

SEEDIG executive committee Terms of reference

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Art. 1. – Coordination of the SEEDIG process – which includes the SEEDIG annual meeting and the related preparatory steps, as well as intersessional activities – is entrusted to an executive committee.

Art. 2. – Term of office

2.1. The executive committee shall serve for a term of two years, preferably coinciding with two consecutive SEEDIG cycles¹.

2.2. Members of the executive committee may choose to run for re-election at the end of their term.

2.3. Where a member of the executive committee relinquishes his/her seat before the end of his/her term, a partial election process is put in place. A member thus elected shall serve for the remaining term of the member he/she replaced.

Art. 3. – Structure and organisation

3.1. The executive committee consists of five (5) members.

3.2. The composition of the executive committee shall reflect stakeholder, country, and gender diversity, as follows:

- a. Minimum three (3), but preferably four (4) stakeholder groups² are represented on the committee.
- b. Preferably, each member represents a different country. In exceptional cases, there could be a maximum of two members from the same country.
- c. There is gender diversity among the members.

3.3. Members of the executive committee are equal, and have the same rights and duties to act in their individual capacity, in line with their roles and responsibilities.

¹ One SEEDIG cycle runs between two consecutive SEEDIG annual meetings.

² SEEDIG recognises six stakeholder groups: civil society, academia, private sector, technical community, governments, and intergovernmental organisations.

3.4. The executive committee shall elect a chair from among its members, to serve for the duration of the committee's term.

3.5. The chair is responsible for coordinating the work of the executive committee, by performing tasks such as, but not limited to:

- a. Convening and chairing meetings of the executive committee.
- b. Elaborating draft agendas for meetings of the executive committee, while also taking into account suggestions from other committee members.
- c. Coordinating the implementation of decisions taken by the executive committee.
- d. When so decided by the executive committee, representing the committee in its dealing with the SEEDIG community³, sponsors, partners, and supporting organisations.

3.6. In his/her absence, the chair shall delegate his/her tasks to another member of the executive committee.

Art. 4. – Roles and responsibilities of the executive committee

4.1. Duties to be fulfilled by executive committee throughout its mandate include, but are not limited to:

- a. Coordinating the preparatory process for SEEDIG annual meetings, including, but not limited to, logistics (including location and relations with the host entity), finances, programme planning, and reporting.
- b. Coordinating the planning and execution of SEEDIG intersessional activities.
- c. Managing SEEDIG finances, and actively exploring new sponsorship opportunities for SEEDIG.
- d. Managing SEEDIG's communication tools (website, social media channels, etc.) and ensuring they are kept up to date with information regarding the SEEDIG process.
- e. Initiating and coordinating communications and outreach activities aimed at promoting SEEDIG and bringing new stakeholders into the SEEDIG process, either as members of the SEEDIG community, or as partners or supporting organisations of SEEDIG.
- f. Consulting the SEEDIG community on all significant matters related to the SEEDIG process, and ensuring that the views of the SEEDIG community are integrated, to the largest extent possible, in the preparatory process for SEEDIG annual meetings, as well as in SEEDIG intersessional activities.
- g. Ensuring that the core principles of the SEEDIG process – open, inclusive, bottom-up, and transparent – are fully complied with throughout all SEEDIG activities;
- h. Ensuring continuous communication with SEEDIG sponsors, partners, and supporting organisations.

³ Membership of the SEEDIG community is determined by voluntary participation in the dedicated SEEDIG mailing list and/or in SEEDIG activities.

4.2. Each member of the executive committee is expected and commits to dedicate an average of 5-6 working hours/week to SEEDIG activities. The amount of time that each member needs to dedicate to SEEDIG fluctuates during a SEEDIG cycle, and considerably increases around the annual meeting (to up to 10 hours/week or even more).

