GFCE CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING STRATEGIC DOCUMENT

GFCE Cyber Capacity Building Strategic Document
"Global Cooperation, Regional Coordination and Local Collaboration"

Introduction
Everyone should be able to reap the benefits that an open, free and secure internet has to offer. Under these conditions, cyberspace has thrived and continues to offer extraordinary opportunities for innovation, communication, sustainable development and economic growth. Building cyber capacity provides the necessary foundation for countries to strengthen their cyber resilience by developing skills and capacity to address threats and vulnerabilities arising from cyberspace. The Global Forum on Cyber Expertise's (GFCE) unique structure as a bottom-up, neutral and apolitical forum provides an excellent opportunity for multi-stakeholders to cooperate and collaborate on cyber capacity building, leading to improved coordination. The GFCE promotes a vision of cyber capacity building (CCB) that lies at the intersection of security, economy and human rights.

Towards 2025, our mission is to reinforce the GFCE as the leading coordination platform for cyber capacity building stakeholders and activities on a global and regional level. This Strategic Document aims to set out the objectives and ambitions for the further development of the GFCE from 2023-2024. Looking at the CCB landscape and unique value of the GFCE, it also summarizes the GFCE's activities and evolution in response to key developments and challenges that are driving up demand for collaboration and networking. The document emphasizes the critical coordination role that the GFCE plays in CCB and invites the Community to embark on this next phase together.

Strategic Context
The World Bank found that over the past fifteen years, the digital economy has been growing at a rate two and a half times faster than global gross domestic product (GDP). Today, the value of the digital economy is estimated to be equivalent to 15.5% of global GDP.[1] Given the significant increase in digital transformation investments by governments and the private sector, this trend of rapid growth will likely continue. The value and fast growth of the digital economy sector, coupled with the fact that the speed of digital transformation is intertwined with geopolitical and major events (e.g. the COVID-19 pandemic), underlines the importance and necessity of investing in cyber resilience.

Although awareness of the importance of digital resilience and CCB is growing, alongside an increasing commitment for resources from various donors, the field is not without its challenges. As an emerging global and multi-stakeholder field, one of the biggest challenges is the fragmentation of CCB efforts. This challenge is summarized below:
- There is limited knowledge-sharing and coordination on CCB programs and activities. This can result in duplication of efforts whereby some countries receive similar offers of support from multiple donors and implementers, while others are left with little to no support.
- The efficiency and effectiveness of capacity building efforts are often hindered by their lack of alignment with countries' specific needs, or lack of long-term vision for sustainable impact.
- As the field is still relatively new, and resources, though increasing, are still scarce, recipients are limited in their choices regarding projects, donors and implementors. This can limit the possibilities for countries seeking assistance.

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[1] World Bank Digital Development Overview,
https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/digitaldevelopment/overview

- Collaboration on capacity building efforts may be hampered by a lack of trust and cooperation in the field, caused by the multiplicity of diverse stakeholders involved, each working with their own interests and perspectives.

Against this backdrop, supporting collaboration and enabling multi-level coordination is more crucial than ever to support the strengthening of cyber capacity and bring us closer to a secure and stable digital ecosystem. To realize this vision, the GFCE's CCB ecosystem catalyzes the collaboration necessary to power the digital engine driving economic growth.

The unique value of the GFCE
At the heart of our work is the conviction that capacity building is a powerful and necessary tool for change. CCB is an essential part of ensuring that everyone has equal access to the opportunities digital transformation creates, and that each country and organization can safeguard its cyber security and build resilience. For CCB to be purposeful and effective, we need to minimize the discrepancies and misalliances that can occur between donor programs and projects, and the countries and organizations working to build capacity.

The GFCE is unique, as the only global and multi-stakeholder CCB platform that helps its members and partners[2] with collaboration and coordination of their activities It does this by providing access to a wide pool of expertise and by sharing available knowledge, matchmaking and networking opportunities. Launched in 2015, our founding principles of "inclusive international collaboration and investment to ensure a free, open and secure cyberspace" were codified in the 2017 Delhi Communiqué.[3] The GFCE has organized itself around its three main strategic objectives as outlined below.

