IGF Best Practice Forums

Definitions, Procedures, and Modalities

> *The Definitions, Procedures and Modalities document was developed by the* IGF 2020 BPF on BPFs *in response to the MAG's request to provide guidance for best practices on organising and leading BPFs from 2021 onwards. This document and the practical* recommendations *formulated by the BPF on BPFs are intended to be immediately implementable to strengthen the BPFs and their contribution to enhancing the IGF's footprint.*
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> *In addition, It is expected that the BPF on BPFs' observations, recommendations, and this Definitions, Procedures, and Modalities document, may contribute to the evolving dialogue on the future of the IGF and its intersessional activities, amongst other in response to the UN Secretary-General's Road map for Digital Cooperation and call to 'Better integrating programme and intersessional policy development work' (art 93(e)), and the suggestions in the Options Paper for the Future of Global Digital Cooperation 'to build on and strengthen the existing Dynamic Coalitions and Best Practice Fora (...)'.*
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> *The MAG endorsed the Definitions, Procedures and Modalities document on* 26 October 2020*.*

I. IGF Best Practice Forums - definition and purpose

Best Practice Forums were introduced in 2014 as part of the intersessional programme to complement the IGF community's activities and develop more tangible outputs to 'enhance the impact of the IGF on global Internet governance and policy'.[1]

BPFs offer unique platforms for multistakeholder discussion on topics relevant to the future of the Internet, with the aim of facilitating dialogue and collecting emerging and existing practices to address specific issues or themes. BPFs foster a common understanding of the concrete policy challenges stakeholders may address in order to contribute to achieving the Internet policy goal the BPF is focussing on. The objective is not to develop new policies or practices, but rather to collect existing good practices, share positive and negative experiences, and flag challenges that require additional multistakeholder dialogue and/or require the attention of policymakers, including in specified decision-making bodies.

BPFs typically work on less controversial topics for which the debate has sufficiently matured to make way for some general consensus in the community and the focus of discussions has shifted to implementation.

Like other intersessional activities, BPF outcomes are designed to become robust resources, to serve as inputs into other pertinent forums, and to grow and evolve over time.

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[1] This intersessional programme was designed in accordance with the recommendations of a 2012 report by the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)'s Working Group on IGF Improvements.

BPFs are in nature open, bottom-up, and collective processes. Their open and transparent working approaches aim at encouraging and gathering broad stakeholder input and their outcomes are intended to be community-driven, bottom-up, and a true reflection of the multistakeholder nature of the IGF's intersessional activities. Within these general principles BPFs have the freedom to define and delineate the parameters of their work in consultation with their respective multistakeholder communities; to define their own methodologies; and to tailor their work to the requirements of their theme's specific needs and requirements.

II. BPF working modalities

General Principles

- The IGF Code of Conduct should be followed by all stakeholders involved in IGF community activities, including BPFs.
- BPFs have the freedom to define their own methodologies which suit the chosen topic and are tailored to each group's specific needs and requirements.
- BPF activities are open to all interested stakeholders. Each BPF should discuss and decide on their respective working modalities in an open and transparent way on mailing lists and during virtual meetings.
- Decisions on working modalities should have support of the participants of the BPF and should also be made in an inclusive and transparent manner.
- BPF activities should be documented on the IGF website.
- BPFs are expected to work collaboratively and produce tangible outputs, of which drafts are shared as inputs to the annual IGF meeting.

Roles & Responsibilities

- **The BPF Coordinating team** consists of the MAG facilitator(s), BPF co-facilitator(s), and the IGF Secretariat.
- **MAG facilitators** should act as stewards of the groups, assist in scheduling and chairing the working virtual meetings, guide work being conducted on the mailing lists, and engage in outreach to encourage participation from all stakeholders in the work. MAG facilitators are expected to act as guardians of the open and inclusive character of the BPF and regularly report to the MAG on BPF progress.
- The MAG facilitators can invite one or more non-MAG **Co-facilitators** to share the workload and help with coordinating the BPF or serve as Lead-expert(s).
- The **IGF Secretariat** should primarily act as a neutral rapporteur and editor of the BPF output, including responsibility for drafting meeting summaries and providing logistical support to the work of the groups.
- **BPF participants** agree to respect the IGF Code of Conduct. Anyone can become a BPF participant by joining the mailing list or participating in BPF activities.