Art. 5. – Working methods and decision making

5.1. The executive committee shall work on the basis of the following key principles:

- a. Members of the executive committee are accountable to one another and to the SEEDIG community.
- b. Workload within the executive committee is evenly distributed among its members.
- c. Each member is responsible for carrying on specific activities pertaining to the duties of the executive committee, under the overall coordination of the chair.
- d. The executive committee works on the basis of the 'four eyes' principle (i.e. a minimum of two members being involved in any given task, activity, or external communications at all times), with a view to ensure continuity should one member be prevented from working for any reason.
- e. Should a member not be able to fulfil his/her tasks, he/she shall inform the rest of the executive committee in due time, and provide an indication of when he/she could resume his/her activities.
- f. Outgoing members of the executive committee shall pass to the rest of the executive committee or to incoming members all relevant details of their work, contacts, and communications, preferably before they exit the executive committee, but no later than one month after.
- g. Any document resulting from the work carried out by members of the executive committee in the execution of their roles and responsibilities is subject to Creative Commons licenses, and no individual claim applies on copyright and related rights.

5.2. The executive committee shall make decisions by consensus, to the largest extent possible. Consensus is understood to mean the practice of adopting decisions by general agreement, in the absence of any formal objection. Where consensus is not possible, then a formal vote may be held. In the case of voting, decisions shall be taken by simple majority.

5.3. The executive committee shall adopt its internal rules of operation, to be complementary to art. 6.1 and 6.2.

Art. 6. – Election of the executive committee

A. Election cycle and calendar

6.1. The election cycle shall be initiated by the acting executive committee at least seven weeks prior to the end of its term, and shall conclude once the new executive committee is announced.

6.1.1. **Transitional provision:** In 2017, the election cycle shall be initiated on ...*[date to be determined once the ToR is finalised]*

6.2. The election cycle (Annex I) shall commence on the date when the acting executive makes publicly available the election calendar, which includes the following dates:

- a. Launch of the call for volunteers for the election committee – minimum two weeks prior to the opening of the nomination period. The call for volunteers could be launched at the same time with the publication of the election calendar.
- b. Announcement of the election committee – minimum one week prior to the opening of the nomination period).
- c. Opening and closing dates for accepting nominations for the new executive committee (the nomination period to last a minimum of two (2) weeks).
- d. Announcement of voting members – minimum one week prior to the start of the voting period.
- e. Voting period – minimum ten (10) calendar days.
- f. Announcement of election results, by the election committee – no later than one week after the closing of the voting period.

6.3. The new executive committee assumes office no later than one week after the announcement of the final election results.

B. Election committee

6.4. An election committee with three members shall be formed at least one week before the start of the nomination period.

6.5. A call for volunteers to serve on the election committee shall be launched by the acting executive committee. The seats shall be filled on a first come first served basis.

6.6. When no volunteers are forthcoming and to ensure expedient execution of the election process, the acting executive committee may also appoint individuals from the SEEDIG community at its discretion, and with their consent.

6.7. Candidates for the executive committee are automatically disqualified from volunteering or appointment on the election committee.

6.8. SEEDIG supporting organisations shall have one observer seat on the election committee. The person filling this seat shall be appointed at the sole discretion of the supporting organisations. He/she shall be entitled to participate in all activities of the election committee, without the right to vote.

6.9. The election committee administers the election process, from the date when the nomination period commences, until the date when the final election results are announced. During this period, the duties to be performed by the election committee include, but are not limited to:

- a. Opening the call for nominations of candidates.
- b. Announcing the list of voting members.
- c. Reviewing the nominations, and ensuring the publication, on the SEEDIG website, of those nominations for candidates that meet the eligibility criteria.
- d. Administering the voting process.
- e. Announcing the election results.

6.10. The election committee shall be assisted in its operational tasks (i.e. publication of information on the SEEDIG website, creation of list of voters, etc.) by one member of the acting executive committee. He/she shall have no say in decisional matters pertaining to the activity of the election committee.

6.11. The election committee shall make decisions by consensus, to the largest extent possible. Consensus is understood to mean the practice of adoption decisions by general agreement, in the absence of any formal objection. Where consensus is not possible, then a formal vote may be held. In the case of voting, decisions shall be taken by simple majority.

