

IGF 2025: EU and GIFI Open Forum Proposal:

Title:

WSIS+20 Review and SDGs: A Collaborative Global Dialogue

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) has played a pivotal role in shaping global efforts to harness digital technologies for development. During the WSIS+10 review, the WSIS-SDG Matrix was developed to illustrate the linkages between WSIS Action Lines and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Moreover, the Global Digital Compact also plays a crucial role, as it emphasises the importance of aligning digital cooperation efforts with the SDGs, ensuring that digital transformation contributes meaningfully to achieving these global goals. As we approach the WSIS+20 milestone, there is an opportunity to deepen this integration by developing comprehensive strategies to effectively leverage digital technologies in achieving specific SDG targets.

The European Union is committed to engaging stakeholders in brainstorming and discussions on this topic to shape a forward-looking and inclusive approach. This Open Forum session aims to facilitate a collaborative dialogue. The discussion will focus on:

- **Evaluating Past Efforts:** Reflecting on the outcomes of the WSIS+10 review, particularly the effectiveness of the WSIS-SDG Matrix, and identifying areas for enhanced alignment.
- **Proposing Collaborative Strategies:** Exploring the development of detailed, actionable strategies that outline how specific digital initiatives can drive progress toward individual SDGs, drawing also inspiration from the methodology developed by the UN for the elaboration of STI4SDG roadmaps¹.
- **Engaging Diverse Stakeholders:** Encouraging collaboration among governments, international organizations, the private sector, civil society, and academia to co-create these strategies and ensure their successful implementation.

Possible Participants (to be defined at a later stage):

- **Ambassador Elina Kalkku** – Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations, co-chair of the STI Forum.
- **Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin** – Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), in charge of WSIS-SDGs Matrix.
- **Representative from the European Commission** – Level TBC.
- **Representative from the African Union /ODC** – Level TBC.
- **Mr. Joshua Alade** – Coordinator of the Nigeria Youth SDGs Network, a youth-led organization dedicated to localizing the United Nations SDGs in Nigeria.
- **Ms. Karen McCabe** – Senior Director of Global Public Affairs at IEEE, representing the technical community's perspective on developing and implementing digital-driven SDG strategies.

¹ [Guidebook for the Preparation of STI for SDGs Roadmaps \(English Edited Version\) | Department of Economic and Social Affairs](#)

- **Representative from Latin America or Asia CSO. NGOs on digital related matters (e.g. Access now, HRW, ECNL, etc.)**
- **OHCHR / UNICEF/UNDP**
- **Etc.**

Session Approach:

The session will begin with brief presentations from each panelist, highlighting their organization's efforts in aligning digital initiatives with the SDGs. This will be followed by an interactive discussion, encouraging input from both onsite and online participants, to coalesce ideas on formulating effective strategies. The goal is to emerge with a set of actionable recommendations that the EU and its partners can pursue in the lead-up to the WSIS+20 review.

Issues, Challenges, and Opportunities:

- **Issues:** Despite previous efforts, gaps remain in effectively integrating digital strategies with SDG implementation plans. There is also a need for more detailed guidance on leveraging digital technologies for specific SDG targets.
- **Challenges:** Developing universally applicable strategies is challenging due to varying levels of digital infrastructure, policy environments, and socio-economic contexts across countries.
- **Opportunities:** The upcoming WSIS+20 review presents a timely opportunity to reassess and strengthen the role of digital technologies in sustainable development. By collaborating on the development of detailed strategies, the EU can work alongside global partners to foster partnerships and drive innovation.