SEEDIG 2017 - Virtual planning meetings I & II
17 & 18 January 2017

Summary Report

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The main aim of the planning meetings was to continue preparations for the SEEDIG 2017 annual event, especially in terms of initiating work on the draft programme. Several other topics related to the broader SEEDIG process were also discussed.

1.   Overview of SEEDIG

The meeting started with an overview of SEEDIG and the planning process for the 2017 annual meeting. It was explained that SEEDIG is a sub-regional Internet Governance Forum (IGF) initiative (recognised as such by the IGF Secretariat), dedicated to open, inclusive and informal dialogue on Internet governance (IG) issues among interested stakeholders from South Eastern Europe and the neighbouring area. SEEDIG's objectives include: awareness raising and capacity building on IG related matters (concept, issues, processes and organisations); facilitating multistakeholder discussion on IG issues that are of relevance for stakeholders in the region; and contributing to creating linkages between the IG realities in the region and the pan-European and global IG processes.

SEEDIG had its first meeting in June 2015, in Sofia, Bulgaria, in the context of the eighth EuroDIG meeting. Following a decision made by the SEEDIG community, the second annual meeting was held as a stand-alone event, in April 2016, in Belgrade, Serbia.

SEEDIG 2017 will be held on 24-25 May 2017, in Ohrid, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.[1] It will be hosted by the country's Agency for Electronic Communications (AEC), with institutional support from the Ministry of Information Society and Administration, and the Macedonian Academic Research Networks (MARnet).

SEEDIG, as an overall IGF initiative, is supported by several regional and international entities:

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[1] http://www.seedig.net/seedig-2017/

Council of Europe, DiploFoundation, European Commission, European Dialogue on Internet Governance (EuroDIG), Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), Internet Governance Forum (IGF), Internet Governance Forum Support Association (IGFSA), Internet Society (ISOC), and RIPE Network Coordination Centre (RIPE NCC).

At the center of the SEEDIG process is an annual meeting, held in various countries across the region. The programme for the annual meeting is built through a bottom-up, open and transparent process, by the SEEDIG community, under the coordination of the executive committee. The first step in this process was the joint SEEDIG-EuroDIG call for issues, which ran between October and December 2016. The virtual planning meetings constitute the second step.

2. Submitted proposals - overview

Statistical information was given with regard to the proposals submitted in response to the call for issues to be discussed at SEEDIG 2017[2]:

- In total, 74 proposals have been received.
- Proposals came from representatives of all stakeholder groups: civil society (33 proposals), technical community (14), government (12), academia (11), private sector (3), and intergovernmental organisations (1).
- While most proposals were submitted by individuals living and/or working in South Eastern Europe and the neighbouring area (54), there were also proposals submitted from beyond the region (15 from other European regions, and 5 from other regions).
- Most proposals were submitted under the Security and crime category (20), followed by: Future challenges and opportunities (10), Innovation (9), Human rights (8), Access and literacy (8), Development of the IG ecosystem (7), Technical and operational issues (6), Media and content (3), and Other (3).

An overview of the submitted proposals[3], prepared by the executive committee and distributed in advance of the meeting, was also presented. It was explained that, in preparing the overview, the executive committee has tried to cluster proposed issues into more general topics (based on similarities and commonalities), hoping that this would facilitate the discussions. These topics were:

- Access and digital divide - infrastructure issues
- Access and digital divide - capacity development issues
- IG ecosystem in SEE - status and perspectives
- Internet of Things
- Intermediary liability
- Cybersafety education for different age groups
- Censorship, surveillance and human rights
- Human rights and/or versus cybersecurity
- Privacy and data protection

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[2] http://www.seedig.net/call-for-issues/
[3] http://www.seedig.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/SEEDIG-2017-Overview-of-proposals-24-January.pdf

- Child safety online
- Net neutrality and zero rating
- Trade agreements
- Telco regulation and market practices
- Open data
- Online news reliability
- Cybersecurity at national level
- Multistakeholder approaches towards cybersecurity
- Cybersecurity cooperation at regional and international level
- Emerging issues: refugees, cyber-terrorism, cyber war
- Mobile security and pen testing
- The Domain Name System in SEE
- Cooperation between network operator groups

It was mentioned that the overview also includes several very specific proposals, related to projects, initiatives, and organisations; these could be considered for formats such as short talks and the speakers' corner. These were: ICANN accountability and Post Transition IANA, IG and digital policy observatories, IoT hackathons as regional community building activities, algorithms accountability and ethics, social innovation labs as instruments for social change.

