



IGF INITIATIVES

**A Toolkit to help communities to establish
IGF initiatives**

About

This Toolkit is based on inputs from existing and emerging IGF Initiatives, and draws on their suggestions for information that describes the basic requirements for an IGF initiative to be listed on the IGF website. It also offers suggestions about organizing structures.

The Toolkit stands as an advisory document and is a result of the NRIs collaborative process on establishing basic requirements such as adhering to the IGF principles.

Acknowledgements

The Secretariat of the Internet Governance Forum collaborated closely with the existing IGF initiatives during the 2016 year, in order to develop this publications.

In particular, the publication benefited from the work of the NRIs Working Group, that was specifically organized for this purpose.

About

Internet Governance Forum (IGF)

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) serves to bring people together from various stakeholder groups as equals in discussions on issues pertaining to the Internet. It is convened by the Secretary General of the United Nations (UN) and administered by the IGF Secretariat, under the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), while its format and substantive agenda is developed by the members of the IGF Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG), appointed by the UN Secretary General on a yearly basis, and based upon inputs received from the broad stakeholder community during the open, public consultations.

At the annual IGF event, participants discuss, exchange information and share good practices with each other. The IGF helps to facilitate common understandings of how to maximize Internet opportunities, address different types of challenges that arise, through a bottom up, multistakeholder, open, transparent and inclusive manner.

Every year, the IGF launches a call for input, where the wider community suggests substantive topics that require in-depth discussion. These are valuable inputs that would further be reviewed and clustered, and the final agenda developed by the MAG, ensuring that it reflects the needs of the global multistakeholder community.

After the agenda is created, the community continues developing the substantive program (e.g., developing the content for various types of sessions) for the annual meeting.

Since its first event in 2006, the global IGF has inspired the development of numerous IGF initiatives. National, sub-regional and regional IGF initiatives (NRIs) are IGF events that are organized by the community at the national, regional and sub-regional levels, in a bottom-up manner.

In recent years, a number of youth IGFs have also been developed by younger members of the IGF community. These IGF initiatives are part of a process that aims at further including and amplifying new voices.

For further reference, “IGF Initiatives” or the “NRIs” is used in this document as a term that stands for National, Sub-Regional, Regional and Youth IGF initiatives.

Different IGF initiatives can organize and coordinate local stakeholders to participate in the global IGF, however, their primary purpose is to promote multistakeholder dialogue and cooperation aimed at tackling local issues.

The IGF sees IGF initiatives as valuable contributors in conducting an inclusive and open multistakeholder discussion on matters pertaining to the Internet. Individual engagement is very important, since we are all responsible for the Internet’s success and impact; thus, the IGF Initiatives play a central role, for all.

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Collaboration between IGF initiatives significantly helps participants at the global IGF to better understand the substance of the issues existing around the world. It is equally important to note that IGF initiatives also reflect the need for greater stakeholder inclusion. For instance, the development of youth IGFs has served as a platform for voicing new perspectives to national, regional, and international Internet governance debates and processes.

It is important to note that there are many multistakeholder conferences related to Internet governance that are not IGF initiatives. However, if a multistakeholder conference wants to be recognized by the IGF Secretariat as an IGF initiative, it needs to follow a set of baseline principles, described in further detail below.

In addition to honoring these principles, the IGF initiative has to submit a meeting report to the IGF Secretariat. Any guidance provided in this Toolkit, outside of these baseline requirements, are suggestions only and offered by other IGF initiatives as good practice.

This Toolkit has been developed through open community discussion amongst participants on the dedicated mailing list, hosted by the IGF Secretariat.

We hope that this publication will help those looking to organize an IGF Initiative to understand what are the essential steps for establishing an IGF initiative, how to engage with the existing ones and what is the value of all stakeholders respecting the core IGF principles of being open, inclusive, bottom-up, multistakeholder, and non-commercial in our work.

