



How to engage with internet standardisation and governance bodies?

Practical guidance to the IGF

August 2025



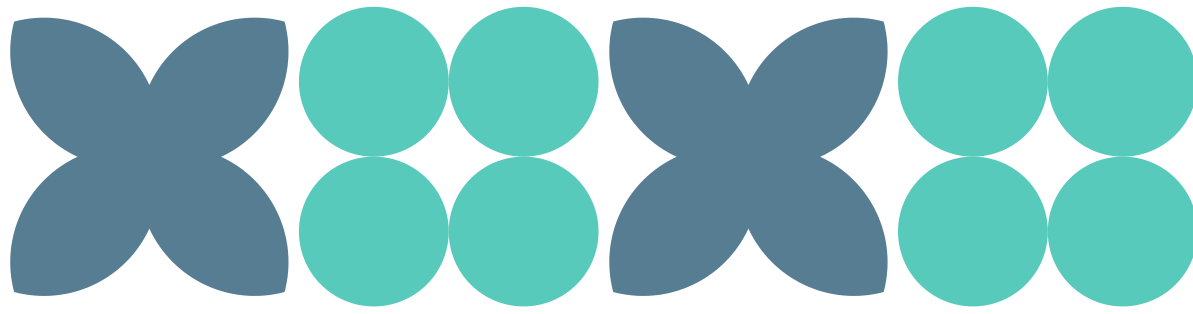
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Civil Society Alliances for
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Abbreviations

ALAC - At-Large Advisory Committee

ALS - At-large Structure

CSO - Civil Society Organisation

DESA - Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN)

GNSO - Generic Names Supporting Organisation

gTLD - Generic Top-Level Domains

IAB - Internet Architecture Board

ICANN - Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers

I-D - Internet Draft

IESG - Internet Engineering Steering Group

IETF - Internet Engineering Task Force

IGF - Internet Governance Forum

IRTF - Internet Research Task Force

ITU - International Telecommunication Union

ITU-D - Telecommunication Development

ITU-R - Radiocommunication

ITU-T - Telecommunication Standardisation

MAG - Multistakeholder Advisory Group

NCUC - Non-Commercial Users Constituency

NCSG - Non-Commercial Stakeholders Group

NPOC - Not-for-Profit Operational Concerns Constituency

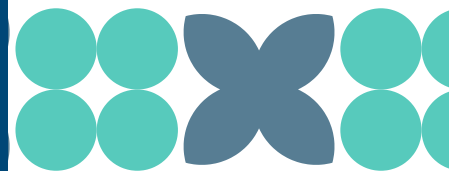
RALO - Regional At-Large Organisations

RFC - Requests for Comments

SG - Study Groups

WTDC - World Telecommunication Development Conference

WTSa - World Telecommunications Standardisation Assembly



What is the IGF and how does it work?

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is a UN conference and engagement process which constitutes the main global platform for discussions on internet governance and policy in a multistakeholder setting. Considering that the IGF is an established forum encouraging discussions on emerging issues on national, regional and international levels, and that it historically enjoys active engagement of governments and companies, the IGF is an important avenue of influence for civil society.

The IGF mandate was adopted in 2005, and extended for 10 years in 2015. In 2025, there are a lot of conversations about the future of the IGF, its mandate, and its role in the global internet governance ecosystem. Considering the IGF's strong historical focus on multistakeholder collaboration and openness to civil society, CSOs have a key active role to play in ensuring that the IGF remains a vital space for internet governance-related debates.

The IGF is convened annually by the UN Secretary-General with support from a different host country each year. It is structured around three key bodies:

- **The Leadership Panel** is a multistakeholder body composed of 10 members appointed for two-year terms by the UN Secretary-General. It provides strategic advice on IGF, supports stakeholder engagement and fundraising for IGF, and aims to promote the impact and dissemination of IGF discussions.
- **The Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG)** is composed of 40 to 50 members appointed by the UN Secretary-General to advise on the programmes and schedules of IGF annual meetings, as well as intersessional activities. The MAG comprises members from governments, the private sector, civil society, academia and technical communities from all regions (the number of members varies yearly).
- **The IGF Secretariat** supports the IGF and MAG and is headquartered at the UN Office in Geneva.