3. Format and content for SEEDIG 2017

3.1. Pre-event | 24 May

It was explained that, taking into account feedback received last year, consideration has been given to extending the SEEDIG annual meeting with a half-day pre-event, focused on capacity development on broader IG topics. This idea received support during the planning meetings, as participants agreed that there would always be newcomers at SEEDIG, and, hence, there would always be a need for capacity development focused sessions.

Discussions were held on the format, and many suggestions were made for extending the pre-event to a full day, with both morning and afternoon sessions. With regard to the content and focus of the pre-event, it was broadly agreed that the day should be built around three tracks:

- **Youth.** Following the model of the New Media Summer School usually taking place before the EuroDIG annual meeting, a suggestion was made to try something similar for SEE youth, in the context of SEEDIG. ICANN offered to look into the possibility of contributing financially to such an initiative, while other participants expressed full support for the idea, and volunteered to assist with the preparations. It was noted that it would be useful to organise such an event before the main SEEDIG day, to give young attendees the possibility to grasp the complexities of the IG ecosystem before actually engaging in discussions on key topics.

- **National IGF initiatives in SEE and the neighbouring area**. Building upon SEEDIG's practice of holding, from time to time, virtual meetings with national IGF initiatives from the region,

it was suggested that space is given on the pre-event day for these initiatives to discuss with one another and with community members about their activities, good practices, challenges, etc. It was suggested that this track focuses on specific issues that initiatives could discuss and share experiences on, such as how to involve certain stakeholder groups (like governments, regulatory authorities, or the business community).

- **IG ecosystem - general capacity development**. Reflecting on the previous discussions about the continuous need for capacity development on broader IG issues, it was agreed that sessions similar to the ones held in the introduction of both SEEDIG 2015 and SEEDIG 2016 should be held again, on the pre-event day. Proposals submitted under the theme 'Development of IG ecosystem' would also find their place in this track.

Regarding the scheduling of these tracks, it was suggested that the youth track and national IGFs track could be held in the morning, leaving the afternoon for the general IG capacity development track, to be also open for youth and national IGFs. A point was also made to ensure that remote participation is available for the pre-event day, in addition to the main event.

3.2.   Main event | 25 May

It was explained that the programme for the 2015 and 2016 meetings only included four main sessions (with no parallel events). In addition, a speakers' corner and a short talks slot was included in the programme for SEEDIG 2016. Participants found this approach as valuable, as it kept the audience undivided and allowed and encouraged more interactions and exchanges. Many of them expressed their desire for a similar approach to be followed for the 2017 meeting as well, considering that SEEDIG is still in its early phases, and participants would benefit from following the same track of discussions.

The idea of continuing with a linear programme was broadly supported at the planning meetings, for the same reasons outlined above. It was further explained that this format still allows for some level of flexibility regarding both the duration of the sessions and the possibility of including segments dedicated to brief presentations on very specific issues (possibly repeating the experiences from last year).

Discussions on issues/topics/possible sessions

In this context, and considering the large number of submitted proposals, it was underlined that it would, unfortunately, be impossible for the programme of SEEDIG 2017 to include all proposed issues. As such, decisions would have to be made as to what topics should be included in the programme, considering both the proposed issues, as well as the results of the planning meetings. However, it was explained that not including a certain proposal in the programme does not mean that the proponent would be excluded from further participating in building the programme. On the opposite, all proponents are encouraged to participate in the sessions planning process, irrespective of whether their proposed issues are or are not included into the programme.

In order to better reflect this point, participants were reminded about the following **guidelines for**

the programme planning process[4]:

- The sessions to be included in the SEEDIG programme would not be formed around individual proposals (i.e. one proposal would not become one session), but rather several proposals would be clustered together into one session, based on their relevance to the topic of the session.
- An initial clustering of proposals under specific sessions is made by the executive committee, considering the categories under which the proposals were submitted, as well as the content of the proposals. Changes could then be made to this initial clustering, based on input from proponents (re-assigning proposals to other sessions, including proposals that were not initially clustered, but which are found as relevant to a specific session, etc.).
- For each session, organising teams (org teams) will be formed, and they will take over the responsibility for building the session (from deciding the title of the session, to choosing the format and the key participants).
- Proponents of the issues identified as pertaining to a particular session will be invited to join the org team for that session. Any other interested individuals will be welcome to join these themes.
- For each session, one or two focal points will be a designated by the executive committee; their role is to lead the work of the org teams and to maintain communication with the executive committee.