IGF Secretariat

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IGF INITIATIVES

Over time, many of the stakeholders from around the world have organized themselves into multistakeholder groups to discuss Internet governance related issues emerging from their respective communities. Such practices contributed to the formation of national, sub-regional, regional IGFs and youth IGFs in different parts of the world. All IGF initiatives, regardless of the level they are organized at, have agreed to adhere to the same IGF principles as the global IGF, which draws its principles from the Tunis Agenda.

This publication will review those principles and ways to establish one IGF initiative. It will also reflect the requirement for reporting of the initiatives toward their respective communities and the IGF.

1) IGF initiatives: what are they?

IGF initiatives are the Internet Governance Forums organized as a reflection of the need of a particular community. They are classified as:

- [National](#)
- [Sub-regional](#)
- [Regional](#), and
- [Youth IGFs](#)

If an initiative is organized at the national basis in one country, then it is classified as a **national IGF**. In case the initiative is organized to serve the needs of one particular region, then that classifies them either as **sub-regional** or **regional IGFs**, depending on the size of the geographic area. The main criteria for identifying a region is geography, but also in some cases mutual language and culture are considered.

Youth IGFs are specifically organized forums that discuss the issues pertaining to the Internet arena from the youth¹ point of view.

¹The initiatives are independent in describing the Youth population .

2) A check list on how to organize an IGF initiative?

In case there is an interest within one respective community to discuss the issues pertaining to the Internet, and the main practical steps to organize a national, sub-regional, regional, or youth IGF include but are not limited to the following:

- ⇒ Consult your wider community and engage with different stakeholders within it
- ⇒ Contact the IGF Secretariat. They can provide advice and support during your planning process
- ⇒ Make sure that a multistakeholder core Organizing Team is established where its membership composition comes from at least three different stakeholder groups
- ⇒ Ensure that the Initiative conducts work in accordance with the main IGF principles of being open, inclusive, multistakeholder, bottom up and non-commercial
- ⇒ Ensure that decisions are reached based on public consultations with different stakeholders and community members
- ⇒ Send regular updates to the IGF Secretariat that will further inform the NRIs Network and wider IGF respective community

These listed checklist items on the IGF core principles, the multistakeholder composition of the core organizing teams and on guidelines on reporting, are explained further below.

3) NRIs respective communities

At the beginning of the organizational process, the IGF initiatives are encouraged to describe the community scope they act within.

In principle, the national IGF initiatives act within one country.² Sub-regional and regional IGFs are more complex in this sense. Usually, they are developed around one geographic region, like the IGF initiatives in the Asia-Pacific, Europe, Africa, Latin America, and Caribbean, or around one language and/or culture, like the Arab IGF.

²Countries officially recognized by the UN.

Sub-regional IGFs are encouraged to describe, to the extent possible, the geographic region they will be acting within, mainly referring to the countries and regions they aim to collaborate with, as well as the central criteria for engagement (for example, shared cultural values, geographic location, shared language, etc.). In line with the principles of being open, however, defining the (sub-)regional scope does not imply that interested stakeholders from different regions, if interested, are prohibited from participating.

The IGF initiatives, regardless of their respective geographic, cultural, or linguistic representations, should be open to all interested stakeholders.

4) Main objectives of the NRIs

The NRIs should define the main objectives of their initiatives, as well as the key leading principles and goals they aim for, within their overall work.

In principle, the NRIs should provide the answers to why the particular initiative is organized and what the main goal is for organizing the NRIs' annual meeting(s) in their objective statements.

- Raise awareness, build capacity and promote a better understanding of Internet governance-related matters among the stakeholders of their respective community;
- Facilitate a multistakeholder discussion and exchanges of ideas and opinions. They should seek to foster multistakeholder collaboration among the stakeholders from their respective community; and
- Bring the perspectives of the respective community to the global IGF agenda and vice-versa.

5) Core principles of the IGF

As well as the global IGF, the IGF Initiatives should be organized in accordance with five core IGF principles, which are:

- Open and transparent
- Inclusive
- Bottom-up
- Multistakeholder
- Non-commercial

Below section presents description of each of the five IGF principles, in the NRIs context.

