Activities Report 2018-2020

Advisory Board
of the Global Forum on Cyber Expertise

May 2020

Table of Contents

Part I. Activities Report

1. Introduction

The aim of the Advisory Board (AB) is to provide advice on the overall strategic direction of the GFCE to ensure that cyber capacity building activities under the GFCE umbrella reflect the multistakeholder approach to policy making. In performing its functions, the Advisory Board relies on information shared by the Secretariat and acquired through participation in different bodies of the GFCE, in particular the Working Groups (WG). The current activities report provides a non-exhaustive overview of the activities implemented by the Advisory Board as well as contributions made by individual members of the Board.

__Table 1__. Members of the Advisory Board 2018-2020

Co-Chairs	
Rooba Moorghen	Mauritius, Co-Chair (2018-2019)
Folake Olagunju	ECOWAS, Co-Chair (2019-2020)
Patryk Pawlak	EU Institute for Security Studies, Co-Chair (2018-2020)
Members	
Klee Aiken	APNIC/CERT NZ
Enrico Calandro	Research ICT Africa
Catherine Garcia van-Hoogstraten	The Hague University of Applied Sciences
Joyce Hakmeh	Chatham House
Damir "Gaus" Rajnovic	FIRST
Vladimir Radunovic	DiploFoundation
Gabriela Reynaga	Holistics GRC/ISACA
Daniela Schnidrig	Global Partners Digital
J. Satyanarayana	National Health Authority, Government of India
Ian Wallace	New America

The work plan of the Advisory Board is closely linked to the developments within the GFCE. Nonetheless, the Board also enjoys certain level of liberty in deciding on its agenda and activities.

In 2019, the Advisory Board agreed on a set of **four main objectives** (Doc. 1/2019) that guided the Board's activities and engagement with the GFCE community:

1. **To make decisions of the GFCE better informed** by providing guidance, advice and views on the overall strategic direction of the GFCE;
2. **To ensure that the views of civil society are reflected** in the GFCE actions by establishing a robust consultation and collaboration mechanism;

3. **To raise awareness about the GFCE engagements** by establishing adequate communication channels;
4. **To ensure proper functioning of the Board** by adopting adequate working modalities and securing resources needed for the achievement of its mission and objectives.

To meet these objectives, the Advisory Board set forth **seven key priorities**:

1. **To provide guidance and advice on the GFCE activities** through participation in the Working Groups;
2. **To improve the quality of the GFCE products** by assisting in the preparations of the annual meeting, contributing to the GFCE Magazine, and assuring the overall added value of the GFCE products;
3. **To develop a methodology allowing for issuing recommendations and opinions** regarding current and prospective members, partners, and initiatives, in particular the implementation of their commitments under the Hague Declaration;
4. **To strengthen research support** to the GFCE activities by strengthening the role of knowledge partners and laying the foundations for creation of the GFCE Research Council or a similar mechanism that helps to identify new issues and topics relevant for the CCB community;
5. **To develop an outreach and communication strategy** in support of the Board's outreach and consultation mechanisms with the civil society;
6. **To improve awareness and understanding** of the GFCE and visibility of its activities;
7. **To develop and strengthen collaborative tools and mechanisms**, including regular conference calls, regular meetings, etc. necessary for the proper functioning of the Advisory Board.

The present report provides an overview of the Board's actions towards achieving these priorities.

2. Informed Decision Making

One of the main objectives of the Advisory Board is to support the GFCE community in the decisions concerning its functioning, activities and strategic direction. To fulfill this objective, members of the Advisory Board regularly contribute to the Working Groups. Most of the work done by the Board, however, remains invisible to the broader community. Over the past two years, the Advisory Board has served as a sounding board for the new initiatives and activities planned by the Secretariat. The Board has also provided extensive comments on the plans and documents concerning the GFCE members and partners.

2.1.   Working Groups

Working Groups are the primary channel through which the GFCE activities and initiatives are designed and implemented. The Advisory Board had two representatives in each of the

Working Groups (see Table 2). From the very beginning members of the Advisory Board have actively contributed to the work of each Working Group. Some of the activities include outreach to potential members/partners/interested parties in the APAC region (ex: Telstra, APNIC, Pacific) or mapping of cyber capacity building initiatives and cyber strategies which was successfully included in the Cybil Portal.

The Board was actively involved in the GFCE discussion about the support for development of the national cyber strategy in Tunisia. To this aim, the Board has organized consultation with representatives of the civil society from Tunisia in the margins of the Internet Governance Forum in Paris in 2018. The results of this consultation were then incorporated in the Recommendation 2/2019 adopted by the Board and presented to the Chairs of Working Group A.

