act as a carrier that transports the insights and messages from the IGF so that they reach the eyes and ears of decision-makers at the highest levels (and vice versa). This would support the work of current and future IGF policy networks.

Key functions/activities of the MHLB:

Per 93(a) of the Roadmap (see above):

- Address and raise awareness on urgent issues
- Contribute to coordinating follow-up to IGF discussions
- Relay proposed policy approaches and recommendations from the Forum (i.e. prepared by policy networks, such as BPFs), to the appropriate normative and decision-making fora.

Activities in connection with the IGF ecosystem:

- Advise UNSG and Tech Envoy on strategic issues, based on IGF discussions
- Deliver strategic inputs, including from other digital cooperation fora, to MAG on annual program and intersessional activities, contributing also to the pluriannual working plan of the IGF
- Offer strategic input on intersessional work of IGF, e.g. by suggesting new policy networks to the IGF community
- Offer strategic feedback on draft policy approaches and recommendations from the Forum (i.e. prepared by policy networks, such as BPFs, etc.)
- Offer feedback and support with regard to the evolution of the IGF/IGF+
- Advocate for the IGF/IGF+ and bring the discussions and messages of the IGF/IGF+ to the attention of other relevant fora and decision-making bodies to help build stronger connections, encourage information sharing and the

meaningful participation of these organizations in the IGF/IGF+ discussions.

- Collect inputs on IGF outputs from other fora and channel them back through strategic inputs into the IGF ecosystem
- Contribute with strategic inputs to fundraising efforts and corporate identity strategy of the IGF

Composition of the MHLB:

Per 93 (a) the MHLB has to be multistakeholder and build on the experience of the existing MAG. Hence, it is logical to apply the same or a very similar nomination and selection procedure like the one used for the MAG, following transparent and clear nomination and designation procedures and criteria (including on geographical, gender and stakeholder balance):

- Composition is informed by MAG practice and experience: about 25 people⁵ from all stakeholder groups; bottom-up nominations by stakeholder groups and UNSG designation; rotation by thirds; terms would be limited;
- The formal/honorary chair of the MHLB could be the UNSG, with a rotational day-to-day co-chair drawn from any member of the MHLB.
- The chair of MAG should be an ex-officio member of the MHLB, and possibly a vice-chair of it; The chair of the MHLB would as well be a member of the MAG, possibly also as its vice-chair. Both Chairs would liaise with each other and ensure smooth cooperation.
- The UN Tech Envoy should be a member or at least attend MHLB meetings as a liaison. A vice-chair role could also be possible for the Tech Envoy.

Profile of members:

The functions of the MHLB require a high-level composition made up of people who are established leaders in their sectors and institutions, and who are able to take action and commit their organizations and institutions as much as possible:

- The members should be high-level, namely at senior Minister level for

¹ Several members of the Working Group felt that 25 members would make this body too large. One proposed that 16 would be sufficient, with four individuals from each of the four primary stakeholder groups: government, civil society, technical community and business. Others pointed out that if it was any smaller it would be virtually impossible to make it sufficiently inclusive in terms of sector, stakeholder group and geographic regions. Some also comments made earlier to the effect that the criteria of "head of organisation" and even "senior executive" might exclude prominent individuals from the academia and civil society.

Governments or head of organization level in civil society, private sector, academia and technical community organizations, and/or prominent individuals, senior officials or executives from the respective stakeholder groups

- All members should be committed to the WSIS outcomes and the IGF mandate
- They should act individually as multipliers of the IGF in their respective organizations/communities, linking the IGF up with the decision-making fora and institutions

MHLB secretariat function would be performed by:

- The IGF Secretariat, whose resources would need to be strengthened

Modalities of work:

- Minimum one f2f meeting at the annual IGF, where personal participation of MHLB members would be expected
- Normally 3 more meetings virtually per year
- Work intersessionally, e.g. meet representatives of decision-making fora, attend other internet governance events, present IGF outcomes
- May meet at the request of UNSG/MHLB Chair to address emergencies

Approach “B”: operationalize 93(a) through an in-depth reform of the MAG – A High Level Body – “MAG Plus” Approach

Purpose of the High Level Body

The functions of the High Level Body will be performed by “MAG+”, which will be empowered to provide strategic leadership and more senior representation for the IGF+.

