

Working Group on Workshop Review and Evaluation Process – IGF 2019

6th Virtual meeting, 16 April 2019, 13.00 – 14.00 UTC

Minutes

1. The meeting centred on assessing the next steps in the IGF workshops process. This followed the closing of submissions two days prior, on 14 April, and extensive programmatic discussions among MAG members during their face-to-face meeting from 9-11 April.
2. The Chair of the MAG, Ms. Lynn St. Amour, joined the working group call and shared takeaways from the face-to-face meeting. The Chair reaffirmed that there had been agreement among MAG members, and inputs similarly expressed from the community, that any processes moving forward should be dedicated to ensuring the 2019 programme is thematically focused and non-duplicative. It was felt the MAG should be ‘building’ the three major themes, ‘telling a story’ on each and identifying the most important policy questions related to them. Based on this, the Chair suggested that the post-workshop grading phase would be best served by careful examination of proposal shortlists by theme, with the evaluators on that theme meeting in groups before and during the next face-to-face MAG meeting in June. As such, three working groups would be formed, on ‘Data Governance’, ‘Digital Inclusion’ and ‘Safety, Security, Stability & Resilience’, dedicated to finalizing the selection of workshops for the theme and refining how that theme is represented in the annual meeting.
3. Reflecting on past Secretariat analyses of evaluated proposals, it was remarked that a new analytical framework would be needed to support post-grading thematic work by the MAG. Whereas prior analyses prioritized meta-information of the proposals, with an emphasis on stakeholder, regional and gender breakdowns for addressing diversity gaps, this year’s could take a closer look at content and present any points of interest to the thematic working groups – especially given that diversity parameters had already been strongly set in the proposal process. The Secretariat confirmed it could revise the analysis.
4. There was unified support for this new approach, with working group members agreeing that this is what the MAG had approved at the face-to-face meeting. Two practical questions were raised, on whether the size of the evaluation groups, which would necessarily vary, would affect the scores of those proposals, and how MAG members should react to proposals that are seemingly miscategorised in the theme. On the first question, it was noted that the size of the groups would vary only very slightly, as there were no big differences in the number of submissions under the theme, that this should not affect scoring, and that, in any case, the Secretariat could apply ‘normalization’ equations to the final scores. Concerning the second question, the Secretariat asserted that the theme classifications should be taken at face value, as they are selected by the proposers themselves. However, there would be ‘empty slots’ in each theme that would give the working groups the opportunity to populate these with any workshops they have identified as particularly cross-cutting and any small number that were strong but underrated.
5. The issue was brought up of any potential conflicts of interest MAG members may encounter as they evaluate. The Secretariat informed that members would have a period of a couple of days to declare these before officially beginning evaluations. It was agreed that conflicts of interest should be declared in cases where a proposal is submitted by the organisation the MAG member works for, and when the MAG member evaluating the proposal is listed as a speaker in the session. Finding other MAG members’ names in a proposal’s speakers list would not constitute a conflict. Unlike in previous years, the proposals would not be re-assigned for the small number of conflicts foreseen.
6. Members expressed some doubts about the rules surrounding limitations on sessions per speaker, as well as the limitations on MAG members’ own participation in the meeting sessions. It was said that as previously agreed, there would not be a hard limit this year on the number of sessions in which a speaker could appear. However, MAG members could add a remark in their evaluation forms

if they see a certain speaker appears quite often. This should not affect their assessment of the related proposal(s), since the frequency of a speaker's name will only be assessed once proposals are accepted for the programme. Members were further reminded, as pertains to their own participation, that a 3-session per member speaking limit would apply.

Next Steps

- Secretariat will prepare outline for new analytical framework as well as overall process document capturing the proposed next steps; this will be presented to the MAG for approval/any questions at its next virtual meeting on Wednesday 24 April.

Participants

Lucien Castex

Susan Chalmers

Afi Edoh

Lianna Galstyan

June Parris

Paul Rowney

Lynn St. Amour

Mary Uduma

Secretariat

Luis Bobo

Anja Gengo

Chengetai Masango

Eleonora Mazzucchi

Host

Jutta Croll