C. Candidate eligibility criteria

6.12. SEEDIG executive committee elections are open to any member of the SEEDIG community who meets the following criteria:

- a. Is a national or a resident of a country in South Eastern Europe and the neighbouring area.
- b. Demonstrates prior engagement with SEEDIG.
- c. Has been actively involved in Internet governance processes and/or organisations.

D. Nomination process

6.13. The nomination period shall last for a minimum of two weeks. In exceptional cases, such as, but not limited to situations when the number of eligible candidates is lower than the number of members of the executive committee, or there are no candidates from a specific stakeholder group, the election committee may decide, at its sole discretion, to extend the nomination period.

6.14. Members of the SEEDIG community can nominate themselves or other eligible members to be a candidate by submitting a (self)nomination form within the nomination period.

6.15. The (self)nomination form shall include the following information:

- a. For the nominator: name, organisation/affiliation, stakeholder group, country of origin and residence, and e-mail address.
- b. For the nominee:
 - i. Name, age, gender, organisation/affiliation, stakeholder group, country of origin and residence, and e-mail address.
 - ii. Motivation, containing, at a minimum, background information about the nominee, his/her involvement in SEEDIG and other Internet governance processes and/or organisations, and the reasons behind the nomination.

6.16. In case of nominations, the nominee shall be contacted by the election committee and asked to indicate whether he/she accepts the nomination.

6.17. All (self)nominations are reviewed by the election committee, with a view to determine if they are complete and the candidates meet the eligibility criteria listed in art. 6.12. In the case of incomplete (self)nominations, the election committee shall contact the person making the nomination and ask for the missing information to be submitted within a determined timeline.

6.18. (Self)nominations which are complete and meet the eligibility criteria are published on the SEEDIG website, on an ongoing basis during the nomination period. All eligible (self)nominations shall be published on the SEEDIG website no later than one day after the close of the nomination period.

6.19. Once a candidate is deemed eligible by the election committee, he/she shall submit the following additional documents, within the nomination period:

- a. A candidate statement, outlining the candidate's vision for SEEDIG over the following two years, and his/her expected contribution to achieving SEEDIG's objectives. The election committee may prepare a set of guiding questions to help candidates prepare their statements.
- b. A transparency statement, indicating all other Internet governance processes and/or organisations the candidate is involved with, on a voluntary or paid basis.

E. Voting process and voting rights

6.20. If the number of eligible candidates matches the number of members of the executive committee, and if these candidates reflect the diversity criteria mentioned in art. 3.2, no voting is required, and the candidates are automatically elected.

6.21. If the number of eligible candidates matches the number of members of the executive committee, but these candidates do not reflect the diversity criteria mentioned in art. 3.2, the election committee shall, at its sole discretion, extend the nomination period.

6.22. If the number of eligible candidates exceeds the number of available seats on the executive committee, a voting process shall occur.

6.23. Nationals and/or residents of countries in South Eastern Europe and the neighbouring area who are members of the dedicated SEEDIG mailing list at the date when the election cycle starts are eligible to vote, and shall be considered voting members of the SEEDIG community.

6.24. A list of voting members shall be distributed via the SEEDIG mailing list and published on the SEEDIG website, at least one week before the start of the voting period. Before the list is published, voting members shall be asked to indicate, within a 48h timeline, whether they object to their names being included in the public list.

6.25. Each voting member shall have one vote. Through his/her vote, the voting member shall express their preference for five (5) candidates, of their choice. It is strongly recommended that voting members take into account the need to ensure stakeholder, country, and gender diversity within the executive committee.

6.26. Voting via proxy is not allowed.

6.27. The voting period shall last a minimum of ten (10) calendar days.

6.28. The voting process shall be conducted through such online means that ensure, to the extent possible, that:

- a. Votes are expressed only by members who have the right to vote.
- b. Each vote is anonymous and unique.