The Advisory Board has also provided more operational support to the Working Group Activities. For instance, several members of the Advisory Board filled in as co-chairs of the Working Groups (e.g. Working Group on Cybercrime) or served as Team Leads for task forces established by individual Working Groups (e.g. Cyber Incident Management Task Force Lead under Working Group B).

Table 2. Participation of the GFCE Advisory Board in the Working Groups

Rooba Moorghen	Overall coordination – Representative to the Chairs of the Working Groups meetings
Folake Olagunju	Overall coordination – Representative to the Chairs of the Working Groups meetings Member, WG D - Task Force lead – Cyber security Awareness WG D
Patryk Pawlak	Overall coordination – Representative to the Chairs of the Working Groups meetings
Klee Aiken	Member, WG B – Incident Management and Information Protection; Co-lead Cyber Incident Management Task Force
Enrico Calandro	Member, WG A – Policy and Strategy
Catherine Garcia van-Hoogstraten	Member, WG D – Cybersecurity Culture and Skills Task Force lead – Cybersecurity Education and Training
Joyce Hakmeh	Member, WG C – Cybercrime; Co-Chair of WG C - Cybercrime
Damir "Gaus" Rajnovic	Member, WG B – Incident Management and Information Protection
Vladimir Radunovic	Member, WG D – Culture and Skills
Gabriela Reynaga	Member, WG E – Standards
Daniela Schnidrig	Member, WG D – Culture and Skills; Task Force Co-lead Strategy & Assessments
J. Satyanarayana	Member, WG E – Standards
Ian Wallace	Chair of WG A – Policy and Strategy

2.2.   Advice and guidance

During its term, the Advisory Board provided extensive comments and participated in the discussions concerning key GFCE initiatives: the establishment of the clearing house, branding of the GFCE products, and implementation of the cyber capacity building research agenda. These engagements occurred directly between the Advisory Board and the Secretariat and as such have not led to the adoption of formal opinions or recommendations.

In a limited number of cases, the Advisory Board has decided to adopt formal opinions and recommendations available on the GFCE website:

A. Opinion 1/2019 on the GFCE membership request by Palo Alto Networks
B. Recommendations on improvements to the process of identification and use of Global Good Practices (GFCE AB Rec. 1/2018)
C. Recommendations for Working Group B on the establishment of the National Cyber Security Centres (GFCE AB Rec. 1/2019)
D. Recommendations on the coordinated effort to support the development of the National Cybersecurity Strategy in Tunisia (GFCE AB Rec. 2/2019)

In addition, several members of the Advisory Board were actively involved in the planning and conduct of the GFCE products and activities. Some of the notable examples include the assistance provided for the organization of the GFCE Pacific Regional Forum in Melbourne and GFCE Regional Forum for Europe in Lille.

3. Multistakeholder Engagement

The primary objective of the GFCE Advisory Board is to ensure that voices of different stakeholder communities – in particular the civil society and research community – are adequately reflected in the GFCE activities. The primary mechanism to achieve this objective – in addition to providing regular inputs and the Working Groups – is the annual meeting of the GFCE where all members, partners and knowledge partners are represented. Consequently, the Advisory Board organized a dedicated workshop at the annual meeting in Addis Ababa in 2019. The aim of the workshop was to discuss and explore how research and capacity building, conducted by civil society groups, can be leveraged in policymaking and used to influence and shape cyber policy outcomes at the national, regional and global levels. Thanks to the funding provided by external partners – such as Global Partners Digital – numerous civil society groups from the Global South were able to participate in the GFCE activities for the first time.

4. Awareness Raising

To ensure a more inclusive nature of the decision making within the GFCE as well as to provide better information about the GFCE and its activities to the external stakeholders, the Advisory Board has adopted its own outreach and communication plan – pending the adoption of an overall communication strategy by the GFCE secretariat. The aim of the outreach plan is to provide guidance and structure to the AB to fulfil the relevant actions contemplated in its ToR ("encourage collaboration between the GFCE and other appropriate cyber-capacity building

programs" and "raise awareness of the GFCE where possible, to mobilize stakeholders in support of its objectives, and to conduct advocacy and outreach at events and meetings when relevant" paragraphs 2 and 3 of ToR). The outreach plan also links to the GFCE AB work plan priority "To develop an outreach and communication strategy in support of the Board's outreach and consultation mechanisms with the civil society." The specific aims of the plan include:

A. To broaden the Board's outreach and increase visibility;
B. To adopt a more proactive, hands on approach to raise awareness and facilitate collaboration with stakeholders;
C. To provide clarity on what the GFCE and the AB do for external stakeholders, with the aim to increase their engagement and participation in the GFCE.