Between the annual IGF meetings, there are intersessional activities, including Dynamic Coalitions and Best Practice Forums. Additionally, there are national, regional, and youth IGF initiatives focused on respective communities and issues.



- [IGF events calendar](#)
- Leadership Panel:
 - [Current members](#)
 - [The role of the Leadership panel](#) and the selection process of members
- MAG:
 - [Current members](#)
 - [The role of the MAG](#)
- [IGF Secretariat](#)
- [IGF+20 Review by the UN General Assembly](#)

How can civil society get involved?

Join the MAG to influence the themes covered by the annual IGF

Civil society representatives can **apply to be part of the IGF MAG**. MAG members serve in their personal capacity, but they are expected to have established connections with their respective stakeholder groups. Some of the MAG's responsibilities include:

- Developing the programme and schedule of annual IGFs
- Organising main sessions and participating in dedicated thematic working groups
- Coordinating panels and providing guidance to organisers and speakers
- Support IGF intersessional work
- Promoting the work of the IGF

The MAG **meets in person 2–3 times a year** between the annual IGFs and holds periodic virtual meetings. Most meetings are also open to observers. The MAG makes decisions through rough consensus.

The MAG **comprises approximately 40-50 Members** (this number changes from year to year) representing governments (including previous host countries), the private sector, media, civil society, and the technical community. Government representatives constitute around 40% of all members, and the remaining seats are divided among other stakeholders.

The United Nations Secretary-General appoints MAG members for a term of one year. This term can also be shorter or longer, depending on the space of time between annual IGFs. The term is renewable for two consecutive years, based on the yearly evaluation of the member's work and contributions. Around one-third of the MAG members are rotated each year to bring in new perspectives. Typically, the MAG rotates regionally.

→ See the section 'How to become a member of MAG?' below for details on the application process.

Participate in annual IGFs

Participation in the annual IGF or their respective national and regional IGFs is a form of engagement available to all civil society organisations (CSOs). Before each IGF, the MAG organises two open consultations to provide feedback on the previous IGF and share suggestions for themes for the upcoming meeting. **CSOs can also propose sessions and workshops to take place during the IGF.**

Participation is free but requires sufficient resources to cover travel and accommodation costs. The IGF has a call for travel support for its annual IGF meeting for stakeholders who should fulfil these main criteria:

- Be from a Least Developed Country, Landlocked Developing Country, Small Island Developing State or Economy in Transition
- Be engaged in the IGF process as active contributors (e.g. to the intersessional work, as session co-organisers, session speakers, moderators and rapporteurs)
- Show commitment to contributing to its community after participating at the IGF;
- Be recommended by a respected community member.

→ Information about available travel support is published at IGF's website and applications usually close 3-4 months before the event.

Join intersessional work

Anyone in the community can join the inter-sessional working groups (e.g. policy networks, best practice forums, dynamic coalitions). These groups engage in thematic work that is developed throughout the year. In 2024, the themes included AI, cybersecurity, and internet fragmentation.

→ Organisations interested in this work can join the dedicated mailing list or contact the IGF Secretariat for advice at igf@un.org.

Support existing MAG members

Formal participation in the MAG will not be available or feasible for some CSOs due to the required time commitments and the need for recognition in the community to gather enough support for appointment. However, organisations can actively contribute to the discussions by engaging with current MAG members representing civil society voices.

How can I become a member of the MAG?

Application process and eligibility

Normally, **a call for applications is announced online on the IGF website every time a member leaves**, or when there's a rotation. For 2025, considering the need for experience with the IGF in the pivotal moment for the IGF mandate renewal, MAG members were appointed through an exceptional approach based on the public nomination process from the MAG alumni network.

