

# Public Comment at ICANN

Policy Development Support  
Strategic Community Operations, Planning, and Engagement Team

ATRT3 Plenary Call #27

28 August 2019 | 11:00 UTC



# Public Comment

---

Public Comment is a mechanism that gives the ICANN community and other stakeholders (including those not normally engaged in ICANN activities) an opportunity to provide **input and feedback**.

Public Comment is a key part of the **policy development process in the multistakeholder model**, allowing for the refinement of recommendations before potential adoption.

Public Comment is also used to guide **implementation work, reviews, strategic planning and operational activities** of ICANN org.



# Role of the Policy Development Support Team

---

1

## Process Management

Review/approve tickets (requests to open a proceeding) and answer questions

2

## Ensure Timeliness

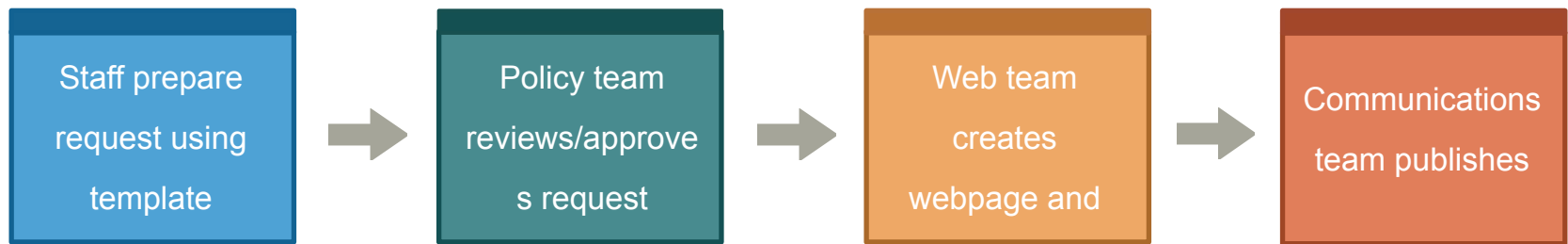
Unless required by ICANN Bylaws or other community governance document, any proceeding between 21 and 39 days requires approval from two ICANN executives. A summary report is due two weeks after the close date (unless another timeframe is established).

3

## Maintain Quality Control

Ensure adherence to templates and consistency of requests, including the summary report

# Current Request Process when initiating a Public Comment Proceeding



# Areas for Improvement

---

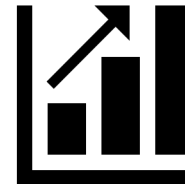
To better serve the ICANN community and organization, the Public Comment experience at ICANN should be improved in the areas of

**Purpose**

**Accountability**

**Communications**

**Infrastructure**



# Purpose

---

As the ICANN community and org evolve, **Public Comment should adapt** as well.

## When is a Public Comment Proceeding necessary?

- When the ICANN Bylaws or other community governance document require a Public Comment proceeding, then the process should be followed.
- A proceeding may not be necessary for all other issues. ICANN org will publish **internal guidelines on what should be posted for Public Comment.**

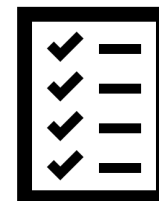


# Accountability

---

Currently, there is no guidance about how, when, or where the ICANN org—both broadly, and specifically, the ICANN org members for each proceeding—should **substantively address feedback** from Public Comment proceedings, including the objective of the staff summary report.

This gap creates confusion in the community about whether or not their input is valued and **impacts the transparency expectations of ICANN org.**



## Proposal:

- Review and clarify the purpose of the staff summary report in the guidelines
- Consider making a report optional for certain types of proceedings

# Proposed Guidelines for Public Comment

---

Guidelines for initiating a Public Comment proceeding are being developed to help ICANN org members determine when a Public Comment proceeding should be opened.

Initiating a Public Comment proceeding is the default mechanism for ICANN to seek feedback from the community or general public.