The MAG+ will include a “leadership team” (or “executive committee”) which would drive forward the implementation of IGF+ and the steps set out in Para 93 of the Roadmap. It would be composed by senior-level persons nominated by IGF stakeholders following a process informed by the MAG’s experience and practice (see below). The “leadership team” will be led by the chair of the MAG+. It will act on behalf of the MAG+ as a whole and it will be accountable to the IGF+ community as a whole. Its members will act as senior advocates for the IGF+ and for the discussions and proposals emerging from IGF+. It shall not act as gatekeeper or as top-down control mechanism of or within the IGF.

A key role for the “leadership team” would be to help to ensure linkages between the discussions held at the IGF and existing decision-making bodies, by contributing to improved awareness among high-level decision-makers of the discussions and proposals emerging from the IGF.

The whole MAG+ would be bound and perform its functions within the mandate of the IGF as laid down in §72 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society. It would not take, develop or provide critical commentary on policy decisions on behalf of the IGF. The “leadership team” will act as a carrier that transports the insights and messages from the IGF so that they reach the eyes and ears of decision-makers at the highest levels. This would support the work of current and future IGF policy networks.

Key functions/activities of the MAG+:

Para 93 (a) of the Roadmap says the high level body should:

- Address and raise awareness on urgent issues
- Contribute to coordinating follow-up to IGF discussions
- Relay proposed policy approaches and recommendations from the Forum (i.e. prepared by policy networks, such as BPFs) to appropriate normative and decision-making fora.

Following discussions in the Recommendation 5 Roundtable and elsewhere, we would suggest developing these key functions and activities as part of a MAG+.

The MAG+ “leadership team” will:

- Lead the work of the MAG+ to ensure that IGF+ is able to address issues effectively
- Lead the work of the MAG+ to ensure inclusive participation at the IGF+ and ensure that IGF+ is well-focused and easy for all stakeholders to navigate
- Lead the “programme committee” functions of the MAG+
- Advise UNSG and Tech Envoy on strategic issues, based on IGF discussions
- Deliver strategic inputs on annual program and intersessional activities
- Be accountable and responsive to the wider MAG+ and the wider IGF+ community
- Help advocate for the role of the IGF+ and for the discussions and proposals emerging from it.
- Help ensure linkages between the discussions held at the IGF+ and existing decision-making bodies, supporting the IGF community to build stronger links as appropriate.
- Offer feedback and support with regard to the evolution of the IGF/IGF plus.
- The Terms of Reference of the MAG should be amended and developed to reflect these roles and to ensure that the MAG+ is able to support an effective IGF+.

Composition of the MAG+:

Per 93 (a) the MAG+ has to be multistakeholder and build on the experience of the existing MAG.

- The “leadership team” should have a very similar nomination and selection procedure like the one used for the MAG. It would comprise of 5 or 6 people.
- Composition of the rest of the MAG+ should continue to be based on MAG practice and experience: about 40-50 people from all stakeholder groups; bottom-up nominations by stakeholder groups and UNSG designation; rotation by thirds; terms would be limited.

Profile of the “leadership team”:

The functions of the “leadership team” require a high-level composition made up of people who are established leaders in their sectors and institutions, and who are able to generate support and commitment from their sectors as much as possible:

- The members should be high-level, namely at senior official/ambassador level for

Governments or head of organization level in civil society, private sector, academia and technical community

- All members should be committed to the WSIS outcomes and the IGF mandate
- Their work to represent the IGF+ should be based on consensus and collective responsibility

MAG+ secretariat function would be performed by:

- IGF Secretariat. The “leadership team” should not have an independent secretariat function.

Modalities of work:

- Minimum one meeting of the leadership team alongside meetings of the MAG+
- May meet at the request of UNSG/MAG+ Chair to address emergencies

Approach “C”: Operationalise 93(a) through a two-tiered multistakeholder IGF leadership structure including the MHLB and the MAG

This approach draws on elements of options A and B to operationalising the MHLB. It involves **establishing a single IGF multistakeholder leadership structure** that consists of two tiers: the proposed MHLB and the current MAG. It could be referred to as the **“IGF Leadership Group”** or as the **“IGF Multistakeholder Leadership Council”** or simply the **“IGF Council”**.

