



## SEEDIG 6 | Online planning meeting I.a & I.b

### Summary report

On 15 January 2020, two online public meetings were held as part of the planning process for the [SEEDIG 6 annual meeting](#). The meetings were attended by 24 participants.

#### 1. SEEDIG 6 updates

Participants were informed that, following consultation with local partners in Moldova, there are plans to move the SEEDIG 6 annual meeting from spring to autumn. It was explained that, unless very strong reasons are brought against this change (e.g. possible clashing with major events), the timeline for the planning process will be revised accordingly.

This change is mostly motivated by delays in the planning process for SEEDIG 6 and the need to give both the community and the local team in Moldova more time to prepare the meeting in an appropriate manner, without having to rush and compromise on quality. It is also hoped that this extra time would also ease the work on other parallel processes (elections, working group on legal entity, etc).

In previous years, having SEEDIG in the spring allowed discussions from SEEDIG to feed into EuroDIG. This year's change, however, brings another advantage: using the EuroDIG meeting in early summer to (a) facilitate discussions between the SEE+ community and the rest of Europe on matters of common interest and then feed those discussions into the SEEDIG meeting; and (b) offer a space for the SEEDIG community to meet and discuss any SEEDIG-related matters, before the annual SEEDIG event.

Moving SEEDIG 6 to the autumn (tentative dates are mid-late September) was supported by participants in the two online meetings, who welcomed the extra time allowed for the related planning process. The view was also shared by SEEDIG supporting organisations. The exact dates will be confirmed with the local partners and then publicly announced.

The Moldovan local team then provided a few updates on the preparations for hosting SEEDIG 6. Several local entities (e.g. the Association of ICT companies, the State University of Moldova - willing to host the Youth School, Mediapoint Association, the Agency for Electronic Governance) have already expressed support for SEEDIG 6. Discussions are also ongoing with other local entities. Cost estimates are being prepared and the fundraising process will soon start, in coordination with the Executive Committee.

## **2. SEEDIG 6 Programme Committee and next steps**

The recently formed [Programme Committee \(PC\)](#) (created following a public call for volunteers) will soon start working on shaping the programme for SEEDIG 6. Activities will include: review of [proposals submitted in response to the call for issues](#); preparation of a draft programme and its publication for public comment; definition of modalities for further engagement of the SEEDIG community in the programme building processes; defining the format and content of the programme and sessions; etc.

Participants suggested that, in addition to the public comment period on the draft programme, the community could also be invited to suggest key participants and moderators for SEEDIG 6 sessions, once these are set. For example, Google docs can be created for each session, and the community given a timeframe to suggest key participants for the sessions. The PC would still be in charge of making the final decisions, but the community will also be able to provide its input.

## **3. Overview of proposals submitted by the community**

An overview was given of the 84 proposals submitted in response to the call for issues which ran between October and early November 2019. Participants noted that the proposals were of good quality and many could become good topics for discussion at SEEDIG 6. It will be the task of the PC to review the proposals and identify those that received more support and could be integrated in the programme for SEEDIG 6.

## **4. Discussion on programme structure and content**

Participants discussed key elements that should be kept in mind when building the programme for SEEDIG 6 and made several suggestions:

- Ensure the programme is both focused and relevant for as many stakeholders as possible.
- Select less topics and allow more time for in-depth discussions on the same topic (including tackling a topic from many different angles).
- Where sessions are organised in a classical format (e.g. panel-type), allow more time for participant engagement.
- To attract stakeholders less represented, introduce new principles, such as allowing some sessions to focus on issues which are of particular interest to a specific category of stakeholders. Even if this could mean less diversity within a single session, it would be a chance to attract more diverse participation within the overall meeting. At the end, the goal should be to have diversity in the overall programme, and not necessarily in each and every session.