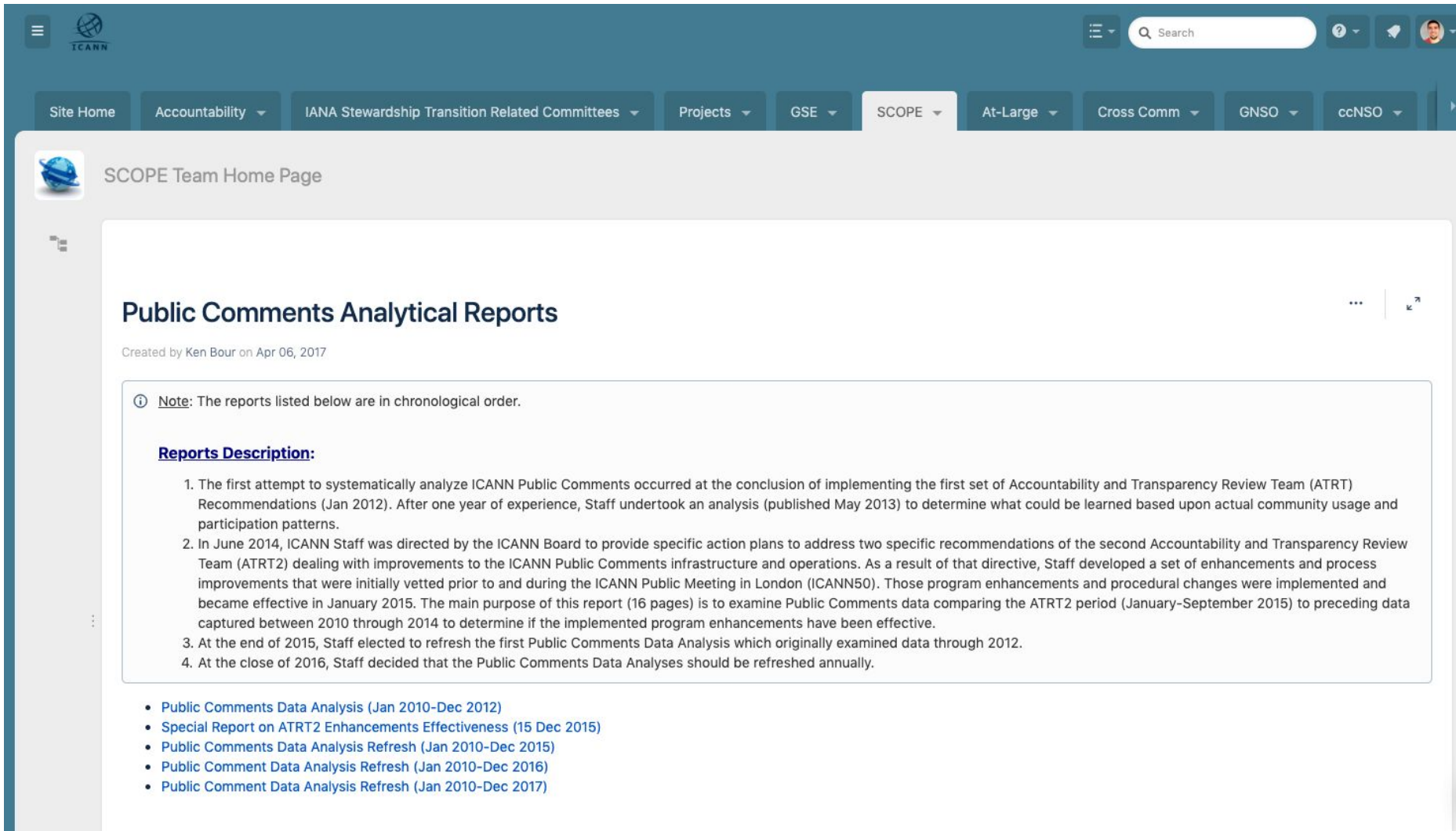


## When to Initiate a Public Comment Proceeding

If a request for community feedback includes one of the following topics, a Public Comment proceeding should be initiated:

- **Governance documents** (e.g., ICANN Bylaws, operating procedures, community charters)
- **Policy recommendations** (including draft or initial reports, final reports, and registry agreements)
- **Organizational reviews** (e.g., that will affect ICANN, a Supporting Organization, or an Advisory Committee)
- **Other documents** not included in the above mentioned categories (e.g., reviews, cross-community working group output, implementation work, operational activities), may also require initiating a Public Comment proceeding for the purposes of transparency and impartiality.