- **Open and Transparent**

IGF initiatives are open to all stakeholders interested in contributing to the organization of the meetings. It is the responsibility of the organizing committees to ensure that all interested stakeholders, both individuals and organizations, are invited to participate in the IGF Initiative. It is important that the IGF Initiative's work is conducted in a transparent manner. This means that wider relevant communities need to be properly informed about the work plan.

The best way to inform the community is to regularly send updates to the mailing list, post them on the official website/webpage and promote through the social network accounts.

- **Inclusive**

The organizing committee of an IGF Initiative has the responsibility to organize the meeting and develop the overall program that will encompass the views of the wider community. Conducting rounds of public consultations on the substantive meeting program, are good practices that can ensure inclusiveness.

In particular, the meeting's program agenda needs to address the views of the wider community. The core organizing teams are free to decide the ways they will run the public consultations. Usually, the initiatives either launch a public call for input for topics that should be discussed at the annual meeting(s), or they propose agenda topics and call for public consultation, potential edits, and the final adoption of the proposed agenda.

Either way, the organizers have the responsibility to create an effective way of conducting outreach with the community and seeking input before the final decision is made, which should ideally be based on consensus to the extent possible.

IGF Initiatives should involve all efforts to promote the call for input and motivate the wider community to actively participate.

To comply with the IGF's main principles, mainly the principals of being open, transparent, and inclusive, the initiatives should conduct effective outreach toward their respective communities.

This is why the initiative should, establish the following instruments to inform the wider community and conduct outreach:

1. Establish a dedicated website or webpage³
2. Create a mailing list and/or an open website platform
3. Create dedicated social media accounts and official hashtag(s)⁴

Once the above mentioned outreach instruments are established, the initiatives should use all these channels to communicate with their respective communities and seek input and feedback.

Website/webpages are particularly important since all relevant publications should be stored on the website, making it accessible to the public.

The mailing list's subscription details should be available on the initiative's website/webpage, where the list is open to anyone interested in signing up and not restricted to local and/or regional stakeholders.

As some initiatives are faced with challenges to get started, the IGF Secretariat can assist with the following short term resources:

- Support the online participation, by providing a free WeBEx account for the initiative's annual meeting (s) and a training for a remote moderator
- Create a dedicated mailing list
- Hosting a dedicated page at the IGF

- **Bottom-Up**

The decision-making process of the IGF initiative should be bottom-up, where the substantive organization of the annual meeting(s) should reflect the needs of the respective community the NRIs are acting within. This is why the NRIs are encouraged to run public consultations, in order to ensure that the community is aware of the initiatives' work, uphold the importance for engagement, and encourage involvement.

³ In case of lack of resources, the IGF Secretariat will help temporarily facilitating a dedicated page on its website, as well as a mailing list.

⁴ For example: #SEEDIG, #igfchad etc.

- **Non-commercial**

All annual meetings of IGF initiatives are non-commercial (not-for-profit). The annual NRIs' meetings are not organized for the purpose of gaining profit. This means that the entrance to the annual meeting as well as the cost of participation for all interested stakeholders during the preparatory process and the meeting day(s) need to be free of charge.

This does not mean in any way, however, that the initiatives are not free to have donors and sponsors that will support the organization of their annual meetings. In fact, donors and sponsors provide the majority of the funding and resources needed for NRIs.

- **Multistakeholder**

The IGF initiatives need to respect the criteria of being multistakeholder in its organization. The multistakeholder approach refers to collaboration between all stakeholder groups (private sector, civils society, public sector/Government and technical community), around development and implementation of an array of Internet-related principles, norms, rules, decision making procedures, and policies and programs.

Additionally, the multistakeholder component is also very important in regards to the meeting. In principle, organizers must ensure that the session speakers and presenters reflect stakeholder diversity, as this will add to the session being inclusive of different views.

If asked, the Secretariat is available to assist in sharing information and good practices about successful approaches used by fellow NRIs.