F. Elections results

6.29. The election committee shall announce the initial results of the voting process (including information on the number of votes castes, the number of valid votes for each candidate, the number of abstentions and invalid votes), within 48 hours from the closing of the voting period.

6.30. The first five (5) candidates receiving most votes during the voting process shall form the executive committee, provided that the diversity criteria mentioned in art. 3.2 are met. If this is the case, the election committee will so announce while making available the results indicated at art. 6.29, which shall be deemed as final election results.

6.31. If the sole results of the voting process do not reflect the diversity criteria mentioned in art. 3.2, the election committee shall, within five (5) days from the announcement of the initial voting results, propose a composition of the executive committee that meets the following conditions:

- a. Minimum three (3), but preferably four (4) stakeholder groups are represented on the committee.
- b. Preferably, each member represents a different country. In exceptional cases, there could be a maximum of two members from the same country.
- c. There is gender diversity among the members.
- d. The total sums of the votes (as received during the voting process) of the selected executive committee members is the highest, i.e. it is not possible to compose another group of five members that would have more total votes.

6.32. An executive committee proposed in line with art. 6.31 shall be subject to review and approval by the SEEDIG community through the following mechanism:

- a. Voting members of the SEEDIG community may file written motivated objections to the proposed executive committee within seven (7) days from the date when the proposal is announced. Objections may only be raised on procedural grounds and concern the fulfilment of the conditions described in art. 6.31. If no objection is filed within this timeline, the election committee shall announce the final election results and the composition of the executive committee.
- b. If an objection is raised, the election committee shall review it and provide a response within three (3) days. The election committee may accept the objection and revise the election results and proposed executive committee accordingly, or reject the objection and provide a rationale.
- c. If no further objection is raised, the election committee shall announce the final election results and the composition of the executive committee.
- d. If any additional objection is raised, the entire election process is re-initiated.

6.33. When communicating the composition of the executive committee as resulting from elections, in line with art. 6.30, or proposed in line with art. 6.31, the election committee shall also provide a rationale.

G. Transparency

6.34. For transparency reasons, the following information shall be published on the SEEDIG website, at a minimum:

- a. The election calendar.
- b. The list of eligible candidates, together with their nomination form, candidate statement, and transparency statement.
- c. The list of voting members, in line with art. 6.24.
- d. The results of the election process.

7. Removing individual members of the executive committee or recalling the entire executive committee

7.1. Should the executive committee, or parts of it, fail to comply with the mandate mentioned in art. 4, the SEEDIG community is entitled to either remove individual members or to recall the entire executive committee.

7.2. The removal of individual members or the recalling of the entire executive committee may be requested by any voting member of the SEEDIG community, through a petition submitted to the SEEDIG mailing list. The petition should clearly state the reasons for requesting the removal or recalling, underlining the parts of the executive committee mandate that have allegedly not been complied with.

7.3. In order to trigger a vote on removing individual members or recalling the entire executive committee, the petition needs to be backed by at least 10% of the total number of members of the SEEDIG mailing list.

7.4. Before a vote is held, the executive committee or the member(s) concerned shall be given the opportunity to respond to the claims outlined in the petition.

7.5. A petition for removing individual members of the executive committee or recalling the entire executive committee shall be deemed successful if passed by a simple majority of votes cast.

7.6. When one or several members of the executive committee is/are removed, a partial election process is launched. The election process outlined in art. 6 shall apply *mutatis mutandis*. Any member thus selected shall serve for the remaining term of the member he/she replaced.

7.7. When the entire executive committee is recalled, a process for electing a new executive committee is launched. The election process outlined in art. 6 shall apply *mutatis mutandis*. An interim executive committee shall be created by consensus by the SEEDIG community, for purposes of coordinating the SEEDIG process until the creation of a new executive committee.

Art. 8. – Amending the charter

8.1. Any member of the SEEDIG community may propose amendments to this charter, via the SEEDIG mailing list.

8.2. Any proposal for amending the charter shall be subject to discussion and approval by the SEEDIG community.

Annex I Election cycle