The following sections present selected outreach activities conducted by the Advisory Board or its individual members.

4.1. UN Open-Ended Working Group

The inclusion of cyber capacity building as an aspect of the ongoing work of the UN Open-ended Group on developments in field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security (OEWG) provided an opportunity for several members of the Advisory Board to promote the work of the GFCE. During the intersessional meeting of the OEWG in New York in December 2019, members of the Advisory Board spoke in support of the capacity building activities and initiatives implemented under the umbrella of the GFCE.

4.2. Internet Governance Forum

In 2018, the Advisory Board organized a roundtable "Public-Private-Civil Partnerships in Cyber Capacity Building" at the Internet Governance Forum. The speakers to the panel belonged to different stakeholders groups – civil society, academia, technical community, and private sector. In this way, different perspectives on the role of the multistakeholder community in cyber capacity building were discussed by different stakeholders groups. The session provided a good opportunity for sharing experiences of different actors with the process of cyber capacity building. The session has reaffirmed the strong need for a more organized and explicit recognition of the civil society organizations in the cyber capacity building efforts. Several speakers stressed the growing importance of the CSOs – not only as the target of capacity building efforts but also as a real partner in the process. Their increasing role in providing legitimacy to the whole process was also underlined with some speakers suggesting that governments and private sector actors are becoming surprisingly dependent on civil society organizations. Yet, some of the speakers expressed doubts whether the existing set up is a partnership of the equals. Differences in how different groups define cyber security and approach capacity building in this domain were listed as potential reasons for a variety in types of the emerging partnerships. More information about this roundtable can be found on the IGF website.

4.3.   GFCE Magazine

As part of its outreach strategy, members of the Advisory Board have prepared a contribution to the 7th edition of the Global Cyber Expertise Magazine. The article by Daniela Schnidrig and Klee Aiken focused on lessons for the stakeholder engagement five years since the establishment of the GFCE.

Part II. Functioning of the Advisory Board

Based on their experience over the past two years, members of the Advisory Board gathered several lessons and recommendations, contained in this section. Some of them reflect the uncertainty related to the position of the Advisory Board within the constantly evolving structure of the GFCE, in particular the establishment of the Foundation Board and the ongoing discussion about the creation of a Research Council.

5. Operations of the Advisory Board

The Advisory Board enjoys a rather extensive level of independence when it comes to its functioning and activities. The Terms of Reference and Working Modalities provide further guidance concerning the performance of duties by its members. The Advisory Board has full freedom in adopting its work plan, which sets out the objectives and key activities for the Board. During its functioning, the Board navigates between two different sets of tasks: those resulting from the ongoing work of the GFCE (e.g. contribution to the Working Groups, comments on documents and initiatives) and the independent initiatives of the Board. Due to the broad scope of the Board's mandate, its members enjoy discretion in defining the type of activities they wish to engage in. It is important to note, however, that the Advisory Board does not receive any funding for its activities, which may provide limitation on what can be achieved. Finally, depending on the composition of the Advisory Board and the profile of its members, there might be a natural leaning towards some topics and issues at the expense of others. It is important, however, that the Board covers all areas of the GFCE activities.

Lesson 1: It is important for the members of the Advisory Board to agree on their level of ambition and adopt a work plan as soon as possible after taking office. In developing its work plan, the Board needs to take into account the roles performed by different bodies established within the GFCE (i.e. Working Groups, Foundation).

5.1. Communication and exchanges

The Advisory Board communicates primarily through emails. MS Teams serves as a platform for collaboration and repository of the Board's documentation. However, it has remained largely underutilized due to some members' concerns about its functionality, which resulted in the parallel circulation of all documentation by email. The regularity of the Board's work is ensured through the regular monthly calls. Co-chairs, in cooperation with the Secretariat, are responsible for setting the agenda of the meeting and monitoring the progress towards their implementation.

Lesson 2: Selecting the most convenient and trusted channel for communication from early on is important for proper functioning of the Board and in order to maximize the participation of all members in the deliberations of the Board.

5.2. Relations with the Working Groups

Working Groups remain the primary channel for content-related work of the GFCE. Co-Chairs of the Board participate in the coordination meetings of the Chairs of the Working Groups. Members of the Advisory Board are also invited to participate in the meetings of the Working Groups.

