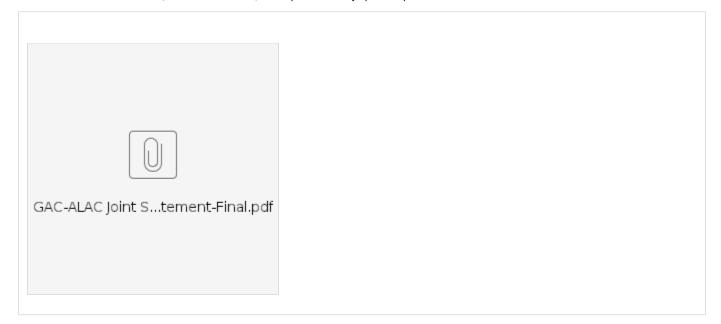# At-Large Workspace: Enabling Inclusive, Informed and Meaningful Participation at ICANN - A Joint Statement by ALAC and GAC

Public Comment Close	Statement Name	Status	Assignee(s)	Call for Comments Open	Call for Comments Close	Vote Open	Vote Close	Date of Submission	Staff Contact and Email	Statement Number
02 November 2017	Enabling Inclusive, Informed and Meaningful Participation at ICANN - A Joint Statement by ALAC and GAC	**ADOPTED** via consensus	Yrjo Lansipuro Alan Greenberg Thomas Schneider	31 October 2017	01 November 2017	02 November 2017	02 November 2017	02 November 2017	staff@atlarge.icann.org	n/a

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FINAL VERSION TO BE SUBMITTED IF RATIFIED

The final version to be submitted, if the draft is ratified, will be placed here by upon completion of the vote.

GAC-ALAC Joint S...tement-Final.pdf

FINAL DRAFT VERSION TO BE VOTED UPON BY THE ALAC

The final draft version to be voted upon by the ALAC will be placed here before the vote is to begin.

In order to enable inclusive, informed and meaningful participation by all stakeholders at ICANN, the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) and the At- Large Advisory Committee (ALAC) ask ICANN, inter alia:

- To develop a simple and efficient document management system that allows – even to non-insiders – an easy and quick access to ICANN documents. As a minimum, every document should have a title, a date and/or reference number; it should identify the author and indicate intended recipients, and make reference to the process it belongs to. Acronyms should be explained.

- To produce executive summaries, key points and synopses for all relevant issues, processes and activities, made easily understandable to non-experts so that all stakeholders will be able (a) to quickly determine if a particular issue is of concern to them and (b) if yes, to participate in the policy process easily and effectively, on equal footing with other stakeholders. This should be done at least for issues put up for public comment.

Rationale:

One of ICANN's core values is to seek and support "*broad, informed participation reflecting the functional, geographic, and cultural diversity of the Internet at all levels of policy development and decision-making to ensure that the bottom-up, multistakeholder policy development process is used to ascertain the global public interest and that those processes are accountable and transparent*" (Bylaws Section 1.2.c.ii)

It is also critical to the legitimacy of ICANN that it allows all stakeholders to participate meaningfully in its processes, and to express their needs and interests. Only by taking them into account can ICANN claim to act in the global public interest.

Enabling informed, inclusive and meaningful participation in the complex processes and activities of ICANN is a challenging objective. Access to relevant information is the first prerequisite among many others. ICANN today is a remarkably open and transparent organization that produces and publishes massive amounts of information about all aspects of its activities. But paradoxically, the sheer volume of the information has turned into a problem for many stakeholders.

The more information is available, the greater the need for a logical and user-friendly document management system. And the more complex the substance matter in their details, the greater effort is needed to present relevant issues – in an understandable form.

The information flood is especially challenging for stakeholders who have limited resources to deal with ICANN-related issues and are not able to become "ICANN insiders" that follow and participate in ICANN's work on a daily basis. This is in particular but not only the case for many end-user volunteers and government representatives. That is why the GAC and the ALAC are taking up the issue.

To address the problem, a multi-pronged approach is necessary. Bringing order to the document management system, as suggested above, should be relatively easy and could be considered "low-hanging fruit". The GAC and ALAC acknowledge the ICANN Board's recent decision to start such an effort on its core web sites but stress that that this must be extended to all ICANN documentation.

A further step will be to re-focus ICANN's communications on enabling informed participation of all stakeholders in the true sense of the core value cited above. There is a gap between informing the potentially interested public via the website and newsletters, and experts with extensive and complicated documents understandable only by them. For a non-expert stakeholder who wants to be an informed participant, the former material is often not very useful and the latter takes too much time and effort to be of use. If ICANN really wants to maximize informed participation, there should be an effort to arouse the interest from all stakeholder groups.

What is needed are summaries and synopses, infographs, videos and other innovative ways of presenting information, so that a stakeholder will be able (a) to quickly determine if a particular issues is of concern to him/her and (b) if yes, to enter into the policy process easily and effectively, on equal footing with other stakeholders. Attention should be paid to using plain English (and if possible translations into other languages) in order to allow non-native English speakers to understand the issues. Providing such easy understandable information is particularly important when an issue is put out for public comment. This would lower the barrier for non-insiders enabling them to understand what is relevant for them and how they can make their voice heard. In communicating about the process of IANA transition and enhancing accountability, ICANN has proven that it is actually possible to break down complex issues into key elements that are understandable and allow for interaction with a wider community.

We are aware that the concrete requests made above alone are not sufficient to allowing for inclusive, informed and meaningful participation at ICANN's processes. Other issues like ensuring that all input is fully considered, managing workload, setting priorities and working on sustainability of a volunteer-based system also need to be looked at. But we are convinced that implementing the elements listed above will contribute to achieving this goal of shared concern.

FIRST DRAFT SUBMITTED

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