After these explanations, participants were invited to share their views regarding both the overview presented by the executive committee, and possible topics that could become sessions in the SEEDIG 2017 programme. It was further clarified that, at this point, discussion should focused on identifying broad topics to be tackled at SEEDIG 2017, on the basis of the submissions made in response to the call for issues. Further work would later be carried on fine-tuning the topics and defining the exact focus of the sessions.

Within these discussions, the following topics were largely agreed upon by meeting participants as being suitable for inclusion in the programme:

- **Internet of Things (IoT)**. Possible issues to be tackled: the developmental dimension of the IoT (how IoT can contribute to development, especially at a regional level); other opportunities offered by the IoT; user awareness (on issues such as data management and related responsibilities); policy implications; challenges related to aspects such as privacy, security, ethics, and accountability; artificial intelligence and other future developments - principles, norms, and standards. It was noted that efforts should be made to ensure that representatives of the IoT industry (from the region, if possible) are represented at a potential IoT-focused session, as well as in the planning activities.

- **Human rights online.** Building upon the online human rights session held at SEEDIG 2016[5], a new session could tackle issues such as: censorship; surveillance (with a look at how countries in the region are tackling this issue), privacy, and freedom of expression; access to

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[4] A more detailed presentation of the guidelines is available at http://www.seedig.net/seedig-2016-programme/
[5] http://www.seedig.net/seedig-2016-session-4/

information vs copyright protection; rights of people with disabilities and other marginalised groups; gender issues, etc. A request was made for such a session to no longer be the last one in the programme, as it was the case in 2016.

● **New media literacy, trustworthy online information, and 'fake news'.** Possible issues to be tackled: reliability of online information; causes and implications of fake news; various approaches for tackling the issue of fake news, and their implications: media literacy, censorship, (self)regulation, role and liability of intermediaries; other approaches.

● **Access and telecom (market) regulation**. Possible issues to be covered: connectivity and digital literacy; roll out of broadband infrastructure (as a valuable addition to mobile connectivity); community connectivity/networks; the role of regulations in improving access; the EU Digital Single Market - does it work in the EU? what are its implications for non-EU countries (acceding countries) in the region?; what happens with the ITU International Telecommunication Regulations (ITRs) revision plans - any threats for the Internet?

Additional topics that were advocated for during the discussions included:

● **Cross-cutting:**
  o **Gender.** A call was made to ensure that at this year's SEEDIG meeting attention is paid to gender diversity, and ensure that the various topics to be tackled are also approached from a gender diversity dimension. It was also suggested that a gender report card is prepared, following similar exercises at the global IGF.
  o **Sustainable development goals (SDGs)**. While a suggestion was made to consider tackling SDGs as stand-alone topic (as this might attract interest from governments), it was said that it is most likely that SDGs would be referred to in relation to other issues (gender, education, access, etc.).

● **Open data & free and open software:** policies, approaches, practices across the region.
● **Net neutrality and zero rating:** implementation of BEREC guidelines.
● **New gTLDs** as a business opportunity for young entrepreneurs in the region.
● **Mobile security and pen-testing.**

With regard to the format of the sessions, general comments were made on the need to ensure that the sessions are highly interactive and engaging for all participants.

4. Overarching theme

Following the tradition of previous meetings, SEEDIG 2017 needs to have an overarching theme. This would be most useful when doing outreach and promoting the meeting, and, therefore, it should be framed in an attractive way, while reflecting the regional nature of SEEDIG and the focus of the discussions to be held at the meeting.

Participants were invited to make suggestions for such an overarching theme. Several proposals

were made during the meetings:

- We saw IG, what now to SEE?
- True lives, healthy economies and broadband for all
- Real news on IG in SEE
- South side of IG

Further suggestions for an overarching theme are welcome, and a call in this regard is to be sent to the community.