The nature of the multistakeholder organizing team is explained in the following section.

6) Multistakeholder Organizing Teams

In the context of an IGF Initiative, “multistakeholder” means that the organizers of the IGF Initiative have to maintain a multistakeholder composition, where the members initially come from at least three different stakeholder groups, with the intention of eventually evolving toward the inclusion of all stakeholder groups.

The initiatives are free to choose the name for their core organizing teams. Usually these are called: Organizing Committees, Steering Committees, Executive Committees or even national or regional Multistakeholder Advisory Groups (national and regional MAGs)⁵.

⁵ For consistency, the term “Organizing Team” (OTs) will be used when referring to the multistakeholder organizing teams.

Additionally, besides the multi stakeholder nature of the Organizing Teams, the membership composition also needs to reflect the regional and gender diversity. The regional diversity means primarily that the membership composition involving members from more than one city/town/village or country, depending on the environmental structure of the community.

The main tasks of the Core Organizing teams normally include the following tasks:

- To ensure the initiative is organized, and work conducted in line with the main IGF principles;
- To coordinate the preparatory process for the annual meetings, especially in regards to planning the program, overall logistics and finances;
- To initiate and coordinate outreach toward the wider community, with goals of informing the community about the existence of the initiative, thus raising awareness on the importance of the NRIs and ways of engagement.
- In this regard, its task is to streamline the outreach activities toward bringing new stakeholders into the initiative's process, either as members or as partners/supporters;
- To actively explore sponsorship opportunities for supporting the organization of the NRIs annual meetings
- In regards to the annual meeting programme agenda and major decision making processes, to coordinate the public consultations, call for inputs and proper classification of received inputs
- To prepare an annual meeting report in (one of the) official national language(s)[6] of the respective communities the NRIs act within, and to ensure
- the report is made publicly available and presented to the concerned stakeholders, at-large community, the global IGF, and other organizations, fora, and processes within the global Internet governance ecosystem;
- To ensure consultation with concerned stakeholders on all important matters related to local and/or regional Internet governance processes, and that the input received is integrated into the NRIs' decision-making processes; and
- To represent the initiative at all relevant events, particularly the IGF and the NRIs.

7) Mandate of the multistakeholder Organizing Teams

The initiatives are free to decide on the mandate of the organizing committees. The initiatives are free to decide on the mandate of the Organizing Teams (OT). To be fully inclusive it is recommended that OTs establish an open and inclusive approach to engagement while respecting the geographic, stakeholder, and gender balance. Over time, this may lead to rotations or it may result in increased membership in an OT.

8) NRIs Contact Points

For the purposes of having continuous and effective communication between the IGF initiative, other NRIs, and the global IGF, it is recommended to have a dedicated focal point within the initiative that will act as a liaison between the initiative and other stakeholders.

This can be one or more persons, deepening on the final decision of the initiative's core organizing team.

The IGF Secretariat keeps the list of all these contact persons, giving them a technical term of a coordinator, which is a functional term used within the planning processes of the NRI's collaboration. It is not intended to replace any official terms or appointments by the NRIs for their own operational purposes.

As emphasized above, the NRIs coordinators act as liaisons between the global IGF, the NRIs network and their initiatives. This means that all updates about the individual NRIs are being regularly sent to the Secretariat and to the NRIs by the Coordinator. Also, the Secretariat is communicating with the NRIs through their Coordinators, that are passing the messages further to their community.

After being established, the initiatives are advised to decide among themselves who will be assigned with this role and inform the IGF Secretariat to update the database of all NRIs coordinators contacts.

II

REPORTING

All IGF Initiatives are primarily accountable to their respective communities. It is the responsibility of the multistakeholder Organizing Teams to report accurately about their annual events to their respective communities, with the main goal of having the wider NRI communities informed as well.

In order for the initiatives to be listed on the IGF website, one of the requirements from the IGF Secretariat is for the initiatives to submit their annual reports duly and timely so that they can be further distributed to the wider IGF community.