Coordination
With our global community and a proven track record, the GFCE facilitates the coordination of CCB projects and programs around the world, improving efficiency and avoiding duplication of effort. We are the 'go to' place to locate partners, pathways, and support to build and develop cyber capacity, expertise, and resilience. Like cyberspace itself, our value comes from the depth and strength of our connections. Our community meets in virtual and in-person settings, such as at GFCE global and regional meetings, in addition to our thematic Working Groups which are a space for members and partners to network, collaborate and share knowledge and opportunities.

Knowledge Sharing
The GFCE makes relevant CCB knowledge, practices and expertise available on a global scale. The CCB knowledge repository, the Cybil Knowledge Portal[4], is the only online repository for international CCB projects, tools and publications that help to improve the effectiveness, coordination and transparency of capacity building. Cybil's array of supports include practical tools for CCB activities, best practices, and research publications, all developed and created by and for the GFCE and the broader CCB community.

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[2] Our members are countries, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), international organizations and companies, who work together with our partners to build cyber capacity globally and supported by a neutral secretariat.
[3] "Delhi Communiqué on a GFCE Global Agenda for Cyber Capacity Building" https://thegfce.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/DelhiCommunique.pdf
[4] Cybil – the CCB knowledge portal: https://cybilportal.org/

Matchmaking

The GFCE provides a support mechanism that fosters cooperation among partners, including identifying pathways for donors and beneficiaries to optimize CCB delivery and impact. We bridge the gap between CCB demand and supply by supporting stocktaking and research to ensure better understanding of needs, and by deepening our regional networks so we can match projects and programs to local demands. Specifically, our Clearing House is a matchmaking service to pair available resources with countries' identified CCB needs.

To fulfil its mission, the GFCE is continuously developing its unique ecosystem in response to the evolving needs and demands of our community.

Evolution and Achievements

During its formative years, the ecosystem evolved in response to the offerings of individual GFCE Members and Partners. The GFCE platform facilitated these efforts and multiplied them on a global level. The focus was on expanding the multi-stakeholder network, which resulted in our community growing from 42 to over 170 stakeholders over the past seven years. By mapping the Community's expertise and encouraging collaboration on GFCE (knowledge) products in the Working Groups, the GFCE built a solid foundation on the supply-side of CCB. Moving forward, the development of the GFCE ecosystem will continue to serve the needs of its Members and Partners, with a focus on multi-stakeholder engagement and collaboration, as a cornerstone of its role.

The GFCE has matured and is now transitioning further towards a demand-driven approach. Key examples include annual regional coordination meetings aimed at gaining a better understanding of regional needs, and the clearing house which facilitates the identification of local needs. For instance, the AU-GFCE collaboration project aims to enable African countries to identify and address their cyber capacity needs. A complete overview of the GFCE's achievements, including testimonials, regarding the impact of the GFCE is available on the GFCE website.

The tangible impacts of the GFCE are made possible by its structure as a bottom-up, neutral, apolitical and community-driven forum. The GFCE exists to support its members and partners by identifying and facilitating their CCB activities and needs. This means the GFCE's impact can be recognized through the impact achieved by its members and partners. Our community benefits from the facilitation provided through Working Groups, regional coordination, Cybil, the Clearing House, Global CCB Research Agenda, and the GFCE's various committees, meetings and events. The GFCE's value lies in the network it provides to the community, and its pivotal role in connecting the dots to bring together the siloed components needed to catalyze action and results. Therefore, the impact that the GFCE makes in CCB is closely linked to the successes and achievements of its community through the engagement with the network and platform.

As we enter a new phase in anticipating and responding to global CCB needs, we will deepen these connections across our platform to increase capacity at the local, regional, and global levels. Our 2023 – 2024 deliverables represent our shared ambitions and blueprint to ensure we continue to serve and grow our community.