# Public Comment Reports



The screenshot shows the ICANN website's navigation bar with the following items: Site Home, Accountability, IANA Stewardship Transition Related Committees, Projects, GSE, SCOPE (highlighted), At-Large, Cross Comm, GNSO, and ccNSO. Below the navigation bar is the SCOPE Team Home Page header. The main content area features the title "Public Comments Analytical Reports" with a sub-header "Created by Ken Bour on Apr 06, 2017". A note indicates that the reports listed below are in chronological order. A section titled "Reports Description:" contains a numbered list of four items. Below this list is a bulleted list of five report titles.

SCOPE Team Home Page

## Public Comments Analytical Reports

Created by Ken Bour on Apr 06, 2017

**Note:** The reports listed below are in chronological order.

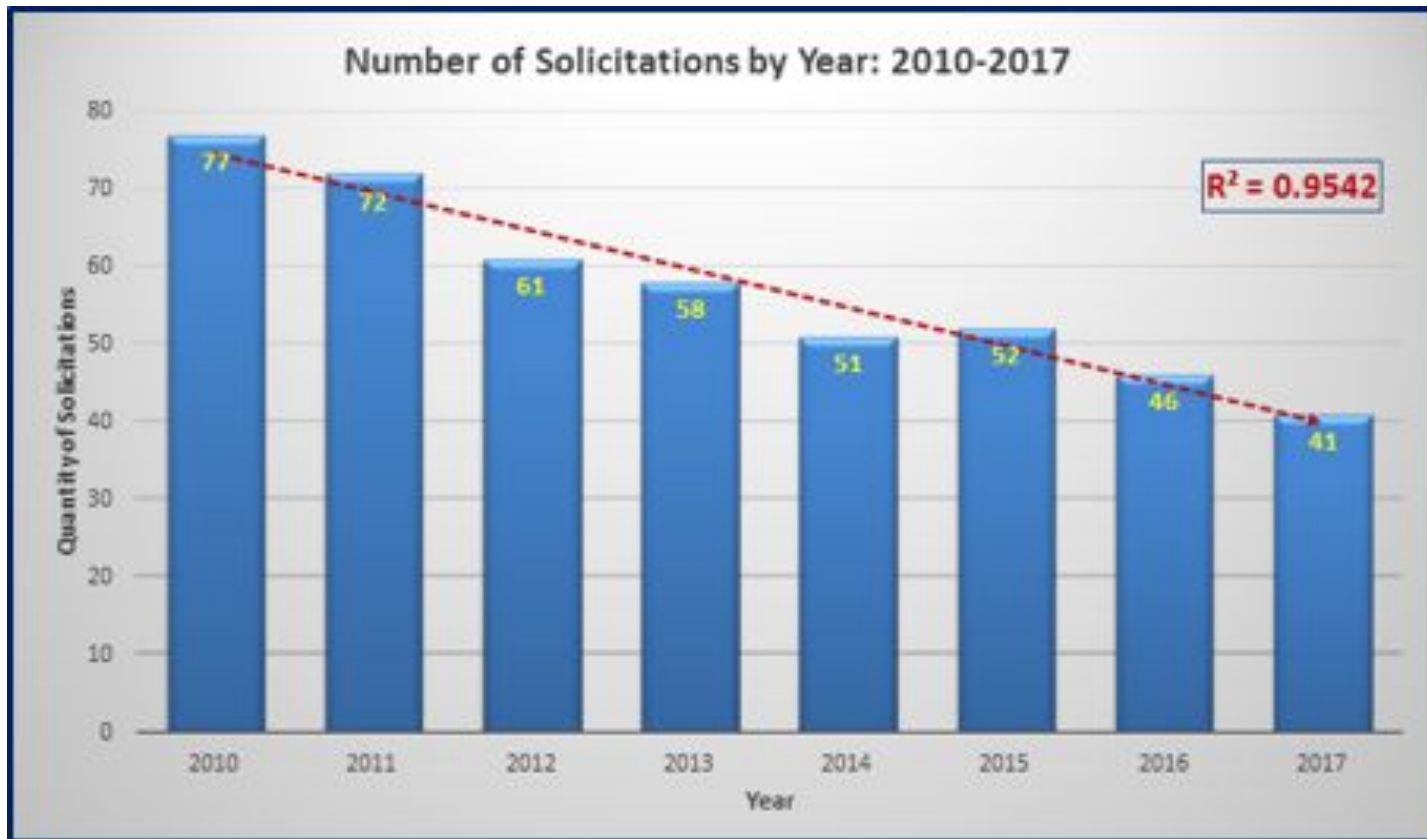
**Reports Description:**

1. The first attempt to systematically analyze ICANN Public Comments occurred at the conclusion of implementing the first set of Accountability and Transparency Review Team (ATRT) Recommendations (Jan 2012). After one year of experience, Staff undertook an analysis (published May 2013) to determine what could be learned based upon actual community usage and participation patterns.
