

# **The West African Internet Governance Forum 2010: A platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue on issues relating to Internet Governance in West Africa.**

**Report submitted to the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) by the Free and Open Source Software Foundation of Africa**

**Compiled by the Association for Progressive Communications**

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# 1. Introduction and Summary

This report covers progress made by the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) as the lead Project Action Coordinator of the West African Internet Governance Forum (WAIGF) initiative. It begins with a general overview followed by an overview of the activities during the reporting period. Attached as **Appendix A** provides a list of national country coordinators.

The first regional West Africa IGF (WAIGF) event consisted of a one-day discussion held in Saly Portudal, Senegal, in 2008. It focused on developing the capacity of participants on global internet governance issues. A second event was held in Accra, Ghana, in 2009 in which a number of countries participated. In spite of the success of these events the process was largely separated from the global IGF as there were no structured linkages between the two fora. The third meeting of the West Africa Internet Governance Forum (WA-IGF) was held in Dakar in August, 2010, with the theme "Promoting the multi-stakeholder model for the development of the Internet in Africa" and with a specific plan of action for linking to the global IGF that was held in Vilnius, Lithuania in September 2010. One of the outcomes of the 2010 WAIGF was a call for more proactive government engagement in a multistakeholder internet policy processes which are currently predominantly spearheaded by civil society. Participants also called for increased participation of countries and their stakeholders in West Africa at the global forum.

## 1.1 Key recommendations

Based on our experience in working on this project we would like to suggest that following recommendations are taken into account in planning for future internet governance forums in West Africa. See Section 6 of this report for more information on lessons learnt from the process:

- Geographical reach** – We recommend that for the 2011 WAIGF more countries in the region are included, using the same model utilised during the 2010 process.
- Coordination** – Donor partners and the core consortium team needs to ensure that sufficient capacity and resources be put into coordination of the West African IGF. Coordination has a critical bearing on the overall impact of the project and a multi-partner, multi-country project such as this should have had at least a 50% time coordinator.
- Capacity building** – The core consortium team should identify training needs and start the project with capacity building in internet policy to ensure that West African participation in the IGF and in internet governance more broadly is effective and sustained over time.
- Information resources** – Equally, there is a need for an information resource pack that can be made available to stakeholders whom the consortium would like to take part in the project. This could also be used in efforts to mobilise resources for the project. It is also important that an online information space for the project be established at the outset and maintained over time so that there is no delay when preparing for a new WAIGF.<sup>1</sup>
- Monitoring and evaluation** – National country coordinators recommend that simple in-house monitoring tools be developed and disseminated to encourage self monitoring.
- Timeframes** – Preparation for the 2011 IGF should be given at least 10 months to ensure that national consultations take place in time to feed into the regional IGF, which will then inform the global IGF. As the 2011 IGF will take place in September/October in Nairobi work on the 2011 WAIGF should start in late 2010.

## 2. Overview of the Project

The West West African IGF is a collaborative effort by a consortium to create a regional Internet governance forum that will facilitate multi-stakeholder Internet policy discussions in West Africa and feed into the global IGF agenda.. The core consortium team comprised seven organisations mainly based in West Africa. ;

–The Free Software and Open Source Foundation for Africa (FOSSFA)

<sup>1</sup> This was the intention with the 2010 WAIGF but delays in the disbursements of funds resulted in delays in developing the website.

- The Association for Progressive Communications ( APC)
- The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)
- The African Network Information Center (AfriNIC)
- The Panos Institute for West Africa ( PIWA)
- The Internet Society, Africa ( ISOC)
- The Economic Community of West African States ( ECOWAS)

## **2.1 Aims of the WAIGF project**

The original aims of the initiative are to:

- Increase awareness of Internet governance issues in West Africa
- Facilitate the participation of a broad range of West African stakeholders in the IGF process including governments.
- Create an opportunity for West Africans to engage in/contribute towards discussions regarding Spam, Internet and Security, and other IGF related issues at the global Internet Governance Forum.
- Generate a systematic, bottom up, national, regional and global policy dialogue process in West Africa.

## **2.2 Organisation of the WAIGF**

FOSSFA, as the organisation contracted by OSIWA, ensured that the use of the grant was in compliance with the terms set within the grant agreement by exercising due oversight of the project. APC was responsible for convening and ongoing coordination of the project team through developing workplans, facilitating project team meetings and regular progress reports based on the input from the partners. IISD was responsible for the research activity and production of the research report. ECOWAS ensured government participation and PIWA mobilised stakeholders to participate in the national meetings. AfriNIC created the necessary mailing lists for the project while ISOC co-organised the regional event that was held in August 2010 in Dakar, Senegal.

