SEEDIG 2018 – Online planning meetings I & II
17 & 18 January 2018

Summary Report

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Agenda

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The main aim of the planning meetings was to continue preparations for the SEEDIG 2018 annual meeting, especially in terms of initiating work on the draft programme. Several other topics related to the broader SEEDIG process were also discussed.

1.   SEEDIG 2018 annual meeting

1.1.   Process overview

The meeting started with an overview of SEEDIG and the planning process for the 2018 annual meeting, which is scheduled to be held on 23–24 May 2018, in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

It was explained that SEEDIG is a (sub)regional Internet Governance Forum (IGF) initiative (recognised as such by the IGF Secretariat), dedicated to facilitating discussions and collaboration on Internet governance issues among stakeholders in South Eastern Europe and the neighbouring area (SEE). The central element of the SEEDIG process in the annual meeting, held in different countries around the region. In addition, SEEDIG also undertakes intersessional activities.

The annual meetings are planned in a bottom-up, open, inclusive, 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 2017. The online planning meetings constitute the second step. Other steps are outlined in the

SEEDIG 2018 Milestones.

The programme of the SEEDIG annual meetings is shaped in accordance with the Programme Guidelines and Session Principles.

1.2.   Topics proposed – overview and discussion

In response to the call for issues to be discussed at the SEEDIG 2018 meeting, 105 proposals were received. The list of proposals and statistical information can be found on the dedicated webpage.

The discussions on the submitted proposals started with the presentation of overview prepared by the Executive Committee and distributed in advance of the meeting. 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.

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/lightning talks.

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.

After these explanations, participants were invited to share their views regarding possible topics that could be included in the SEEDIG 2018 programme. It was further clarified that discussion should focus on identifying broad topics to be tackled at the Ljubljana meeting. Further work would later be carried on fine-tuning topics and defining the exact focus of the sessions.

Topics discussed

Access and literacy
- Support was expressed for discussing issues related to **digitalisation**, with a note that it could be later decided whether the focus should be of **e-services, on capacity development and digital literacy**, or on both.
- With regard to **e-services, e-government, and smart governance solutions**, it was noted that a discussion on this topic should include the sharing of good practices across the region. Participants from Albania and Armenia added that their countries could provide examples in this regard.
- On the topic of **bridging the digital divide**, two main issues were brought up in discussion:

connecting remote areas and developing and implementing broadband strategies at local and regional level. As a session on broadband-related issues was held at the SEEDIG 2017 meeting, it was emphasised that any discussions at SEEDIG 2018 on infrastructure issues should build on previous discussions, and avoid repeating previous points.

Development of IG ecosystem

- It was explained that previous SEEDIG annual meeting started with an IG-dedicated session, aimed at providing an overview of the IG ecosystem, and making sure that participants have a basic common understanding of the issues. This was seen as a useful approach as there have always been newcomers to the SEEDIG meeting. It should now be determined whether this approach should continue.

- There was broad agreement on the fact that an introduction to IG would benefit newcomers. It was suggested that such an **introduction to IG be done on Day 0**, for example as a lightning session, and cover issues such as what IG is, what the main topics, processes, and stakeholders are, and where, how, and why to get involved. There were also proposals for keeping the intro to IG apart from the in-situ meeting, and providing online resources or an online webinar focused on this.

- Suggestions were made for the **opening session on Day 1 to focus on the regional IG ecosystem, and bring into discussion national perspectives, experiences, and challenges**. National IGF initiatives from the region could be invited to contribute to this session, with very brief overviews of their 'journeys'. Youth IGF experiences would be incorporated as well. How SEEDIG could help foster strengthened cooperation on digital policy issues across the region, while also supporting national initiatives, could also be part of the session. The session could start with a brief intro on what IG is, and what key principles and values are, but this should be very short and focused.

Human rights

- Addressing **privacy and data protection** issues at the SEEDIG 2018 meeting received broad support. Data protection is crucial for enabling trust in the use of digital services, and all stakeholders have responsibilities in this regard. The discussions could therefore focus on roles and responsibilities in ensuring privacy and data protection (including the issues of privacy regulations and policies).

- There was broad support for having a session focused on the **EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**, given that the regulation will enter into force around the dates of the Ljubljana meeting. Although an EU regulation, the GDPR will have implications beyond the EU borders, for both the private sector, and Internet users. Exploring these implications in detail – how the GDPR affects stakeholders in the SEE region – and looking at what is being done in SEE to comply with its provisions (e.g. how policies are adapted, within both the public and private sector). could be the focus of the session.