The purpose of this section on reporting guidelines is to advise the NRIs on the most effective ways to inform the wider IGF community about the work conducted during the preparatory process of their NRIs' annual meeting, as well as on the activities of the event day(s) and outcomes achieved.

This section will reflect the desired form and content framework of the final annual reports, with the main objective of having comprehensive report content that illustrates the overall organizational work of the organizing committees.

1) NRIs annual reports: Reporting guidelines, format, and content

It is advised for the report to consist of an introductory segment and two major parts.

The first page of the report needs to have a headline that will state the full name of the initiative followed by an acronym, if any [e.g., South Eastern European Dialogue on Internet Governance (SEEDIG)]. Below the name, there should be indicated a number of the annual meeting for the particular year (e.g., EuroDIG 2015), date(s) of the meeting, and the meeting venue details.

The report content can start with a summary of content and an introductory section.

The **introductory section** should state the brief description of the history of the initiative, reflecting the year the initiative was established and the number of organized annual meetings. It is recommended to restate the initiative's main objectives and operational key principles in the annual report as well.

Finally, this part can be concluded by describing the multistakeholder organizing teams and listing their respective members for the particular meeting the initiative is reporting about.

The following details for the members of the Organizing Team to be providing: full names, affiliations within their organizations, and stakeholder groups.

After this, the report could provide an overview of the major highlights of the preparatory process for organizing the annual meeting.

A website and a contact email address should conclude the introduction.

a. Reporting on the preparatory process

The report should indicate the major highlights of the preparatory process for organizing the annual meeting. A timeline of the organizational process could be indicated at the beginning of this section.

It is recommended to elaborate on the following:

- Number of meetings the organizing core groups held and what subjects or topics were discussed?
- How was the outreach conducted toward the wider community in order to gather input for developing the meeting agenda?

The first section (bullet point 1) will provide a record for the number of formal meetings organized with different stakeholder groups. The second section (bullet point 2) in particular is very important as it needs to explain how the initiative developed a meeting agenda that is fully inclusive of the needs of a wider community. As previously explained, public consultations are usually run by the organizing committee through the website, official mailing list(s), and social media accounts.

It is recommended to provide a summary reflecting the subject matter of the public consultations, desired results, applied methodology, outcomes achieved, and the ways the outcomes were later used and/or applied.

b. Reporting on the meeting days

In regards to reporting about the annual meeting(s) event itself, the report should provide a full meeting agenda, reflecting the work timeline, session names and types, and presenters' information details (full names and affiliations).

The next section can have sub-sections reflecting the brief summary report on each of the sessions (submitted at the end of each session to the organizing committee) indicating what was the discussion focus and what were the final outcomes.

The sub-sections should follow the format of indicating at the beginning the names of the session presenters, their affiliation(s), and the countries the institutions they represent are based in.

These brief summaries will provide the concept of the discussion and major key points raised.

Some of the initiatives have adopted the practices of producing concrete messages from each of the sessions, which have become an integral part of the report. Others prefer indicating the main key points that each of the speakers raised.

Some initiatives provide a short reflection on each session's activity on social media accounts, as per the records obtained from the official hashtags of each session.

In case any type of documented input were shared during the presentations, it is recommended to reflect them, and to attach the full version as annexes to the report.

Each of the sessions' summary reporting may be supported by the direct interventions coming from the onsite and online participants, while intervening from the floor, in a form of a quote or brief summary, in case relevant.

Official photos for each of the session should be included in the report as well.

c. Reporting on meeting records

The section on the Meeting Records need to provide the information in regards to the following elements:

Total number of participants present on-site and online, with breakdown per stakeholder group. For having most accurate information on this, it is recommended having official records based on the total number of badges distributed to the registered participants.

The NRIs are encourage to provide information on the demographics and geographical characteristics of the participation in order to allow the assessment of under-represented areas. On this way it will be possible for the initiatives to illustrate if there is equal distribution of participants accords the regions and countries, or there is a significant concentration of participants coming from a particular region/city.