Lesson 3: In order to ensure the full participation of the Advisory Board in the Working Groups, its members should agree on who will represent them in which Working Group. It is also important that regular reporting from the Working Groups is included on the agenda of meetings of the Advisory Board. The activities of the Working Groups are vertical and siloed, and the AB can play a better role in making WG's work more integrated and horizontal. Reporting-back mechanisms and sharing information at the AB level need to improve. This could be ensured by including in the Agenda of the AB meetings a "WG reporting" item, during which AB members can report back to the AB on WG activities.

5.3. Relations with the GFCE Secretariat

The GFCE Secretariat provides assistance required for the proper functioning of the Board. The specific functions include:

- Facilitating communication between members of the Board, including setting up its monthly calls;
- Assisting the members in the performance of their duties, including by drafting and sharing the minutes of the calls;
- Sharing in a timely fashion all information about the upcoming activities and initiatives of the GFCE.

In performance of their duties, the Board is supported by a contact person appointed by the GFCE Secretariat.

Lesson 4: It is very important that there is clear communication between the Secretariat and AB members (not just co-chairs) on a regular basis. It might be a good idea to have quarterly meetings based on a clear agenda where the Secretariat lays out its plans for the upcoming period for the AB's reactions. In order to ensure sufficient time for deliberations within the Board, the Chairs and the Secretariat should agree on an 'early warning' mechanism concerning new memberships and initiatives as well as other issues that may require the Board's attention. For instance, the Secretariat should flag to the Board any potential new requests for membership as soon as such information is available.

5.4. Relations with the GFCE Co-Chairs

Co-Chairs of the GFCE provide the connection between the GFCE members and the Advisory Board. They set the direction for further development of the GFCE community. It is, therefore,

important for the AB to maintain close contacts with the Co-Chairs. So far, this connection was provided through the in-person meetings during the GFCE Annual Meeting where the Board had an opportunity for an open discussion with the Co-Chairs.

Lesson 5: Maintain – and if possible, strengthen – direct relationship with the Co-Chairs of the GFCE in order to ensure that the Advisory Board remains a relevant actor within the GFCE institutional landscape.

5.5. Relations with the GFCE Foundation Board

The GFCE Foundation Board is a newly established body and therefore the current Advisory Board had very limited opportunities for direct exchanges (except for a joint call with the Chair of the Foundation Board soon after it was established).

Lesson 6: In order to avoid uncertainty about the evolving role of the GFCE, clarify the relationship between the Advisory Board and the Foundation Board. Neither the existing Terms of Reference nor the Working Modalities include provisions that would explain the nature of collaboration between these bodies.

5.6. Relations with the GFCE Research Committee

The GFCE community is currently reflecting on the need to develop a Research Agenda, including the establishment of a Research Committee. This work is ongoing and should be closely monitored by the Advisory Board.

Lesson 7: In order to avoid uncertainty about the evolving role of the GFCE, clarify the relationship between the Advisory Board and the Research Committee, ideally by ensuring adequate representation of the Board in this new body. Neither the existing Terms of Reference nor the Working Modalities include provisions that would explain the nature of collaboration between these bodies.

5.7. Relations with the GFCE Community

The Advisory Board communicates with the broader GFCE community through the Co-Chairs and the Secretariat.

Lesson 8: In order to better serve the GFCE members, the Advisory Board may consider establishing direct channels of communication with members and initiatives. In addition, to increase the visibility of its activities, the Advisory Board should make better use of the available communication tools such as the GFCE website, the magazine and the newsletter.

Lesson 9: All new members, partners, and observers need to be welcomed with a formal Introduction to the GFCE. At the Annual Meetings there is usually a number of governments and CSOs that are new to the GFCE and feel lost, especially in the environment where many people already know each other. It might be worth

considering – in addition to a stand for newcomers as was done in Addis – including a "Welcome for newcomers" workshop before the official start of the meeting. The Advisory Board can play a role in that workshop as well. One could also consider circulating a welcome newcomers letter and/or a video prior to the meeting as it may not be possible to always host a workshop before all GFCE Annual Meetings.

5.8.   Relations with the external stakeholder community

One of the key aims of the Advisory Board is to ensure the inclusive and multistakeholder nature of the GFCE activities. Given that civil society organizations cannot become members – as opposed to governments and the private sector – it is important that the Advisory Board offers appropriate mechanisms for channeling these voices into the GFCE discussions. The current Advisory Board has made attempts to stimulate the engagement of external stakeholders by establishing open communication channels (e.g. submission form on the GFCE website) and direct engagement through the events.