Any civil society organisation can put forward candidates for the MAG to represent their stakeholder group, or **individuals may nominate themselves**. Stakeholder groups should nominate candidates from the stakeholder group to which they belong. Historically, civil society has suggested names **through coalitions** (nominating and endorsing a member).

Selection process

The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the IGF Secretariat appoint each individual, in a decision made behind closed doors. The selection is typically based on long-term engagement with the IGF and relevant expertise. The new MAG composition is always announced on the last day of the IGF.

Candidates are assessed based on factors such as the extent of support, knowledge, and expertise. Consideration is also given to whether the candidate would bring in a diverse viewpoint and understanding of internet governance-related issues. There is currently an excess of members from the Western European and Others Group (WEOG). A new selection process will therefore strive to make the MAG as regionally balanced – with a roughly equal number of members per region – and as globally representative as possible, both in the overall membership and within stakeholder groups. The process also aims to place a roughly equal number of members in each non-government stakeholder group.

Expected commitments and remuneration

MAG members do not receive any remuneration from the UN. However, some members may be eligible to receive funding to cover travel and subsistence costs for their participation in MAG meetings and the annual IGF meetings.

→ **More information: [Eligibility for participant funding](#)**

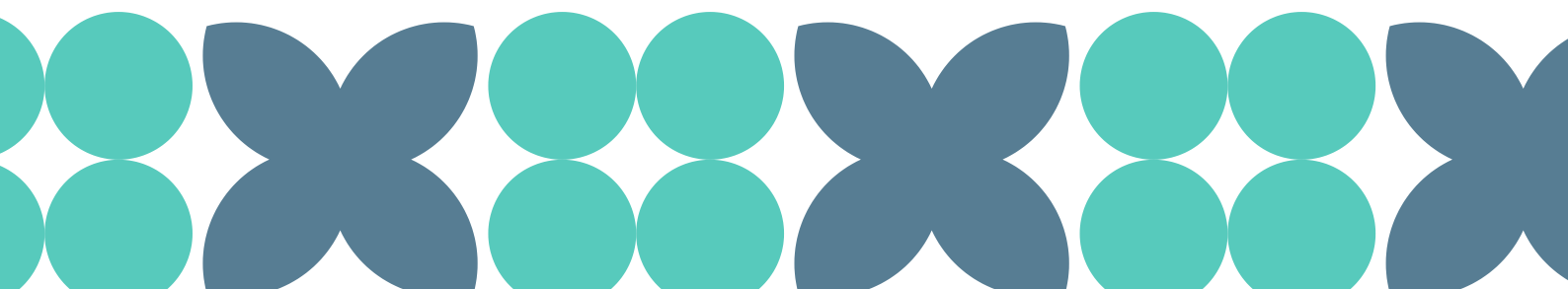
When it comes to expected commitments, MAG members should:

- Attend up to three physical meetings per year
- Participate actively in the annual IGF
- Participate in intersessional work
- Engage in outreach to the wider community
- Explore fundraising opportunities for contributions to the IGF trust fund
- Identify emerging internet governance issues and other areas in need of discussion

■ Is there any guidance for newcomers?

A great entry point is the IGF Newcomers Track, which supports first-time IGF participants to understand the IGF processes and integrate into the IGF community. Additionally, the IGF Secretariat hosts at least one informational webinar and one onsite session at the annual IGF meeting for newcomers as well as anyone else wishing to learn more about the IGF. These activities guide newcomers on how to maximise the benefits of actively participating in the IGF. The orientation session for newcomers is hosted at the annual IGF meeting, usually in the morning before the official start of the programme. It includes an orientation on the IGF governance structure and tips on how to navigate the programme.

→ **More information: [Report from the IGF 2024 Newcomers session](#)**





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