UN-Singapore Cyber Programme:
UN-Singapore Cyber Fellowship

Concept Note

[Note: This concept paper elaborates on a proposal made by the Singapore national delegation at the First and Second Substantive Sessions of the OEWG on Security of and in the use of ICTs (OEWG 2021 – 2025).]

Purpose

1. The purpose of the UN-Singapore Cyber Fellowship is to introduce a capacity-building programme (in partnership with the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs) that will:

   • Give high-level national cyber officials from all UN Member States access to a high-quality capacity-building programme tailored to the needs of high-level decision-makers;

   • Equip participants with the expertise required to be an effective cyber decision-maker at the national-level via a unique inter-disciplinary curriculum integrating the key domains of strategy, policy, technology and operations; and

   • Facilitate international cyber cooperation by providing a platform for national cyber officials to network and build relationships with their foreign counterparts.

Background

2. The final report of the Open-Ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (2019 - 2021) identified the need for a concrete, action-oriented approach to capacity-building and concluded that such concrete measures could include establishing specialized training and tailored curricula.

3. The report further identified that, in addition to technical skills, institution-building and cooperative mechanisms, there was also a pressing need for building expertise across a range of diplomatic, legal, policy, legislative and regulatory areas.

4. Nonetheless, we have observed several gaps in current cyber capacity building programmes, including the tendency to separately address policy, technical and operational aspects targeting cyber specialists and line managers. There are few programmes which concurrently provides training for senior officials on the strategic considerations across these domains.

Description

5. We envisage that the UN-Singapore Cyber Fellowship will take the form of a six-day in-person programme conducted in Singapore at the ASEAN-Singapore Cybersecurity Centre of Excellence and selected sites in partnership with a Singapore university, with up to two runs annually. The Fellowship programme will consist of classroom-style interactive seminars, site visits, cybersecurity table-top exercises, fireside chats, and networking sessions with key policymakers and industry leaders.
6. Trainers will be subject-matter experts in government, industry, and academia drawn from around the world. The Fellowship will focus on equipping participants with the capabilities and instincts necessary for effectively balancing the considerations of cyber policymaking with the operational management of technical teams. It will also provide a platform for participants to interact and engage with practitioners from the private sector and academia.

7. The Fellowship will cover a spectrum of topics in cyber and digital security governance such as national cybersecurity strategy, legislation, operations capacity development, workforce and ecosystem development, and international policy.

Participants and Sponsorship

8. The Fellowship will be open to heads/deputy heads of national agencies overseeing cybersecurity and/or Cyber Ambassadors holding decision-making responsibility in the areas of cybersecurity and cyber governance. All UN Member States may nominate up to two participants each for the Fellowship. Each cohort will comprise up to thirty (30) participants.

9. Participants are required to attend the whole duration of the Fellowship as the sessions will build on each other. Participants will receive a certificate of completion, if they fulfil the attendance criteria.

10. Participants will be provided with a sponsorship package. The details of the package will be communicated in due course.

Feedback and Comments

11. We welcome feedback and comments on the substance of this proposal, as well as expressions of interest by OEWG delegations who may wish to partner with Singapore in the further development of this proposal and in taking this project forward. Comments and expressions of interest may be directed to: ASCCE_contact@csa.gov.sg.

Call for Interest

12. A formal call for nominations will be issued that includes criteria for selection. Preference will be given to participants from developing countries with due regard for geographic and gender balance per intake. We also welcome advance expressions of interest by Member States interested to nominate participants for the first Fellowship cohort which will be conducted tentatively in August 2022. The organisers will keep these Member States updated on developments relating to the Fellowship and will inform them once nominations are open. Advance expressions of interest may be directed to: ASCCE_contact@csa.gov.sg.