2. In June 2014, ICANN Staff was directed by the ICANN Board to provide specific action plans to address two specific recommendations of the second Accountability and Transparency Review Team (ATRT2) dealing with improvements to the ICANN Public Comments infrastructure and operations. As a result of that directive, Staff developed a set of enhancements and process improvements that were initially vetted prior to and during the ICANN Public Meeting in London (ICANN50). Those program enhancements and procedural changes were implemented and became effective in January 2015. The main purpose of this report (16 pages) is to examine Public Comments data comparing the ATRT2 period (January-September 2015) to preceding data captured between 2010 through 2014 to determine if the implemented program enhancements have been effective.
3. At the end of 2015, Staff elected to refresh the first Public Comments Data Analysis which originally examined data through 2012.
4. At the close of 2016, Staff decided that the Public Comments Data Analyses should be refreshed annually.

- [Public Comments Data Analysis \(Jan 2010-Dec 2012\)](#)
- [Special Report on ATRT2 Enhancements Effectiveness \(15 Dec 2015\)](#)
- [Public Comments Data Analysis Refresh \(Jan 2010-Dec 2015\)](#)
- [Public Comment Data Analysis Refresh \(Jan 2010-Dec 2016\)](#)
- [Public Comment Data Analysis Refresh \(Jan 2010-Dec 2017\)](#)

<https://community.icann.org/display/soacabout/Public+Comments+Analytical+Reports>