Lesson 10: One of the most effective ways to involve a broader external stakeholder community has been through participation of the civil society groups in the GFCE annual meetings. It is worth exploring additional sources of funding to make such interactions possible also in the future. The current outreach and communication plan also needs to be regularly updated to reflect the evolving ambitions and priorities of the Advisory Board.

6. Way Forward for the GFCE

Based on the experience to date, the Advisory Board 2018-2020 wishes to submit the following points for further consideration by its successors and the whole GFCE community.

6.1.   New strategic environment

Cyber capacity building is no longer a niche topic in the policy and research debates. Quite to the contrary, over the past five years it has become increasingly clear that there is a direct link between cyber capacity building and other topics such as strengthening societal resilience and practical implementation of the cyber stability regime in cyberspace (in particular norms of responsible behavior, confidence-building measures, and application of international law in cyberspace). Given the highly political nature of the debates surrounding some of these issues, certain aspects of cyber capacity building have also become political (e.g. conditions under which capacity building is provided).

Against this background, the GFCE community faces a number of challenges that need to be addressed as a priority:

- Commitment to values and principles reflected in the GFCE founding documents: the GFCE was established on the basis of concrete values and principles. Today, they are as important as five years ago when the GFCE was established and the GFCE needs to

ensure that all its members subscribe to them not only on paper but also through their actions;

- Cooperation with other platforms and actors active in cyber capacity building: the interest in cyber capacity building has also increased the involvement of other institutions and organizations such as the United Nations (ITU, High-Level Panel, OEWG and UNGGE) or ICANN. The GFCE needs to clearly define its place within this community and ensure that the efforts that it has undertaken over the past years are not undermined by new initiatives.
- Defining and explaining the added value of the GFCE as a primary platform for coordinating cyber capacity building efforts: in order to remain a go-to place for cyber capacity building, the GFCE also needs to stress the added value it brings to its members.

In order to remain relevant, all members of the GFCE community must assume a greater responsibility for the GFCE and its functioning. For the moment, too many things are done by too few people. The GFCE can become an even more successful organization and can serve its members even better but only if everybody assumes their responsibility for the future of the organization. Reinvigorating co-ownership and joint responsibility for the GFCE needs to become an absolute priority in the coming months/years.

6.2.   Clearing house function

One way to demonstrate the GFCE's added value is through the clearing house mechanism. But the experience to date has demonstrated numerous challenges that still need to be addressed. The Advisory Board can work with the WGs chairs and the GFCE secretariat to devise mechanisms to do a better scouting of suppliers based on the demand received. Currently, the supply outweighs the demand. A better 'matchmaking' mechanism needs to be put in place so that the available expertise is better used and the needs accommodated.

6.3.   Streamlining the GFCE entities

Over the past two years, the GFCE structure has grown significantly in order to reflect the interests of the members. However, the current architecture is becoming increasingly complex and difficult to understand for members with limited resources. It is therefore critical that the respective roles and responsibilities of each body are clearly explained to the members. As the GFCE community grows, it is important to ensure that everybody has the clarity about the purpose and their roles within the organization. In addition, there is a clear need for avoiding disconnect between the activities undertaken by different bodies within the GFCE architecture. What is lacking at the moment, for instance, is communication between the five WGs to align and coordinate their work where necessary. Finally, there should be more clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the chairs towards the WGs and the Secretariat and more communication on a regular basis.

6.4.   Cybil Portal

Cybil Portal is a good beginning of the concept of One-Stop-Shop for cyber capacity building. A lot of systematic effort has gone into the building of the portal, the taxonomy of the topics, collection of content and its hosting. Since this is just the beginning, the GFCE community should explore the possibilities of how to improve the utility of this platform. Some of the areas that could benefit from further improvement include:

- Quantity Vs Quality: While nearly 600 distinct items are available on the Portal, the currency and relevance of several items cannot be guaranteed. It is desirable to 'prune' the content and put in place quality control procedures and content validation criteria quickly so that the Portal continues to be relevant, usable and useful to the community.
- Metrics: It is desirable to measure and publish the metrics of the number and categories of visitors, pages most visited, time spent by users, etc. Suitable enhancements of the content may be made depending on the observed user preferences.
- Focus on user experience: user experience can be enhanced significantly so that the site is re-visited by the users and made effective use of. Being able to access the most useful, relevant and current content with the minimum number of clicks is one broad requirement in this regard.