

Internet Governance Forum (IGF) 2014

Best Practice Forums

Overview

The IGF Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG), at its meeting held in Paris on 19-21 May 2014, agreed to revitalize the Best Practice Forum category of IGF sessions, taking up a suggestion put forward in a paper submitted by the Internet Society as an input into the preparation of the IGF 2014¹.

The paper describes what it calls “the core of the proposal” as follows: “to enable the IGF to produce policy outcome documents open for voluntary adoption. In order to get there, it is suggested to seek inspiration from the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) in terms of producing outcome documents based on voluntary adoption and starting substantive inter-sessional work”. It further argues that “the concept of documentation related to best practices could prove the most suitable one for providing tangible outcomes. In the past, the IGF tried to promote best practices sessions and organized Best Practice Forums. Unfortunately, after some successful individual sessions this format ran out of steam and, due to lack of resources, was not documented sufficiently. Revived Best Practice Forums could be reflected in policy documents.”

The MAG identified the following five areas as themes for the Istanbul Best Practice Forums:

- Developing meaningful multistakeholder mechanisms;
- Regulation and mitigation of unwanted communications (e.g. spam);
- Online child protection;
- Establishing and supporting Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) for Internet security;
- Creating an enabling environment for the development of local content.

It was decided that each theme would to be dealt with in one separate session at the IGF 2014 meeting, while a final wrap-up session would bring the outcomes of the individual sessions to the broader IGF community.

The MAG started the preparatory process by reaching out to the IGF community to identify experts to lead each of these explorations. These lead experts managed email list serves and led global discussions on these topics. They were supported in this endeavor by the IGF Secretariat, which had recruited two additional experts for this purpose. Each group published an initial draft prior to the 2014 Istanbul IGF meeting and opened them up for public comment.

At the IGF Best Practice Forum wrap-up session in Istanbul, the broader community provided additional comments, which were incorporated into the draft documents. While for some Best

¹ <http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/images/2014/IGF2014/IGF-2014Request-for-Public-Input.v3.pdf>

Practice Forums most of the work was done through the online preparatory and wrap-up process, for others, the physical meeting in Istanbul provided a valuable corrective with some substantive additions.

The lead experts noted that each thread had found rough consensus on some issues and acknowledged that further work in each area was needed. All parties agreed that the short preparatory time frame had been woefully brief and that lengthening the work window would be conducive to delivering more substantial outcomes. Additionally, contributors at the session suggested that additional best practice threads might be suitable for further exploration.

The final outcome documents in each of these areas reflect the rough consensus views of the lead experts and contributing stakeholders, including their advice on defining challenges, unanswered questions and potential future work.

MAG facilitators for the Best Practice Forums process

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