- Make sure that the programme is aligned with the current interests and priorities of the region. Challenges that the region may be facing (for example, digitalisation, cybersecurity, and readiness for uptake of advanced digital technologies) should find their place in the programme. Other possible topics include: advanced technologies beyond the hype, 5G deployment and potential implications, impact of advanced technology on the region's economy.
- Make sure that the programme also reflects topics of particular interest for the community in the host country.
- At the same time, allow for some of the topics addressed in previous years (such as multilingualism and IDNs) to feature again in the programme, as a way to continue the discussions, identify progress, etc.
- Sessions could be planned in different formats, including panels, round-tables, fishbowls, world cafes, case studies, etc. Online tools should also be used as a way to enhance audience engagement. SEEDIG has experimented with multiple formats over the years and has some experience it should build on for SEEDIG 6. Ideally, the programme would include a mix of various session types.
- Explore options in which some time is allocated for discussions within stakeholder groups, and some time is allocated for multistakeholder debates. If not now, at least for future annual meetings.
- Experiment with expo spaces (for companies, and in particular start-ups, to present their initiatives, innovations, etc), hackathons, art@SEEDIG and other new elements that could attract new participants.

## 5. Outreach

Participants were invited to contribute to outreach activities related to SEEDIG 6 and promote the meeting within their communities. They were also invited to approach the Executive Committee with any suggestions they may have on fundraising opportunities.

## 6. Other updates

The Executive Committee announced its intention to continue SEEDIG's capacity development programme. It is very likely that the Youth School (YS) will be held this year too, especially considering support from the State University of Moldova and previous YS partners. A suggestion was made to reach out to universities, as they may be willing to support the participation of their students in the YS.

Depending on funds, it is also hoped that the Fellowship Programme will be reactivated.

## **7. Discussion on recent developments within SEEDIG**

The Executive Committee reiterated its objections to the allegations related to violations of core SEEDIG principles, such as transparency, openness and inclusion. The Executive Committee is of the view that the burden of proof belongs to those voicing such allegations, and noted that, so far, no concrete evidence has been provided in support of such claims.

On the request that the Executive Committee resigns, it was noted that: this request only came from a very few community members; the Executive Committee is acting in line with the mandate entrusted following the 2017 election process (two members are continuing this mandate until its expiration at the end of 2020, and the third member, whose mandate was to expire in November 2019, is continuing on an interim basis, until the election process is finalises); the Terms of Reference (ToR) provided for a clear mechanism for the removal of the Executive Committee; if the community no longer trusts the committee, this mechanism can be triggered as provided for in the ToR.

Participants were informed that the Executive Committee held a meeting with SEEDIG supporting organisations, to gather their views on recent developments, especially considering that many of them were the target of unfounded allegations. During this meeting, participating SEEDIG supporting organisations (Internet Society, ICANN, RIPE NCC, IGFSa, IGF Secretariat, EuroDIG, European Commission, ETNO) confirmed their ongoing support for SEEDIG and their trust that SEEDIG process and work modalities are in line with core IGF principles. In their view, SEEDIG should continue its work, which has so far produced good results. (The discussions did not touch on issues related to financial support.)

During the open discussions, some participants indicated that, in their view, at least some community members are confused about the current situation, but hope that it will soon be overcome and the actual work will not be affected. To overcome 'community confusion', now and in the future, it was suggested that periodic public meetings are held (maybe one every month or every two months), to allow community members to raise any questions they may have and get a better understanding of the ongoing developments.

It was also noted that requests for resignations were not backed by grounded explanations. Moreover, participants did not share concerns such as those related to an alleged lack of inclusion, noting the many calls for volunteers that are regularly announced within SEEDIG.

Broad support was expressed for the Executive Committee to continue its work and keep SEEDIG activities alive. The fact that many on the SEEDIG list remain silent does not necessarily mean lack of support, but could also indicate a concern of not fuelling more unfounded attacks and allegations.



Moving forward, participants were encouraged to share their views when controversial matters are discussed in the community. They were also invited to pay attention to the ongoing election process and consider submitted nominations, as the Executive Committee needs to be strengthened in order to carry out its duties as effectively and efficiently as possible.

## **8. AOB**

A quick update was provided on the [SEEDIG Legal Entity Working Group](#), which is expected to resume work soon.

Next, a representative of Missions Publiques presented the organisation's project activities and a project called 'We, the Internet – The Global Citizens' Dialogue on the future of Internet'. SEEDIG community members were invited to engage in the project.

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