## **3. Overview of Activities During the Reporting Period**

**Project launch meeting in Nairobi, Kenya** – the meeting was held during ICANN's meetings at the Kenyatta International Conference Center in March 2010. The meeting had virtual and physical participants and the main objective was to introduce the project, discuss basic scheduling of the project and also brainstorm work plan ideas. The partners who were represented are APC, FOSSFA, Panos, ISOC, AfriNIC and IISD.

**Develop a core consortium team** - APC and FOSSFA led the drawing up the memorandum of understanding which bound the organisations to commit responsibility to various interrelated activities. Each organisation nominated a lead focal person. A work plan was developed to guide the WAIGF process and an online workspace for the team was created. Regular online meetings were held and minutes recorded.

**Recruitment and training of the national country coordinators** – APC led on this activity and job descriptions for National Country Coordinators were drafted. Job adverts were disseminated through various channels and national country coordinators were hired. Subcontracts were drawn up by the APC for the national country coordinators. Among other things their responsibilities entailed stimulating discussions on the online space, drawing up weekly summaries of discussions held and disseminating the survey on internet governance issues in West Africa. Online orientation meetings were held with each national country coordinator to introduce the project and also explain what the in-country coordination entailed. The national country coordinators reported to the West African IGF consortium through the APC or another designated representative of the consortium.

**Creation of online policy dialogues spaces** - With the assistance of AfriNIC more than 10 online mailing lists were created. The main purposes of the online policy dialogue spaces were to encourage the participation all stakeholders in the discussions related to internet governance, build momentum and feed into national face to face events. Online dialogue participants included civil society, regulatory agencies, academia, internet users and government.

The table below reflects the number of subscribers and the national country coordinators.

Country	National Country Coordinator	Number of subscribers to online space
Burkina Faso	Idrissa Bourgou	408
Gambia	Poncelet Ilegeji	35
Ghana	Charles Amega- Selorm/ Godfred Ahuma	40
Liberia	Abdulai Kamara	152
Nigeria	Emmanuel Edet	63
Senegal	Maye Diop	Unknown
Sierra Leone	Sahr F. Gborie	179
Togo	Nahmsath Yabouri	81

**Development and maintenance of the WAIGF website** – APC drafted the job description and FOSSFA assisted in disseminating the job advert. APC and FOSSFA were in charge of the recruitment process. There nine applicants and three were shortlisted. Idrissa Bourgou from Burkino Faso was hired to develop and maintain the project's website and update it with WAIGF news and developments. The website manager trained the national coordinators on uploading content on the site. Each national coordinator has an account to update the country space on the website. The website can be viewed at: [www.waigf.org](http://www.waigf.org)

**Organise a regional IGF** - The third West African Internet Governance Forum (WA-IGF) was held in Dakar from August 23-25th 2010. Over 200 participants and observers from 12 countries representing civil society, media, the private sector, government regulatory authorities, development partners and internet activists convened to deliberate on issues relating to internet governance (IG) issues in West Africa. ISOC Senegal with the assistance of consortium team organised the event. **Appendix B** includes a full report on the regional event.

**Links with other regional IGFs** – As the West African IGF we engaged with other regional IGFs at the global event in Lithuania. A workshop organised by the WAIGF was attended by the representatives from the United States, East African and Central African IGFs. The main purpose of this engagement was to explore possible areas of collaboration. A working group was formed to look into ways of collaborating and learning from one another.

**Promote West African issues at the global Internet Governance Forum** – Five participants were sponsored by the Open Society Initiative in West Africa (OSIWA) to attend the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Internet Governance Forum in Lithuania. See **Appendix C** for a detailed report.

## 4. Internet Policy Research in West Africa

The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) led this activity of the project by carrying out a survey among people in West Africa to map their concerns and awareness of different technical and social issues related to the internet, as well as support for various policy directions and the future of the regional internet governance.