GFCE Priorities for 2023-2024

Towards 2025, our mission is to ensure that the GFCE is the leading coordination platform for cyber capacity building stakeholders and activities on a global and regional level. To achieve this the GFCE will focus the next two years to strengthen global cooperation, regional coordination, and local collaboration in cyber capacity building. To achieve this, there are five main priorities identified below:

1. **Foster inclusivity in the GFCE network:** ensure an inclusive network that includes all relevant stakeholders active in CCB, including strong private sector and civil society participation and linking to the development community.

2. **Empower the GFCE hubs in Africa, Latin America, Caribbean, Pacific and South-East Asia:** to support needs analysis, regional coordination, and delivery of CCB activities. Each GFCE regional hub will:
   o Build a regional multi-stakeholder CCB community.
   o Identify and prioritize the needs for each region and country through developing demand-driven regional CCB agendas.
   o Establish regional clearing house programs prioritizing south-south cooperation with (expertise) support from the GFCE community.

3. **Establish a global CCB agenda:** as an outcome of the GC3B process, steered by the GFCE community, to create a global agenda to support the facilitation of global and regional CCB priorities.

4. **Scale up information sharing within the CCB ecosystem:** by aiming to have all relevant projects and resources on Cybil to provide a good overview of who does what where and when. Specifically, to make Cybil more inclusive with information from the Global South and encourage South-South cooperation success stories.

5. **Spearhead and coordinate efforts to mainstream gender in CCB:** support activities and analysis that encourage gender-sensitive CCB, as well as coordinate with and complement stakeholder efforts to mainstream gender in CCB.

Next Steps and Conclusion

To implement this strategic document, the GFCE Secretariat will deliver and report back on our supporting activities at the global, regional and local levels. This will be monitored through an evolving action plan[5] that reports on the objectives outlined in this strategic document. As CCB continues to evolve, the action plan will also report on any activities that need to be adapted. In line with our organizational and community values of knowledge-sharing and iterative improvement, the action plan will report on which activities are most effective in achieving these objectives so that the lessons can be applied to benefit our members and partners.

Change is constant, and we need constantly to adapt to ensure the GFCE remains a leading platform for matchmaking and coordinating the global CCB community. We will continue to embrace innovation, share knowledge, and build on each other's experience and ideas. To make this possible, we need to work together and offer mutual support – across cultures, borders, and stakeholder groups. The GFCE Secretariat invites your insights, collaboration and ongoing support as we move forward together.

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[5] The Action Plan is available on the next few pages.

GFCE ACTION PLAN 2023-2024

I. Global cooperation: Expand the GFCE network, focusing on inclusivity

The GFCE aims to cooperate globally with and connect CCB actors to strengthen connections and mature the GFCE ecosystem. An important milestone for the GFCE in the coming years is the Global Conference on Cyber Capacity Building (GC3B) which supports catalyzation of the GFCE's ambitions on global cooperation.

Ambition	Explanation	Deliverable
1. **Enhance private sector participation**	Build a strong coalition of trusted private sector expertise to support the GFCE community on awareness raising regarding the latest technical developments and support programs on cyber skills development.	• Deliver an annual threats assessments report with the GFCE private sector to be completed with a presentation or session during AM.
		• Way forward on how to increase engagement of private sector in the GFCE and how they can make the most of it.
2. **Build a strong civil society network**	Build and increase the involvement of the civil society network within the GFCE structure, under the leadership of the GFCE Advisory Board, through bi-annual events and other forms of engagement.	• Bi-annual civil society dialogue led by the Advisory Board
3. **Mainstream gender in CCB**	Support activities and analysis that encourage gender-sensitive cyber capacity building as well as coordinate with and complement stakeholder efforts to mainstream gender in CCB.	• Conduct a mapping of existing Women in Cyber networks and initiatives and connect with the relevant networks
		• Develop guidelines for integrating GEDSI considerations in CCB projects
		• (Co-)Host roundtable discussions on thematic topics related to gender and security
		• Establish a project group within the WiCCB network to steer the mainstreaming gender in CCB process
4. **Connect CCB with the Development community**	Expand and deepen the GFCE network, in addition to bridging the community with the development community while exploring opportunities for collaboration towards the GC3B.	• Link cyber capacity building and to the SDG's
		• Integrate the recommendations from the report 'Integrating Cyber Capacity to the Digital Development Agenda' to the CCB community
		• Explore how to connect cyber capacity building activities with ODA funding
5. **Establish a Global CCB Agenda**	As an outcome of the GC3B process, steered by the GFCE community, to create a global agenda to support the facilitation of global and regional CCB priorities.	• Organize at least two consultations with the GFCE community leading up to the GC3B
		• Agree upon an agenda as a deliverable of the GC3B that entails a statement of purpose with roots in the Delhi Communiqué that prioritizes cyber capacities.

