



# FY20 COMMUNITY REQUEST FORM

The deadline for FY20 Budget consideration is **25 January 2019**. All questions and completed forms should be sent to **planning@icann.org**.

## REQUEST INFORMATION

### Title of Proposed Activity

Real-time Transcription of Adobe Connect Meetings in English.

### Community Requestor Name

Judith Hellerstein

### Chair

Maureen Hilyard – ALAC Chair

### ICANN Staff Community Liaison

Heidi Ullrich

## REQUEST DESCRIPTION

### 1. Activity: Please describe your proposed activity in detail

This request is for real-time transcription (RTT) for up to 10 hours per month in EN for At-Large intersessional teleconferences during FY20 as a means to enhance understanding for participants who may have a hearing disability, be a non-native EN speaker or have low bandwidth or poor audio in order to engage in policy advice development activities more effectively.

RTT was initially introduced to At-Large as a Pilot programme providing RALO or ALAC monthly meetings, Working Group meetings or webinars over a 6-month period in FY18. One of the aims of the captioning program was to introduce a transcription service to enhance understanding by a large percentage of our audio meeting attendees who may have a hearing disability and may not fully comprehend what is being said without being supported by lip-reading or signing. Its other greatest use was to enable those who can hear but the technical language and the complex issues that surround much of the policy work within ICANN, as well as other unfavorable factors have caused many attendees to disengage and not return to our meetings.

RTT has the capacity to create better understanding of what might have been a lot harder to understand without being able to read and reread something in a split second in order to get comprehension. In such a technical environment, there is a strong need for understanding about what At-Large work is all about.

A 2017 survey indicated strong support for the program with more than 54% indicating that they got greater understanding of the topics with the support of captioning. RTT therefore offers a chance not only for those who may have a hearing disability but also for those whose primary language may not be English but interpretation is not provided for their first language so that captioning enables them to listen and then to read and re-read what has been said, to get a better understanding of what is being said.

ICANN should not just assume that because they are offering an audio meeting that it will be accessed with the same quality in every individual circumstance. RTT would be useful even when one is not hearing impaired, but who may have difficulty with different accents, low bandwidth and poor audio, speaker speaking too quickly, etc. all contributing to an attendee who is not getting anything out of sitting for 60-90 minutes and not understanding a thing. In some instances, offering captioning to help them understand what is going on, can be the contributing factor for whether they will actually engage with us or not.



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Since participation is a major objective for At-Large, with the At-Large Review Implementation Plan and our goals for ATLASIII moving us more towards encouraging greater participation and leadership, it is important that ICANN and At-Large supports any options that will encourage understanding and engagement. Providing RTT that will help At-Large participants better engage in our meetings, and better understand the terminology and contexts and thus become better informed about the various policy topics discussed, would greatly help the ALAC to achieve this goal.

Whether in a meeting, a working group or a webinar, captioning would help participants to catch up more quickly and enable them to recheck facts or key ideas from earlier parts of the text and generally develop new skills that will help them participate in the work of At-Large more effectively.

Other RTT facts and details were provided in the FY18 community request.

**2. Type of Activity: e.g. Outreach - Education/training - Travel support - Research/Study - Meetings - Other**

Language support, Public Interest, Awareness and education

**3. Proposed Timeline/Schedule: e.g. one time activity, recurring activity**

Recurring activity up to 10 hours per month.

## REQUEST OBJECTIVES

**1. Strategic Alignment. Which area of ICANN's Strategic Plan does this request support?**

- Advance **organizational, technological and operational excellence**
- Promote ICANN's role **and multi-stakeholder approach**
- Develop and implement a **global public interest** framework bounded by ICANN's mission.

ICANN also supports a globally diverse culture of knowledge and expertise, and has a goal of global inclusivity, transparency and accountability – all critical to being trusted by its stakeholders. Embracing cultural diversity and inclusion through the implementation of this technology which would help to remove the barriers to engagement and participation which are major concerns of At-Large, as we strive to achieve greater participation of our current members.

Access to such a tool would empower current and new stakeholders to fully participate in ICANN activities (Objective 5.3).

**2. Demographics. What audience(s), in which geographies, does your request target?**

While captioning provides a valuable service for people with hearing difficulties, it also serves a similar purpose who have other accessibility issues when it comes to being in a policy environment where the topic is new and even hearing the words does nothing to aid comprehension. A visual rendition of what is being heard can greatly help with the challenges of the technical vocabulary compounded by the acronyms that ICANN uses. Being able to peruse the captioning would contribute to enhanced understanding in a timelier manner than having to wait for a week before a transcript of the meeting becomes available.

ICANN already provides transcripts in their main plenaries, but they forget how important it is in the smaller group situations within At-Large where attendance becomes a requirement for learning about policy issues. Difficulties are compounded by technical language and acronyms.

**Captioning is essential for At-Large Consolidated Policy Working Group (CPWG) meetings where much of our policy work happens and captioning would help with understanding and encourage more**



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**engagement, Actual participation will develop as they learn more and grow in confidence to be able to make an intervention.**

**3. Deliverables. What are the desired outcomes of your proposed activity?**

The desired outcomes of having captioning:

- ICANN is able to better meet its public interest requirements.
- Participants can follow discussion despite communications gaps.
- More participation by end users and stakeholders is generated within ALAC and the At-Large community.

**4. Metrics. What measurements will you use to determine whether your activity achieves its desired outcomes?**

Metrics were gathered during the pilot to assess the value of captioning for At-Large meetings  
 Main results summarized:  
 \* 91% described captioning as either extremely helpful or helpful  
 \* More than 75% indicated the ability to understand the session more effectively  
 \* More than 54% had a greater understanding of the topics  
 \* More than 31% was able to participate more fully and engage with presenters

## RESOURCE PLANNING – INCREMENTAL TO ACCOMMODATE THIS REQUEST

**Staff Support Needed (not including subject matter expertise):**

Description	Timeline	Assumptions	Costs basis or parameters	Additional Comments
Organization of RTT calls			Within normal call management responsibilities.	

**Subject Matter Expert Support:**

**Technology Support: (telephone, Adobe Connect, web streaming, etc.)**

**Language Services Support:**

RTT service vendors.



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**Other:**

**Travel Support:**

**Potential/planned Sponsorship Contribution:**