5.   Next steps in building the programme for SEEDIG 2017

Following the two virtual meetings, the next steps[6] in building the programme for SEEDIG 2017 will include:

- Preparation of a draft programme, on the basis of the discussions held at the virtual meetings.
- Public comment on the draft programme – expected to run for about 7-10 days.
- Finalisation of the programme. The indicative deadline for the final programme to be made available is the week of 13 February.
- Creation of org teams for the programme sessions.
- Work on building the sessions: org teams would decide on the titles, descriptions, format, key participants (if any), moderators/facilitators, remote moderators, rapporteurs, in an open and transparent manner, in line with the session principles[7], and in coordination with the executive committee.

Further details about these steps are to be communicated at later stages.

6.   Intersessional activities

As SEEDIG evolves as an IGF initiative, efforts are made to continuously expand its scope of activities. Hence, in addition to the annual meetings, SEEDIG is exploring opportunities for engaging in various types of intersessional activities. Such activities are aimed at keeping the regional community engaged between two annual meetings, and more consistently working towards achieving the initiative's objectives.

6.1.   Survey on Internet governance

In 2016, a survey of Internet governance was conducted across the region.[8] The aim of the survey was to get a better understanding of how IG, in general, and IG issues and processes, in particular, are perceived by the Internet community in SEE and the neighbouring area. It covered aspects such

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[6] The overall indicative timeline for the SEEDIG 2017 milestones is available at http://www.seedig.net/milestones/
[7] http://www.seedig.net/session-principles/
[8] http://www.seedig.net/seedig-survey/

as: interest and participation in IG processes and organisations (motivation, challenges, opportunities), Internet-related issues considered as most pressing at national level and in SEE, degree of satisfaction with national, regional and global IG mechanisms, etc. The survey results fed into the IG session held at the meeting in Belgrade.

Participants at the meetings were invited to indicate whether they think conducting a similar survey in 2017 - this time on a specific topic - would be valuable. This idea received broad support, and it was indicated that the topic could be related to the overarching theme of SEEDIG 2017. The results of such a survey would, once again, feed into the SEEDIG meeting itself.

With regard to the topic of the survey, a suggestion was made to look at how regulators and tech actors are understood. Other suggestions will be welcome, and a call in this regard will be shared with the community. Once the topic is chosen, volunteers will be welcome to contribute to preparing the questionnaire for the survey.

6.2.   Internet governance developments in SEE

An overview was given of the 'Internet governance developments in South Eastern Europe' initiative[9], launched by SEEDIG in September 2016, in collaboration with DiploFoundation and the Geneva Internet Platform. The initiative has two components:

- Monthly summaries of IG developments in SEE[10]: aimed to provide an overview of Internet-related developments and activities in SEE and the neighbouring area.
- *SEEhub* for monthly IG briefings[11]: online and in situ (in Belgrade) monthly meetings dedicated to briefings and discussions on global and regional IG and digital policy developments (held every last Tuesday of the month).

The main goal of this initiative is to contribute to strengthening the dialogue and exchange of information on global and regional IG and digital policy issues within the SEE community.

Participants were invited to contribute to the aforementioned initiative, in two ways:

- Contribute to the monthly summaries, by sending updates on Internet-related developments in their countries.
- Joining the monthly briefings, and consider setting up local hubs where the local IG community could gather and connect to the online briefing together. (SEEDIG executive committee can assist with further details in this regard.)

As the next briefing will be held on 31 January (from 13.00 CET)[12], an invitation was extended to meeting participants to attend.

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[9] http://www.seedig.net/ig-developments-in-see/
[10] http://www.seedig.net/ig-summary/
[11] http://www.seedig.net/see-hub-for-ig-briefings/
[12] http://www.seedig.net/2017/01/19/event-see-hub-internet-governance-in-january-2017/

6.3.   Other activities

It was mentioned that ideas for additional intersessional activities that SEEDIG could engage into are welcome at any point. They can be submitted via the SEEDIG mailing list[13], or sent directly to the executive committee, at see[at]intgovforum.org.