1. Rationale for a single two-tiered IGF leadership structure

The IGF has evolved into more than just an annual event. It includes a multi-year intersessional work programme (Best Practice Forums and Dynamic Coalitions) and an extensive network of National, Regional and Youth IGF initiatives (NRIs). Many institutions select the IGF as a launchpad for network-building, research and publications and convening events on Day 0. The Roadmap for Digital Cooperation’s IGF+ involves an even more complex IGF ecosystem and a “strategic and empowered multi-stakeholder high-level body” to “address urgent issues, coordinate follow-up action on Forum discussions and relay proposed policy approaches and recommendations from the Forum to the appropriate normative and decision-making forums” (from paragraph 93 of the Roadmap).

This evolved IGF needs leadership and support at both strategic and programmatic levels and it needs enhanced capacity to interact effectively with policy-making institutions and processes. Currently the IGF MAG plays primarily – but not exclusively - a programme planning role to assist the Secretary-General in convening the annual IGF meeting by preparing the programme and schedule. The MAG’s current terms of reference does not explicitly include responsibility for the longer term strategic development of the IGF but the MAG has actively sought improvements strategic and operational. By complementing the MAG with the addition of the proposed MHLB, the resulting IGF Leadership Group will be able to supplement and extend these efforts.

2. Building a two-tiered IGF multistakeholder leadership structure

This structure (which can be referred to, for example, as the **“IGF leadership group”** or the **“IGF multistakeholder leadership council”** or the **“IGF council”**) can consist of adding the **proposed MHLB** and the current **MAG** into a single two tiered body. These two bodies will work together as a group, but each will also have distinct

roles and responsibilities. The MHLB will be empowered to provide strategic leadership and more senior representation for the IGF+ while the MAG will continue to focus on the annual IGF process and intersessional activities.

2.1 Purpose of the IGF Leadership Group/Council

The IGF Leadership Group/Council will provide strategic leadership as the IGF+ evolves, and be bound by the mandate of the IGF as laid down in paragraph 72 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society. The IGF leadership group would not take decisions on behalf of the IGF. It will be responsible for interacting with the broader IGF community and ensuring that the IGF retains its 'bottom-up' character.

Members of the Leadership Group will work collaboratively, but its two tiers or "subgroups" will have different areas of focus: the MAG will lead the work of organising the IGF's annual work programme and the global forum and the MHLB will act as a carrier that transports the insights and messages from the IGF so that they reach the eyes and ears of decision-makers at the highest levels and facilitate the input of these decision-makers into the IGF's agenda-setting process. The MHLB would extend outreach efforts and help leverage the work of current and future IGF policy networks.

The IGF leadership group should consist of about 50 people (+-20 MHLB members and +- 30 MAG members) from all stakeholder groups constituted through a nomination process and appointed by the UNSG with rotation by thirds and with limited terms. Transparent and clear nomination and designation procedures and criteria (including on geographical, gender and stakeholder balance) should be used. The existing processes used for MAG appointments should be built upon as they respect stakeholder community processes. Nomination processes for the MHLB and the MAG may run concurrently or at different times although in the longer term a concurrent nomination process would be simpler. More about the profile of MHLB members below.

2.2 IGF Leadership Group/Council chairing and coordination

The MHLB and the MAG will each have its own chairperson. The MHLB chairing role could be played by the proposed Tech Envoy. The IGF Leadership Group as a whole can be chaired by the MHLB chair with the MAG chair acting as vice-chair. The chair of the IGF Leadership Group and the chair of the MAG would liaise with each other and ensure smooth cooperation.

A further option would be for both the MHLB and the MAG to each have vice chairs.

There could, for example, be four vice-chairs (one from each stakeholder group), but a single vice-chair is also an option. If needed, an **IGF Leadership Group management committee** could be formed, consisting of the chair and vice-chairs of both the MHLB and the MAG. This management committee can oversee strategic financial and administrative management of the IGF.

Some members of the Working Group felt that having multiple vice-chairs and a management committee could potentially create a division between the “leadership structures” and the members, and the community that nominated them. Some also pointed out that vice-chairs for stakeholder groups could encourage “stakeholder group” positioning. Others felt it could be a useful mechanism for aggregating and channelling views from stakeholder groups when needed.