- Discussing **challenges to Internet freedoms** (e.g. how Internet blocking and shutdowns, censorship, surveillance, etc. affect human rights) was also suggested. The Internet Freedom Network for Central-Eastern Europe and Eurasia could also present some of its work as part of such a discussion.

- **Gender issues** were also mentioned as an overarching topic to be tackled at the SEEDIG 2018 meeting. It could be integrated into the discussions on most of the other topics

suggested during the online meetings. This year, SEEDIG should also consider developing gender report cards, to evaluate the integration of gender into the discussions.

Innovation and economic issues

- This year SEEDIG receive the largest number of proposals focused on economic-related issues (unlike in previous years), and this was welcome by meeting participants.
- The importance of discussing issues related to the **development of the regional Internet/digital economy** was highlighted. It was noted that the supporting the digital economy should be seen as a prerequisite for fostering development across the region; as such, policies and regulations in this area could constitute one angle of discussion. Cryptocurrencies, digital commerce, big data, and other specific issues could be integrated into this discussion.
- There was broad support for having discussions focused on **e-skills and digital education**. As digital technologies and the digital economy continue to evolve, and bring changes to the labour market, being ready for these changes should be treated with high priority. As such, a discussion at SEEDIG could look at **whether and how the region is preparing its workforce for the existing and future digital economy**, what education policies are in place or planned, and what can and should be further done in this direction. Sharing of experiences and good and bad practices from countries across the region could be part of the discussion as well. A note was made that e-skills could be discussed under literacy and/or economy. There was also a suggestion that the GDPR, digital economy, and consumer rights were all related, and could be tackled in a joint session.
- Some suggestions were made for targeted discussions on issues related to **net neutrality and zero-rating**. There was also a proposal to integrate these topics as part of the discussion on Internet freedoms.
- Developments in the **fields of mobile Internet, the app economy, and online platforms** could also form a topic for discussion. Focus could be placed on how they impact the economy of the SEE countries, and the openness and inclusiveness of the Internet.
- A question was raised on whether the discussions held at SEEDIG 2017 on the **Internet of Things** (IoT) should be continued in 2018, possibly from the perspective on how the technology is being used in SEE, and how the private and public sectors cooperate in this area. While some supported this idea, other noted that the deployment of IoT technologies in the region is still at its beginning.
- **Blockchain technologies** and their current and potential applications in various areas (not only cryptocurrencies) were also suggested as a possible topic for discussion.

Cross-cutting

- Suggestions were made to consider **data** as a cross-cutting topic, and the basis for discussions on all issues to be included in the SEEDIG 2018 programme. Data could be used as the topic to link the various sessions, as they all could be approached from a data-related perspective (from cybersecurity to human rights, and from e-government to the digital economy).
- The issue of **intermediary responsibility** and 'privatised law enforcements' was suggested for consideration for a possible session at SEEDIG 2018. It could be addressed for a multifacet perspectives, looking into issues such as copyright protection, tackling fake news,

dealing with extremist content, etc.

Media and content

- It was noted that the issue of '**fake news'** was already discussed at last year's meeting, and we should not add it to the SEEDIG 2018 programme if there will not be a different approach to it. If the topic is discussed in Ljubljana, we should look at how it impacts people's actions, for example in the context of democratic processes. Moreover, the discussion should be research-based, and could also bring into focus the idea of codes of conduct.

Cybersecurity

- A point was made that SEEDIG 2017 and NRIs session on cybersecurity at global IGF provided a good overview on cybersecurity in the SEE region. If the topic is going to be in the programme for SEEDIG 2018, it should focus on something more specific or in depth.
- Suggestions were made for discussions to tackle issues related education and awareness raising. It was also said that issues related to cybersecurity education could be placed under a discussion on digital literacy.
- One proposal which received considerable support was to focus on **CERTs** (how they function at national level, what challenges they face, how do they help in addressing cybersecurity risks) and regional cooperation practices. Exchanges of good practices and discussions on ways of addressing challenges in the functioning of CERTs and the cooperation among them were mentioned as possible points of discussion.
- There were also suggestions for a discussion focused on legislative and strategy approaches towards cybersecurity, at EU level and in SEE countries. The limits of state intrusion into the enjoyment of human rights when implementing cybersecurity strategies, national laws and policies in the field could be one of the topics of discussion.
- **Child safety online** could also be discussed at the SEEDIG 2018 meeting, from the perspective of children rights protection and the responsibilities of the various actors (platforms, parents, educators, etc.)