A breakdown per gender of all registered participants onsite and online (i.e., remote participants) should be included. It is important for the initiatives to be gender sensitive when gathering such data.

Above described records should be illustrated using text but also supported by graphical illustrations whenever possible.

The report should conclude by providing a summary of the participant's feedback. Depending on the ways the feedback was gathered, initiatives can illustrate these in different ways, for example, by providing a summary of all feedback received and directly quoting the most relevant statements representative of what was discussed, issues/challenges raised, solutions offered, etc.

d. Reporting on budget

The report should briefly explain how the initiative is funded and list the sponsor and the in-kind support from sponsors (such as offering a meeting space for free).

An overview of the budget for the particular event the organizing committee is reporting about should be provided in a table. Budget items with estimated and actual costs should be indicated as well.

Additionally, the related information of the main sponsors and supporting organizations should also be provided.

e. Contact details and meeting main information sources

A section detailing the main contact details should be provided, in particular the:

- Official website of the initiative;
- Official email address of the initiative;
- Official mailing list and/or open website details, and
- Official social media account information with official #hashtag(s) details.
-

A section with resources related to the initiative's annual meeting should be provided, containing the following information in particular:

- A link to the report on the initiative's website as well as on the IGF website;
- Links to the online location of all session transcripts, video recordings, and photos; and
- Links to the meeting program agenda.

2) Deadline to submit the report

It is recommended to publish the final version of the report within twelve (12) weeks from the day the meeting ended and before Global IGF meeting.

The first draft version of the report should be available for public discussion for up to two (2) weeks, where the received input should then be reviewed and incorporated before publishing the final version.

Once the NRI Coordinator submits the report, the IGF Secretariat will review the submission. If it complies with the IGF's main principles, the IGF Secretariat will recognize the initiative as an official IGF initiative and include it with the other recognized national and regional IGF initiatives by listing it on the IGF website.

To stay listed on the website, the initiatives are required to submit their updates throughout the year, and submit the report after their annual meeting(s).

Not all NRIs organize their events on a yearly basis due to various reasons. As long as the multistakeholder organizing team exists and the community expresses its need to discuss relevant Internet governance-related topics in a unique multistakeholder forum, the IGF Secretariat will keep the initiatives listed.

III

THE NRIs NETWORK

The IGF initiatives, officially recognized by the IGF Secretariat, are listed on a [dedicated page on the IGF website](#). If any stakeholder is interested in engaging with a particular initiative, the IGF website is the first place to visit and check if there is a relevant initiative.

On the global level, the NRIs conduct regular (bi)monthly virtual meetings to coordinate their joint work activities. The NRIs generally also organize a face-to-face gathering at any of the larger Internet governance-related meetings (such as the global IGF or regional IGF initiatives).

Every year, the NRIs organize dedicated focus sessions at the annual global IGF to discuss substantive issues from different world perspectives. They are regular contributors to the [IGF's intersessional work](#) as well. To keep yourself updated about the work and activities of the NRIs, subscribe to the [NRIs mailing list](#), where all relevant information is shared. Finally, all interested stakeholders are encouraged to engage actively with the national or (sub)regional IGF existing in their communities.

Annex A1

Check list: essential requirements to be sent to the IGF Secretariat in order to be listed on the IGF website as one of the IGF initiatives

- ⇒ Full name of the initiative and the full name of the person that is submitting the quest on behalf of the IGF initiative
- ⇒ Full names of the members of the Core Organizing Committees with their affiliation(s) and stakeholder group(s)
- ⇒ Dedicated website/webpage url
- ⇒ Contact details of the initiative's coordinator
- ⇒ Details about your event including the logistics on conducting a Public call for inputs
- ⇒ After the annual meeting(s) is held, initiatives need to send their final reports

Contact the IGF Secretariat:

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Visit the IGF website:

<http://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/>

Contact the NRIs Network:

igfregionals@intgovforum.org