The **IGF Leadership Group’s secretariat function** would be performed by the IGF Secretariat, whose resources would need to be strengthened.

2.3 Work modalities of the IGF Leadership Group

The full IGF Leadership Group will meet face to face three times a year, ideally face to face at the IGF. The MHLB and the MAG will meet separately more frequently (see below). MHLB meetings will be shorter and more focused than MAG meetings.

3. The MHLB tier of the IGF leadership structure

3.1 Purpose of MHLB

The MHLB’s main function would be to build bridges – in both directions - at a high level between what is discussed and prepared by the IGF and the fora and institutions where decisions are taken, by contributing to improved collaboration among high-level decision-makers of the discussions and proposals emerging from the IGF. An additional role should be to advocate for increased collaboration between institutions. It would also be a place for the UNSG and/or the Tech Envoy to raise at a high level pressing issues, which then may be dealt with in detail by the IGF-Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG), the Best Practice Forums (BPFs) etc. These functions require high-level people in the MHLB, who are able to both as a group and as individuals effectively liaise between IGF discussions and decision-making fora.

Key functions/activities of the MHLB:

NOTE: This text is very similar to that included in Option A and in the “options paper”

but there are some differences. Points that have been added or adapted are indicated with **

Per 93 (a) of the Roadmap:

- Address and raise awareness on urgent issues – both directions **
- Contribute to coordinating follow-up to IGF discussions
- Relay proposed policy approaches and recommendations from the Forum (i.e. prepared by policy networks, such as BPFs), to the appropriate normative and decision-making fora.
- Identify existing programmes with relevance to IGF activities **

Further activities in connection with the IGF ecosystem:

- Advise UNSG and Tech Envoy on strategic issues, based on IGF discussions
- Deliver strategic inputs, including from other digital cooperation fora, to MAG on annual program and intersessional activities, contributing also to the pluriannual working plan of the IGF
- Offer strategic feedback on approaches to developing draft policy and recommendations from the Forum (i.e. prepared by policy networks, such as BPFs, etc.) **
- Offer strategic input on intersessional work of IGF, e.g. by suggesting new policy networks to the IGF community
- Offer feedback and support with regard to the evolution of the IGF/IGF+
- Advocate for the IGF/IGF+ and bring the discussions and messages of the IGF/IGF+ to the attention of other relevant fora and decision-making bodies to help build stronger connections, encourage information sharing and the meaningful participation of these organization in the IGF/IGF+ discussions.
- Collect inputs on IGF outputs from other fora and channel them back through strategic inputs into the IGF ecosystem
- Contribute with strategic inputs to fundraising efforts and corporate identity strategy of the IGF.

3.2 Profile of MHLB members

The functions of the MHLB require a high-level composition made up of people who are established leaders in their sectors and institutions and communities, and who are able to take action and commit their organizations and institutions and communities, e.g. to support the IGF, as much as possible:

- The members should be high-level, namely at senior ministerial level for

governments or head of organization level for civil society, private sector, academia and technical community organizations, and/or prominent individuals, senior officials or executives from the respective stakeholder groups⁶.

- All members should be committed to the WSIS outcomes and the IGF mandate.
- They should act individually as multipliers of the IGF in their respective organizations, linking the IGF up with the decision-making fora and institutions.

3.3 Modalities of work

- Minimum one f2f meeting at the annual IGF with the full IGF Leadership Group/Council, where personal participation of MHLB members would be expected.
- Normally 3 more meetings virtually per year, including a joint session with the MAG.
- Work intersessionally, e.g. meet representatives of decision-making fora, attend other internet governance events, present IGF outcomes.
- May meet at the request of the UNSG/MHLB Chair to address emergencies.

4. The IGF MAG

MAG members will be members of the IGF Leadership Group/Council. The MAG would continue to be the programme-developing committee of the IGF, i.e. of the annual forum programme and intersessional work. This function requires, as today, an “expert-level” profile. This would be maintained, with the advantage of the MHLB providing strategic advice on the program, on intersessional work, and with the MHLB performing, as said above, a liaison role with other organizations etc. at a high level.

The MAG ToR should be updated to reflect this approach and revised as needed from time to time.

² Some Working Group members commented that the criteria of “head of organisation” and even senior executives might exclude prominent individuals from the academia and civil society.