## 4.1 Research goals

Mapping opinions about internet issues serves four purposes:

- To find out about concerns and support for different policies
- To increase the legitimacy of the regional Internet governance process, policy recommendations and reports
- To spread awareness in West Africa about Internet issues and linkages with other policy areas, such as the environment
- To inform the wider world about the concerns of the West Africa

As of 28 August, 2010, the survey was completed by 271 people, 165 of whom completed all 23 questions. 70% of respondents are male. The over-representation of male respondents means we almost completely missed the concerns of women as a stakeholder group. 54.6 per cent of all respondents are aged 18–34, 35.2% are 35–49, while 9.7% are 50–64. This is somewhat commensurate with the age distribution in the surveyed countries. The survey was circulated by national contact persons in each country, which means respondents were self-selected, not random, possibly introducing confirmation bias. The survey nevertheless showed a high level of diversity, representing wide variety of different stakeholders in government, civil society, the private sector and the technical community.

## 4.2 Research findings

Core findings of the research can be summarised as follows:

### **There should be national multi-stakeholder internet governance forums.**

Support for national internet governance forums — including stakeholders from all areas of society, not just technical communities — to discuss internet policy issues and challenges is very high. A majority (53%) further stress the importance of shared responsibility for driving the domestic evolution of the internet, between the government, private sector, technical developers and users.

### **Core internet issues, including access, security, abuse/misuse and privacy, are most important.**

All queried issues engaged the respondents, but issues like net neutrality, internet governance, intellectual property rights and critical internet resources appear to be secondary.

### **The forum should be concerned about issues beyond the core challenges listed above and should engage with a broad range of policy areas.**

National forums must have a broad agenda, not limited to core issues. Responses indicate an understanding that internet governance must be a holistic process, including cross-cutting issues like climate change, social cohesion and literacy.

### **There should be a regional mechanism to engage with other countries on internet governance.**

Lastly, the survey shows a high level of awareness of the interconnected and cross-boundary nature of the internet, and that many challenges thus have to be met on a multilateral basis. National forums should seek to share knowledge and perspectives with other IGFs, both regionally and internationally.

Overall, there was an unambiguous theme in the responses, namely broadening participation in the development of the internet in West Africa, lending legitimacy to national IGFs and the WAIGF process. Potential survey participants in some countries had limited access to connectivity, hence the survey had to be filled in manually

The full report is available on: <http://www.waigf.org/publications/article/preparing-the-ground-for-the-west>

## 5. National Internet Governance Fora

Of the 8 countries that took part in the process, only 2 countries (Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire ) have managed to hold their national internet governance forums to date. The main challenge for the national coordinators has been galvanising financial support for the events, especially from the corporate sector. The national initiatives also faced time constraints as the West African IGF was working backwards using the global forum time-line. Please see **Appendix D** for the country reports.

## **6. Lessons Learnt and the Way Forward**

### ***6.1 Challenges experienced in implementing project activities***

#### **Challenges in project implementation:**

–**Time constraints:** Due to administrative difficulties in concluding the grant agreement the project started four months later than originally planned. This left us with only two months in which to complete activities before the global IGF which took place in mid-September 2010.

–**Commitment from partner organisations:** While some of the partners worked incredibly hard to make the project succeed others who had promised to deliver on specific areas of activity did so very late, or required repeated reminders, or simply did not deliver at all. This placed enormous strain on the remaining partners who had to shoulder more than the anticipated workload

–**Slow start to the project due to funding difficulties:** Even after the project agreement had been concluded there were further delays in the transfer of funds.

–**Initial stimulation of discussions on the online policy dialogue spaces:** Getting the discussions going was not easy and not all national focal points were sufficiently pro-active.

–**Motivating the country coordinators to work for months without being paid:** As stated above, cashflow difficulties meant that the coordinators had to work for a period of time without reimbursement. This made it difficult for the project coordinators to demand better performance from them.

#### **Challenges related to project coordination:**

This was a very difficult project to coordinate. In analysing this we believe this can be attributed to the following factors:

–The project budget did not allow for sufficient coordination staff time.

–Not all the WAIGF partners aligned their programmes and staff teams with the objectives of the project, hence they were not actively involved in the project.

–Some partners experienced internal human and financial resource difficulties which made it hard for them to maintain their initial commitment to the project

–Managing partner relations and developing new partnerships is time consuming and runs the risk of competing for time that should be devoted to the actual work of increasing awareness of Internet governance issues in West Africa

### ***6.2 Next steps***

The following steps are recommended to sustain the project:

–Mobilise resources for WAIGF 2011

–Develop a code of conduct for online discussions to promote a constructive approach to dialogue and debate

–Encourage more stakeholders to join the online discussions and face-to-face events.