Technical and operational issues

- **IDNs** were also discussed at previous SEEDIG meetings. If they feature into this year's programme, the discussion should look at what has changed since SEEDIG 2017, especially in terms of universal acceptance. This could be done in the framework of a short slot or lightning talk.
- Two other possible lighting talks could focus on:
  - **Automation and AI**: technical developments and main policy implications for the region; how the region could take advantage of these new technologies to leap-frog development stages.
  - **IPv6**: the importance of transition, and deployment status and challenges in the region.
- Discussing the role of governments in the management of the Domain Name System (DNS), in particular in relation to country code top-level domains (ccTLDs) was also suggested.

1.3.   Programme structure and format

There was a call for the programme of the SEEDIG 2018 meeting to include more interactive sessions, and less panel debates. Introducing new session formats is welcome and encouraged, and organizing teams will be invited to explore such options instead of choosing the usual panel sessions.

Participants made several suggestions for bringing more interactivity into SEEDIG sessions:
- Using tools such as Mentimeter to get online, real time contributions from participants.
- If panel sessions are included, limit the number of panellists to a maximum of three (as opposed to the current five).
- World cafés, with participants divided into multiple groups to discuss in depth on specific issues
- Fireside chats, in which experts interact directly with the participants.
- Sessions in which two experts introduce a topic from opposite views, and then invite the participants to add arguments in support of the two views.
- Hands-on sessions, in which participants are taught certain skills. One example here, which received wide support, was to have a crypto-party-like session included in the programme.

With regard to the structure of the programme, there was support for continuing with a linear approach (with no parallel sessions). There was also a suggestion to keep open the option of introducing at least some parallel sessions, as they could be useful for topics that require in-depth discussion, and which tend to work better in smaller groups.

1.4.   Overarching theme

Following the tradition of previous meetings, SEEDIG 2018 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. A suggestion was made to use data as an anchor (and a link between technology and humans) for developing the overarching theme.

The community will be invited to make further suggestions for an overarching theme, and a call in this regard will be launched when the draft programme outline for the 2018 SEEDIG meeting is available. Themes emerging from the public consultation could be transformed into a poll for the community to vote on.

1.5.   Next steps in building the meeting programme

Participants were informed about the following **guidelines for the programme planning process**:

- 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.

- 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.

In line with these guidelines, the [next steps in building the programme](#) for the SEEDIG 2018 meeting 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 12 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, and in coordination with the executive committee.

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

2. Internet governance survey

Continuing previous practices, a survey is to be conducted before the SEEDIG 2018 meeting, and its results will be fed into the meeting. The topic will be determined based on community input.

Participants suggested linking the overarching theme and the topic for the survey. They also made few proposals for possible topics:
- Digital readiness in SEE (from both a technical and a skills perspective)
- GDPR awareness and readiness
- Infrastructure and broadband policies
- Zero-rating
- Gender and online harassment issues
- Cybersecurity – CERTs

Further suggestions will be invited during the call for comments on a draft programme outline.

3. Intersessional activities

A brief overview of capacity development programmes and intersessional activities conducted by SEEDIG was given:

- Youth School and Fellowship Programme. These two programmes are connected to the annual meeting, and are dependent on financial support from SEEDIG sponsors and supporting organisations. The Executive Committee is currently working on trying to secure such support. It will be announced later on whether these programmes will run for SEEDIG 2018.
- Internship Programme. A call for applications is open until 25 January.
- *SEEsummary* and *SEEhub*. These are initiatives dedicated to promoting a better understanding of regional Internet governance and digital policy practices and developments.
- Regional surveys.

Moreover, SEEDIG intends to launch additional activities and some examples in this regard are outlined in a draft SEEDIG Strategic Plan, which was made available for public comment after the two meetings. D

The community is also invited to suggest possible activities and projects at any point in time. One idea that came up during the meetings was to create dedicated mailing lists, for discussions on specific topics, and to try to produce some compilations of good practices on such issues.

There was also a suggestion to discuss current and future SEEDIG activities at the Ljubljana meeting.

4. AOB

Code of conduct
- A suggestion was made for SEEDIG to develop a Code of conduct to guide the behavior of participants at the annual meetings.

Fundraising opportunities
SEEDIG is a community-driven process and its activities are currently conducted on a voluntary basis, by the SEEDIG Executive Committee, interns, SEEsummary editors, webadmins, and other community members who contribute their time and experience to the SEEDIG processes.

However, organising an annual meeting and planning further activities involves financial costs. SEEDIG has a network of traditional sponsors, but with each year the estimated annual budget increases, and additional funds are needed. The estimated annual budget for SEEDIG 2018 is available.

The SEEDIG community is therefore invited to suggest fundraising opportunities, keeping in mind that any contributions to the SEEDIG budget, of any size, is welcome.