# Key Findings - Number of Public Comment Proceedings



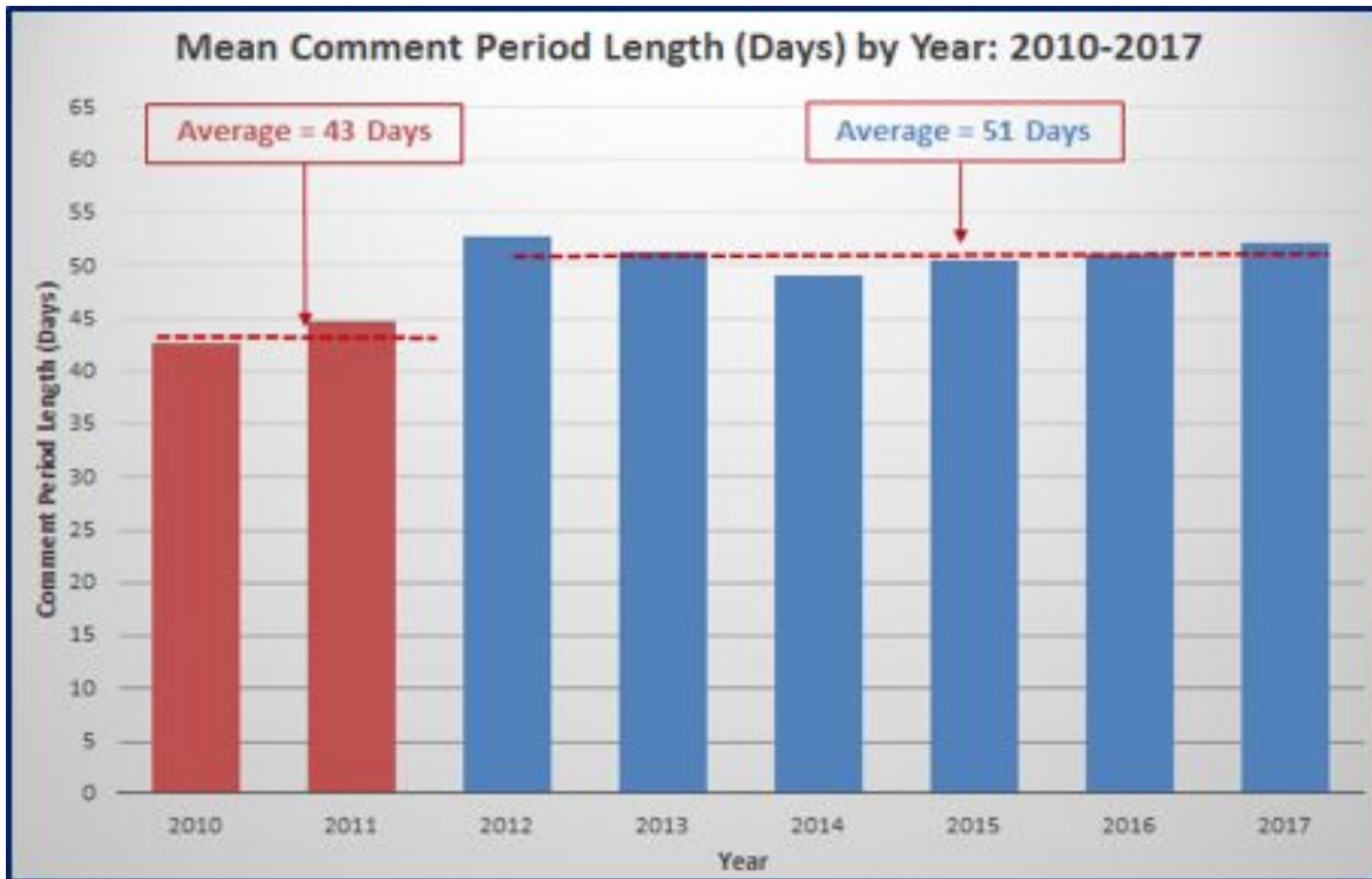
Total number of Public Comment proceedings has declined approximately 10% each year

# Key Findings - Proceedings with Zero Comments



The percentage of proceedings experiencing zero comments from the ICANN community has decreased markedly since 2014

# Key Findings - Comment Period Length



The length of time Public Comment proceedings remain open for comment increased from 42-44 days in 2010-2011 to 50-52 days throughout 2012-2017.

# Communications

---

Currently, apart from the announcement when the Public Comment proceeding opens, there is **no communications/outreach strategy** for the remaining timeline.

There are ad hoc examples, but these are driven by an ICANN org member request.

**A comprehensive strategy for promoting Public Comment proceedings and their milestone dates can potentially drive broader participation.**



## Proposal:

- Work with Communications to develop a strategy
- Include in the guidelines the need to involve specific, relevant departments each time a Public Comment proceeding opens

The **Public Comment experience falls short** of its full potential in some key areas:

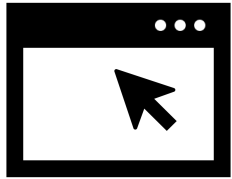
- better guiding and educating the community to targeted opportunities based on interests
- empowering stakeholders to participate and interact
- increasing transparency through improved search
- improving efficiency and automation



## Proposal:

- Leverage the ITI project to review existing tools and mechanisms for this purpose

The Information Transparency Initiative (ITI) aims to deliver increased and improved accessibility and findability of information on icann.org.



These goals will be achieved through

- Rebuilding the technical infrastructure of ICANN's information systems
- Enforcement of content governance
- Creation of a multilingual taxonomy
- Implementation of improved search.

**ITI includes improvements to Public Comment.**



# ITI and Public Comment, continued

---

New pages have been designed and approved after ICANN org and community feedback sessions at ICANN64.

## **Next steps include:**

- Testing platforms to replace Mailman
- Designing new workflows
- Conducting briefings and trainings



**Demonstration by Jana Juginovic, ITI Team**

---

# Thank you!

Questions? Please email [public-comment@icann.org](mailto:public-comment@icann.org).