

IGF Dynamic Coalition Schools on Internet Governance (IGF DC-SIG)

Historical background

The UN Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) identified in its final report (2005) gaps in Internet Governance education and research. The need for enhanced capacity building in Internet Governance was also reflected in the Tunis Agenda of the UN World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). Governments, the private sector and civil society organizations agreed that there is a lack of experts in the field of Internet Governance.

In July 2006, the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), the International Communication Association (ICA) and UNESCO, supported by the German ccTLD Registry DENIC, organized an expert workshop in Rathen/Germany to discuss how to develop further Internet Governance education and research. The recommendations of this expert workshop included the establishment of a Global Internet Governance Academic Network (GIGANET) and the launch of Schools of Internet Governance (SIG).

As a pilot project, Medienstadt Leipzig e.V., a recognized At Large Structure under ICANN Bylaws, together with DENIC, organized the first “European Summer School on Internet Governance” (EuroSSIG) in Meissen/Germany in July 2007. Since 2007 around 300 fellows from all parts of the world have attended the Meissen School which became a blueprint and a source of inspiration for a growing network of SIGs around the world. In 2016 EuroSSIG celebrated its 10th anniversary with Steve Crocker, one of the early contributors of the Internet and chair of the ICANN Board, as key note speaker.

Encouraged by the success of EuroSSIG, other projects in various regions of the world emerged. Already in 2009 the first “South School on Internet Governance” (SSIG) took place in Buenos Aires/Argentina as well as the “Arabic Summer School on Internet Governance” in Cairo/Egypt. The first African SIG was organized by APC in Durban/South Africa in 2013. In Asia Pacific there have been SIG initiatives since 2011.

After regional Schools of Internet Governance national SIGs began to emerge, inter alia in Brazil, Pakistan, India and the USA. And new candidates have started to plan and launch their own national or sub-regional SIG as in Georgia, Kenya and Bulgaria.

Schools of Internet Governance (SIG) enjoy the confidence of many Internet Governance institutions as the source for a high quality programmes about Internet Governance.

Rational for an IGF Dynamic Coalition for Schools on Internet Governance (IGF DC-SIG)

So far the collaboration among the various SIGs is informal. SIG’s inspire each other and benefit from the lessons learned by others. It became evident that not one size fits all and that there are area specifics which have to be taken into account when organizing a national or regional SIG. However some guidelines would help to make all SIG’s comparable and to set basic standards in order to meet the expectations of fellows. After ten years of experiences it would make a lot of sense to formalize the informal collaboration and to establish a flexible structure which would allow more synergies among the SIGs.

Such collaboration could include:

1. Develop a modular SIG curriculum to address the expectations of SIG fellows
Such curriculum should include mandatory elements to guarantee the knowledge transfer of IG basics, and optional elements which can be included according to regional specifics and needs. The curriculum should be developed jointly with the academic faculty, which has experience in teaching methodology. With such a curriculum we could also introduce a level system to better meet the needs for different communities (entry level, advanced level, expert level).
2. Create a platform for general teaching material, practicum templates webinars for preparation
Approved and constantly updated presentations which can be used by multiple (regional) lecturers in different languages. Before creating a new platform we could consider hosting the material on existing platforms, for example ICANN Learn.

3. Creating a global database of alumni from all SIG's including global mailing lists would help
 - o to build a network of SIG alumni's
 - o help managing the IG education progress of alumni's, i.e. which fellow has participated in which SIG and at which course level (in case we introduce different levels in the future)
 - o offer space for the fellows to promote themselves by publishing their references and CV's
4. Create a pool of experts and potential faculty members which are available in each region of the world
This would help to identify multiple IG experts in each region and help manage availabilities. SIG organizers would be able to conduct the programme according to a curriculum and not according to availability of the faculty
5. Organising joint outreach activities within a region and globally, which could include
 - o outreach to different stakeholder groups and mobilizing potential fellows
 - o outreach to global experts to become part of the SIG faculty
 - o enhancing the cooperation between SIG and IGF (i.e. organizing a school in the country where the IGF is taking place)
 - o Outreach to potential sponsors
 - o Feedback from governments and Internet Industry about which skills they need and expect from an SIG Alumni
 - o Outreach to Universities to provide credentials for a successful participation in a SIG
6. Creating a calendar which lists SIG's worldwide and links to the respective website
7. Set up a library with general IG literature and up to date articles

Structure for an IGF DC-SIG

Taking into account the experiences from other IGF Dynamic Coalitions, the structure of a DC-SIG should be as flat as possible with only little bureaucracy. The DC-SIG should just serve as a platform to exchange experiences and good practices and to coordinate, where necessary, activities (inter alia, time tables and outreach activities). The DC-SIG should adopt a work plan including one annual meeting in conjunction with the annual IGF.

The DC-SIG should have a "Collaboration team" and a focal point for administrative matters.

The Collaboration team should be composed by one representative from each regional / national SIG and should include inter alia:

- Wolfgang Kleinwächter, Europe
- Olga Cavalli, Latin America
- Kilnam Chon, Asia-Pacific
- Anriette Esterhuysen, Africa
- Baher Esmat, Arab
- Nick Cull, North America (TBC)
- Hartmut Glaser, Brazil National SIG

Additionally members of the academic faculty as well as global sponsors should be members of this DC-SIG.

The formation of an IGF Dynamic Coalition includes the following requirements:

1. An explanation of the need for the dynamic coalition
2. An action plan
3. A mailing list
4. The contact person(s)
5. A list of representatives from at least three stakeholder groups