6. **Engage in relevant international cyber processes and dialogues**	Contribute to the ongoing OEWG and AHC UN-processes by providing written statements on topical discussions. Additionally, the GFCE can support the implementation of agreed outcomes of the UN-processes and feed specific country requests into the GFCE clearing house process mechanism.	• Develop a resource bank for UN processes to demystify the UN processes by collecting resources and connecting the GFCE's community to support understanding and engagement
		• Organize side-events and virtual meetings in the sidelines of the OEWG and AHC processes.

II. Regional coordination: Develop regional coordination to bridge the national and global level

It is essential to anchor CCB actors with our regional coordination presences to bridge the national and global level. The regional level allows the GFCE to take on a coordination role to ensure a demand-driven approach, prioritizing country's needs in cyber capacity building activities. The GFCE's regional hubs are the cornerstone for coordination through connecting with the regional CCB stakeholders, identifying needs, and sharing available expertise. Therefore, the GFCE has the following regional ambitions.

Ambition	*Explanation*	*Deliverable*
7. **Empower the GFCE hubs**	Establish and further develop the GFCE regional hubs in Africa, Latin America Caribbean, Pacific and South-East Asia to support needs analysis, regional coordination, and delivery of CCB, as well as provide support to the GFCE community. Each GFCE Regional Hub will: • Build a regional multi-stakeholder CCB community. • Identify and prioritize the needs for each region and country. • Develop tailor made and continuously updated knowledge models.	• Develop a regional strategy for each hub to detail the priorities and focus for each region • Organize a GFCE regional meeting in each region through the hub to engage the regional cyber capacity expert communities
8. **Develop regional CCB agendas**	Support the development and deployment of a regional CCB agenda set by the key regional organizations or actors within the CCB domain.	• Develop regional CCB agenda based on needs and priorities of each region that are identified in mappings from GFCE stakeholders and dialogues with the recipients and other relevant regional stakeholders.
9. **Set up regional clearing house programs**	Through scaling up the GFCE's clearing house function from national to (sub-)regional needs, it allows the GFCE to establish regional clearing house programs with the GFCE community.	• Develop a Clearing House manual that provides procedural guidance on the process for all stakeholders involved tailored to national request as well as (sub-)regional requests.
		• Establish (sub-)regional clearing house programs on specific topics based on the identified needs.
		• Establish programmatic funding for the Clearing House through the regional hubs

GFCE ACTION PLAN 2023-2024

III. Local collaboration: Empower local stakeholders by connecting to the GFCE ecosystem		
The impact in cyber capacity building is most prominently made at the local level. With this in mind, it is important for local stakeholders to be connected to the GFCE ecosystem, which will lead to more effective identification and addressing of national CCB needs. Therefore, the following ambitions are set to support local stakeholder collaboration.		
Ambition	*Explanation*	*Deliverable*
10. Coordinate regionally to support national CCB activities	Strengthen our regional coordination with local stakeholders by identifying and working closely with community leaders to identify and support national CCB activities.	• Connect expertise and best practices from the global and regional CCB networks to strengthen national CCB activities
11. Connect the local stakeholders to the GFCE	Enhance collaboration between stakeholders and increase the support of the GFCE's Working Groups and the Toolbox (Clearing House, the Cybil knowledge portal, and the Global CCB Research Agenda) with donors, implementers and recipients to improve the country-level impact.	• Identify and connect local stakeholders to the GFCE's ecosystem: Working Groups and toolbox • Tailor the GFCE toolbox to national CCB needs