A reminder was also made that SEEDIG, like all other national and regional IGF initiatives (NRIs), is invited and welcome to provide input into the planning process for the global IGF (e.g in terms of topics to be tackled at the annual IGF meeting). It was mentioned that SEEDIG has been trying to contribute to the global IGF process (e.g. through input submitted into the Policy Options for Connecting and Enabling the Next Billion(s) inter-sessional project[14], as well as through participating in the preparation of the NRIs main session at IGF 2016). In addition, SEEDIG also works together with EuroDIG on strengthening linkages between the two initiatives, especially in terms of bringing more SEE voices into the EuroDIG process.

Participants were also informed that, on 21 February, the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Macedonia to the United Nations in Geneva and the Geneva Internet Platform (GIP) will hold a briefing for Heads of Missions in Geneva, on 'Digital policy in South Eastern Europe'. During the briefing, Heads of Missions will be informed about the SEEDIG process and the 2017 meeting, and there will be discussions on how and why missions and their capitals could be involved in the process.

A suggestion was also made to make use of the upcoming meetings of the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) and the CSTD Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation (WGEC), and inform their members about the work that is going on within SEEDIG.

7.   SEEDIG legal structure

An overview was given of the previous discussions conducted within the SEEDIG community with regard to setting up a legal structure for SEEDIG. In October 2016, the community was asked for feedback on a proposal regarding the creation of legal structure for SEEDIG, in the form of an association.[15] At that point, it was explained that, as SEEDIG continues to grow, so does the complexity of its processes and work. In order to be able to more effectively manage these processes and work, it was suggested that SEEDIG be given a legal status, through creating a dedicated association. This view is shared by SEEDIG's supporting organisations.

Giving SEEDIG a legal status would contribute to ensuring the sustainability of the initiative, bringing more credibility, and addressing some of the challenges faced over the past two years (such as management of donations, liability, agreements with partners, etc.).

The proposal shared with the community in 2016 involves the creations of a SEEDIG association, in a two-phase process:

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[13] http://www.seedig.net/mailing-list/
[14] http://www.seedig.net/2016/09/14/seedigs-contribution-to-igf-inter-sessional-work/
[15] https://lists.rnids.rs/pipermail/icann-see/2016-October/000604.html

- Creating an 'association 0.1/beta', with members of the executive committee as founding members, and with a very basic statute. The fast-track in creating the 'beta association' would facilitate the preparatory process for the Ohrid meeting.
- Running an open, inclusive and transparent process for building a more comprehensive statute for an 'association 2.0', with open membership. This statute would go into more detail on aspects such as membership, governing structures, decision making, roles and responsibilities, etc.

Given the positive feedback received from the community, the executive committee is in the process of launching phase 1 mentioned above, with the aim to setting up the association 0.1/beta. With regard to the choice of jurisdiction, the choice of the committee is to have the association set up in Serbia. This choice was made after several discussions within the groups, which involved also an analysis of legal requirements for setting up an association in a couple of countries where members of the executive committee reside. It was also mentioned that having the association set up in a non-EU member state might offer the association the advantage of being able to apply for EU and Council of Europe (CoE) funds targeted at non-EU member states (possibly with less complex procedures than in the case of funds allocated to EU member states). In reaction to this point, it was said that there are many EU programmes which are, nevertheless, targeted only at EU countries, so this might need to be further looked into. Moreover, it was noted that community members which are aware of the complexities of setting up a legal structure, or more knowledgeable of EU and CoE funding mechanisms, should be sharing their views on this matter.

During the discussions, it was also underlined that association 01./beta would need to be established well in advance of the Ohrid meeting, to allow for all related financial and legal issues to be managed smoothly. In parallel, the work on drafting the statute for association 0.2 could also start, and a drafting team created with this aim. The drafts produced in this team would be put for public comment until such time when there is agreement on a final version. Ideally, the final version of the statute would be discussed at the meeting in Ohrid, but the timeline could be extended if necessary.

In response to these points and in continuation to the previous discussions, it was suggested that a timeline describing the tracks of work and corresponding deadlines for setting up the association is prepared and shared with the community. This would give the community a better overview of the work ahead, as well as the opportunity to get more engaged into the process. As the idea was well received during the meetings, such a timeline is to be prepared by the executive committee and distributed in due time.

8.   AOB

A suggestion was made to have a SEE gathering at the upcoming ICANN58 meeting to be held on 11-16 March, in Copenhagen (following a previous practice of having such gatherings at previous ICANN meetings). ICANN offered to include such as session in the programme of ICANN58, and the idea was welcome by meeting participants.