



# **ETNO position on proposed models for future digital cooperation structure following the report of the UN High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation**

## 1. Introduction

ETNO and its members, as active players engaged on Internet Governance processes at national, regional and global level, welcome the proposals of the UN Secretary General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation to strengthen the global multi-stakeholder dialogue on digital issues.

ETNO fully supports the global multi-stakeholder approach of Internet Governance processes that serves as a platform to discuss challenges emerging as a result of the continuous expansion of a global open interconnected Internet. The global multi-stakeholder approach is also a means to advance in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure a human centric digitalization process, where no one is left behind.

ETNO considers the strengthening of global collaboration mechanisms, with a commitment to the foundational shared values of Internet Governance processes – openness, multi-stakeholder approach, inclusiveness and equal footing participation – as a guiding principle, a relevant and sensible step forward to continue to maximize the potential of the Internet and new technologies. To this end, ETNO welcomes the opportunity to provide input on the suggested models for future digital cooperation structures proposed in the aforementioned report.

## 2. Guiding questions

### **A) Overarching questions on a future digital cooperation structure concerning all models**

#### **1. How could the new model foster more actionable outcomes?**

The creation of complex and duplicated structures would lead to an inefficient process, where outcomes from the parallel processes would compete with each other. In order to assure meaningful, relevant and more actionable outcomes, the best approach would be to build an Enhanced Collaboration model on top of the already existing structure. ETNO and its members participate in the EuroDIG and see it as a helpful existing means of contributing towards the IGF+ model. In ETNO's view, the adoption of the IGF+ proposal would be of highest interest to the global community with an aim to evolve, expand and reinforce the IGF's current of scope of action, capabilities and structure as well as to achieve more effective and efficient outcomes. Similarly, the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) serves as a well-established and strongly supported multi-stakeholder forum for digital cooperation.

#### **2. How can broader participation of government and business representatives, especially from small and developing countries and SME's be ensured?**

In the current digital ecosystem, it is not only relevant to achieve meaningful outcomes but to design and implement effective communication programmes to disseminate resulting outcomes. The Enhanced Collaboration model should consider communication as a relevant function within their mandate, specifically targeting enhanced engagement of governments and businesses, including SMEs.



### **3. How can a stable financial funding be ensured?**

Securing financial support should be a top priority for the Enhanced Collaboration Model prior to its launch. Improving and ensuring financial sustainability would allow the future digital cooperation structure to focus on achieving its foundational objectives, while at the same time enabling a long-term global cooperation effort capable of yielding results.

Increased governmental engagement should be a high priority in this global collaboration effort, as this would hopefully encourage more governments to participate in the sustainable funding of the future IGFs.

However, a diversification of funding sources should be a key consideration in order to ensure a neutral funding base, avoiding undue influence based on economic dependence.

In order to provide a sustainable funding source of the Global Collaboration Initiative, the governance model of the initiative should be carefully designed. Full transparency should be provided on the origin and use of funding resources as well as on the appointment process of the Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (MAG), to avoid undue influence from any specific stakeholder group or agent.

### **B) Internet Governance Forum Plus (IGF +)**

#### **4. Do you think the Advisory Group is a useful proposal and if yes, how should it look like? Especially in terms of its composition/membership, responsibilities? To what extent should there be differences to the current MAG?**

The Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) should be a high-level and multi-stakeholder group with relevant decision-making powers. Decisions should be based on global consensus, and for this reason the number of members of the MAG should be kept at a level which can foster consensus. As with the current IGF MAG, regional and stakeholder group balance and diversity should be maintained. The new advisory group should focus on relevant strategic issues, having an important role on the future and impact of the Enhanced Collaboration Model. The decisions of the Advisory Group concerning the logistics and preparation of annual events etc. should be left to the technical/administrative multi-stakeholder group to implement.

Among its first duties, the Advisory Group should start a global consultation process about the potential functional structure (Cooperation Accelerator, Policy Incubator, Observatory and Help Desk) of the Global Collaboration Initiative in order to define their respective structure, composition and functions.