

GLOBAL INFORMATION SOCIETY WATCH 2017

*Internet governance from the edges:
National and regional IGFs in their own words*



ASSOCIATION FOR PROGRESSIVE COMMUNICATIONS (APC)

Internet governance from the edges: National and regional IGFs in their own words

Global Information Society Watch 2017 Special edition
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Global Information Society Watch 2017 special edition:
Internet governance from the edges: NRIs in their own words

Disclaimer: The views expressed in survey responses are not necessarily the views of APC or of its members.

This report is a special companion edition to Global Information Society Watch 2017: National and Regional Internet Governance Forum Initiatives (NRIs), which can be downloaded from <https://www.giswatch.org/2017-local-and-regional-internet-governance-forums-igfs>

ARMENIA IGF

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NRI founding stories and development

What is the story of the founding of your NRI? What were its inspiration, its objectives?

For many years, Internet Society (ISOC) Armenia in cooperation with the Ministry of Transport and Communication of Armenia tried to gather all stakeholder groups to discuss the emerging issues in regard to internet governance. In view of the preparation for the WCIT-12 meeting in Dubai, UAE, the Ministry prepared a document which was later ratified by the Prime Minister of Armenia as the Internet Governance Principles, while a multistakeholder Internet Governance Council (IGC) was established in 2014 by order of the Prime Minister. ISOC Armenia, a not-for-profit organisation, was appointed to the Secretariat of the IGC. One of the objectives of the IGC is the organisation of the national Armenia IGF (ArmIGF).

How did it develop and what difficulties did you experience along the way?

ArmIGF has been developing smoothly. We had the third edition in 2017. The difficulty during the formation phase was the lack of established ways of cooperation among the state, the private sector and the civil society. The other difficulty was the lack of an output document for the IGF itself, a mandatory requirement, which decreases the interest of governmental policy makers to participate in the forum.

How do you imagine your NRI and its activities in the future?

One of the activities envisaged consists in research of the questions tackled in the forum. The results can later be presented to the government and become projects funded by the state. The other intersessional activity is the establishment of the Armenian School on Internet Governance, which was successfully launched in 2017 by ISOC Armenia, being the Secretariat for the ArmIGF.

NRI internal governance and initiatives

Who are the people involved in your NRI and how do they contribute to it?

As a multistakeholder group, the IGC is composed of: governmental representatives (the head of the Council is the Deputy Minister of Transport, Communication and IT of Armenia, another member is from the Ministry of Economy), as well as the police and national security service representatives, who are also members of the Council. From the technical community there are major operators and ISP representatives; the private sector counts the Chamber of Commerce and Union of IT Enterprises; civil society is composed of ISOC Armenia and academia, including the National Academy of Sciences and the National Library of Armenia, while the media is present through the Association of Media Agencies and the Yerevan Press Club.

Have you experienced difficulties in ensuring all stakeholder groups participate fully and more or less equally?

We have not faced real difficulties in ensuring all stakeholder groups participate fully as members of IGC.

Do you measure gender balance in your NRI? Did you undertake measures to encourage gender balance?

We have never measured gender balance in the IGC as the representatives in the Council are being nominated by their organisations. As for the ArmIGF, we always pay attention to have a gender balance among panelists and encourage gender-balanced participation among all participants.

How was your last forum organised, what were the topics chosen and the outcomes of discussion? How was it financed?

The last ArmIGF was held on 2 October 2017. We had 130 participants representing all stakeholder groups. The topics of the programme were as follows:

- Panel sessions: Information security, IPTV – Impact of internet on TV and radio, and Libraries in digital age.
- Individual presentations: Root zone KSK rollover update, Rights of people with disabilities, Open Government Partnership, Cloud technologies and Personal data protection.

For the third annual national IGF we received funding support from ISOC, ICANN, the Internet Governance Forum Support Association (IGFSA), RIPE NCC as well as from local organisations such as ISOC Armenia, Microsoft Armenia and in-kind support in terms of providing the internet from Arminco, a local ISP.

Are there controversial topics that have been difficult in your NRI and if so, why?

The topic of informational security was the controversial one. It covered issues which did not have a clear definition in the country and discussing parties had no clear attitude in this regard. The other controversial topic was the OTT services, the impact of the internet on TV and radio. The participants underlined that the licensing of local TV channels gave unequal conditions to internet TV sites distributing the same TV content without any licensing.

Perspectives on the role of NRIs in internet governance

What is your take about the role of your NRI in internet governance processes, at the level of your country, region and globally?

The local community still has to learn what the internet governance processes are and what their role in them is. ISOC Armenia makes endeavours towards this objective by intersessional activities within the country. As for the regional and global level, we actively participate and contribute to the regional meetings such as SEEDIG (South Eastern European Dialogue on Internet Governance) and EuroDIG (European Dialogue on Internet Governance) as well as in the global IGF.

How do you perceive your role and position towards other NRIs, the IGF and the IGF Secretariat?

By our active participation we work towards strengthening the linkages with other national IGFs (Ukraine IGF, Georgia IGF, Belarus IGF, Russia IGF), the (sub)regional IGFs (SEEDIG, Central Asia IGF, EuroDIG) and the global IGF.

Internet governance from the edges: National and regional IGFs in their own words

National and Regional Internet Governance Forum Initiatives (NRIs) emerged in response to the success of the first two global Internet Governance Forums (IGFs). The Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, the outcome document of the final phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), alongside the call for the creation of the IGF, served as the foundations for the model of bottom-up, multistakeholder internet governance. The first NRIs were set up in 2007 and 2008, and there are now close to a hundred initiatives, comprising national, sub-national, regional and youth initiatives, which organise autonomously and cooperate with the global IGF Secretariat. The importance of NRIs has increased throughout the years, as they have grown in number and their work has expanded in scope. They have acquired such relevance within the IGF that an NRI session was included in the IGF 2016 and 2017 main sessions agendas.

This year, APC has taken the initiative to compile two editions of Global Information Society Watch (GISWatch) focused on the work of NRIs. While the main 2017 GISWatch annual report provides independent and analytical perspectives on the role of NRIs in internet governance broadly, the present companion edition, *Internet governance from the edges: National and regional IGFs in their own words*, aims to give voice and visibility to the stories of each NRI, share their experiences and achievements, and highlight their perspectives on internet governance.

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