III. Selection of BPF topics

Proposals for BPF topics

Proposals for the BPF intersessional program should be submitted or seconded by at least one MAG member. BPF proposals should be submitted ahead of the first face-to-face (or equivalent) MAG meeting of the year. MAG members submitting or seconding a proposal are expected to take on the role of MAG Facilitator should the MAG select the topic for a BPF. Proposals can be for new topics or topics that build on previous BPF work.

The proposal should indicate the following:
- **Title**
- **Names of at least two Facilitators** (at least one of which is a MAG member)
- **Background**
  This should include the relationship to multistakeholder Internet governance discussions and/or decision-making bodies and the relevance for the different stakeholder communities.
- **Description**: topics covered, proposed objectives and focus of the BPF (the description should provide sufficient detail to allow an assessment and selection as described below).
- **Outreach plan and multistakeholder engagement**
  This should mention the anticipated engagement from different parts of the multistakeholder community, including the names of organisations which have signalled a desire to participate, and intended outreach to attract further involvement in the work of the BPF.

Selection of topics

When discussing and assessing the different proposals, the MAG may use the following quantitative and qualitative metrics. To allow a swift selection process, it is recommended that proposals dully address the following elements:

Relevance and suitability of the topic
- ❏ Is the topic mature and does it allow for the collection of best practices?
- ❏ In what ways, is it still relevant and useful to collect best practices on this topic?
- ❏ Which are -in the global agenda- ongoing negotiations or debates or problems going on , which is their timeframe, and how could an IGF contribution be useful and appropriate.

Community of interest
- ❏ Will there be sufficient community interest and stakeholder involvement?
- ❏ Description of the community of interest and relevant stakeholder groups
- ❏ List of organisations, institutions, and networks they intend to invite or which have already committed to participate

Metrics to evaluate the functioning of completed BPFs
- ❏ minimum of 3 open virtual meetings;
- ❏ an active BPF mailing list (a minimum number of subscribers, a minimum amount of traffic);
- ❏ the BPF process is documented on the IGF website;
- ❏ a draft BPF output was published ahead of the IGF annual meeting, with the possibility for the community to provide feedback;
- ❏ a BPF session was organised at the annual IGF meeting;
- ❏ the BPF has published a final BPF output report

Expected output and contribution to IG discussions and decision-making processes
- ❏ BPF objective(s)
- ❏ Involvement of relevant organisations (topic leads or institutions)
- ❏ Involvement of experts and expert networks
- ❏ Enlarging the IGF footprint across sectors and regions
- ❏ Immediate relevance of BPF work for ongoing discussions elsewhere
- ❏ Building common ground
- ❏ Longer term contribution to IG(F) / BPF's ripple effect
- ❏ Planned Interaction and synergies with other IGF activities (including DCs, NRIs, Main sessions)

(a description of the above metrics can be found in the BPF on BPFs report, chapter D, section c)

IV. BPF Outputs and Timelines

IGF output documents

BPFs have the freedom to structure their outputs depending on the topic, chosen methodology and work plan. The following three elements are considered key components that should be reflected in BPF output documents:
1. Definition of the issue(s) and overview of policy challenges
2. Brief presentation of the used methodology and BPF activities
3. Compilation of collected case studies and/or best practices

In addition, it is recommended that BPFs consider addressing the following elements in their work and output documents:
4. Regional specificities observed (e.g. Internet industry development)
5. Existing policy measures and private sector initiatives, impediments
6. What worked well, identifying common effective practices
7. Unintended consequences of policy interventions, good and bad
8. Unresolved issues where further multistakeholder cooperation is needed
9. Insights gained as a result of the experience
10. Proposed steps for further multistakeholder dialogue, collaboration, and joint action

Note: The means employed to achieve a solution are as important a learning experience as the actual ends achieved. A discussion of unintended consequences, both positive and negative, of mistakes that were made, and of lessons learned will further enrich an understanding of what has been accomplished.

Timeline

- BPFs begin to meet as soon as approved and channel their discussions into an eventual output document.
- Approximately six weeks prior to the annual meeting, the BPFs' draft outputs should be made available for public comment online. (*The six-week timeframe for outputs will be as consistent as possible across all IGF intersessional groups.)
- Each BPF will be responsible for organising a dedicated session at the annual IGF meeting where they will present their work and invite input.
- After the annual meeting, the outputs will be updated incorporating comments and suggestions made by the community online and at the meeting, and the final BPF outputs will be published.
- MAG facilitators of the individual BPFs, as well as all MAG members generally, are invited to carry out outreach activities to help disseminate the BPF outputs into other relevant fora and future meetings.

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