

# GLOBAL INFORMATION SOCIETY WATCH 2017

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



GISWatch 2017  
SPECIAL EDITION

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

Global Information Society Watch 2017 Special edition  
Internet governance from the edges: National and regional IGFs in their own words

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APC would like to thank the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) for its support for Global Information Society Watch 2017.



Support for this GISWatch special edition was provided by the Ford Foundation.



Published by APC  
2017

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Global Information Society Watch 2017 special edition web and e-book

ISBN 978-92-95102-92-7  
APC-201712-CIPP-R-EN-DIGITAL-282

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>

# PANAMA IGF

## Panama

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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?*

The initial talks around establishing an internet governance community in Panama date back to April 2013, when the government hosted the 5th South School on Internet Governance (SSIG). This event was organised by the National Authority for Governmental Innovation (AIG) and the South School on Internet Governance (SSIG), and aimed at training and motivating Latin Americans to join the international debate on internet governance. The event brought important actors involved in the internet governance ecosystem in Latin America to Panama, and mobilised representatives of the public sector – such as AIG, the National Authority of Public Services (ASEP) and the Ministry of Commerce and Industries (MICI) – as well as the academic and technical community of the country, represented by the Network Information Centre of the Technological University of Panama (UTP), better known as NIC-Panama. A year later, in April 2014, a group of key players from the Panamanian digital ecosystem met at the NETmundial event in Brazil, which brought together different stakeholders around the world to discuss and shape the principles of internet governance. The same group met once again at the 7th LACIGF, held in San Salvador, El Salvador in 2014, and at the 8th LACIGF in Mexico City, in 2015. Back in Panama, they engaged in a series of meetings with the purpose of putting together representatives of the different parties interested in the development of internet governance in the country. During 2016, prior to the 9th LACIGF held in Costa Rica in July, IPANDETEC organised a series of three public forums to inform and involve a broader audience, such as teachers, students, business people and government entities not already involved in internet governance, and civil society in general. Through a series of six meetings convened by IPANDETEC (civil society), and sponsored by AIG and ASEP (public sector), UTP (technical and academic sector) and the Panamanian Chamber of Information, Innovation and Telecommunications (CAPATEC) (business sector), a working group

was created to reinforce the commitment of all stakeholders. This process culminated in the organisation of the first Dialogue Table in April 2017, just when the Panama chapter of the Internet Society was established and shortly after the nomination of IPANDETEC as the host organisation of the 10th LACIGF. Throughout this process, establishing the national internet governance forum was facilitated by both regional and international governance forums. In particular, by putting together experts from different sectors of the Panamanian society, both the NETmundial and the LACIGF played an important role in fostering the creation of a group made up of people engaged in internet governance topics in Panama. The two regional initiatives also helped by providing the expertise and the contacts of people in other countries across the world who shared best practices in establishing a national and regional community focused on internet governance

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

The process is better explained in the previous question. However, the main difficulty was to include some actors who were not very keen on joining the IGF talks from the start, especially from the public sector. In Panama, it is still a challenge to involve actors from the government, beyond the participation of the AIG.

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

We imagine it to be a forum to discuss policies and foster the agenda of digital rights in Panama, involving stakeholders from different sectors.

## NRI internal governance and initiatives

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

IPANDETEC (civil society), AIG and ASEP (public sector), UTP (technical and academic sector) and the Panamanian Chamber of Information,

Innovation and Telecommunications (CAPATEC) (business sector).

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

The main difficulty is to ensure a more active and constant participation of the government, and a greater involvement of the private sector, since other stakeholders have been active and participating constantly in the discussions.

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

We believe that gender balance is respected in all the meetings and events we have organised so far.

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

It was sponsored by the AIG and ASEP. The topics were chosen by committees defined in our meetings prior to the event.

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

No response was provided to this question.

## 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?*

No response was provided to this question.

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

No response was provided to this question.

## 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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