

PLANNING GUIDELINES FOR ICANN PUBLIC MEETINGS **(Proposed Final Version, 20 April 2021)**

I. Introduction: Overview of Purpose and Scope

This document was developed by ICANN org in collaboration with the Chairs of the various Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees (“SOACs”). It is intended to serve as a basic handbook for the community-based ICANN Meetings Community Planning Group, to assist with their planning for ICANN Public Meetings by providing a set of minimum guidelines with the aim of clarifying the role of the community-based ICANN Meetings Community Planning Group and facilitate consistency and accountability in decision making.

Current Composition & Role of the ICANN Meetings Community Planning Group

The ICANN Meetings Community Planning Group (“Planning Group”) currently comprises representatives from each SO, AC, Stakeholder Group, Constituency and Regional At Large Organization (“RALO”). While many representatives are current Chairs of these groups, this is not a strict requirement for membership in the Planning Group at the present time. Instead, it is understood that each Chair has the ability at any time to designate another member of their group to represent that community in the Planning Group.

The Planning Group is currently the main interface between ICANN org and the community for ICANN Public Meeting planning. ICANN Public Meetings are important milestones for community work and play a key role in enhancing cross-community interaction (including with the ICANN Board and org); however, the scope and responsibilities of the Planning Group has not been documented to date. Developing a community-agreed set of guidelines can help Planning Group members understand their role and responsibilities, including the need for accountability for group decisions, if any. Equally, it is important to acknowledge the oversight role of the SOAC Chairs vis-à-vis the deliberations and decisions made by the Planning Group.

The Terms of Reference that are contained in Section II of this document have been developed to provide clarity regarding the role and responsibilities of the Planning Group as well as the SOAC Chairs’ oversight role in relation to ICANN Public Meeting planning. In addition, the Annex to this document cover the following aspects of ICANN Public Meeting planning:

- Guidance for ICANN Meeting Session Requests;
- Guidance for ICANN Meeting Plenary Session Planning; and
- Guidance on availability of online communication and other tools provided by ICANN org to facilitate in-person and remote participation.

This document will be reviewed periodically by the SOAC Chairs and the ICANN org Executive Team, to ensure that it contains relevant, updated information and guidelines suited to the continued evolution of ICANN Public Meetings.

II. Terms of Reference for the Planning Group

A. Proposed Composition & Role of the Planning Group:

The Planning Group is the ICANN community's representative body that works with ICANN org to plan for ICANN Public Meetings. It is a central forum for community information sharing on topics such as: (1) each community group's priorities for an ICANN Public Meeting; (2) the appropriate time zones, duration and other key questions relating to the structure and scope of each ICANN Public Meeting; and (3) requests from ICANN org concerning ICANN Public Meeting scheduling and planning. As such, the Planning Group is accountable to the community, including through oversight provided by the SOAC Chairs, for its work and any decisions that it may collectively make on such topics, based on its consideration of viewpoints from all represented groups. Therefore, the Planning Group should comprise representatives from each of ICANN's recognized community structures (i.e., the four ACs, three SOs, the GNSO Stakeholder Groups and Constituencies and the five RALOs.)

Members of the Planning Group are to be appointed by each participating community structure to represent the viewpoints of their respective group(s). However, this does not mean that Planning Group members should be advocates for their group(s) only, or prioritize requests and decisions based only on the needs of their group(s).

Where feasible, representatives appointed to the Planning Group should possess knowledge and/or skills relevant to performing the work of the Planning Group (e.g., event planning expertise, knowledge of ICANN policy processes, experience in group decision making, etc.)

At the conclusion of each ICANN Public Meeting, each participating community structure is expected to review its representation in the Planning Group and may reappoint or replace its representative(s) in its sole discretion. ICANN org staff will check in with every participating community structure after each ICANN Public Meeting to update the membership list at the earliest practicable opportunity.

B. Role of the SOAC Chairs:

Through its Chair, each participating community structure has an obligation to ensure that its representative(s) to the Planning Group are aware of these Terms of Reference and are willing to commit the time to contribute to and participate actively in the Planning Group. Where a SOAC Chair is not also a member of the Planning Group, they are expected to consult regularly with their group's representative(s) to make sure that they have relevant, up to date information that can assist them in planning their community group's sessions for an ICANN Public Meeting. While appointing members to the Planning Group is the responsibility of each individual community structure, the SOAC Chairs may, as a body, collectively review the overall size and levels of community representation in the Planning Group periodically, to confirm that it remains reasonably representative of the range of community interests while being a size suited for efficient discussions and decision making.

C. Role of the Board:

The Board is not part of the Planning Group; however, given that: (a) the Board's main priority for its community interactions during ICANN Public Meetings is to focus on the topics of interest to the community; and (b) the community leaders agree that it will be helpful to understand what the Board's main concerns are, the Board will have the ability to propose topics for plenary sessions.

The Board's plenary topic proposals (if any) will be considered in the same way as proposals received from a community group. The Board will not have a vote or role in deciding whether a Board proposal is, or is not, accepted for an ICANN Public Meeting plenary session.

D. Expected Norms of Participation:

Planning Group members are expected to:

- Attend and participate regularly and actively in Planning Group meetings and deliberations;
- Represent faithfully the views of their appointing group while considering the views of others with respect and in good faith;
- Keep to the remit of each of their appointing organizations while being accountable to the full ICANN community as a part of the collective Planning Group;
- Work collaboratively with all other Planning Group members to make sure that any decisions it may make are those that the Group collectively agrees are appropriate for the ICANN Public Meeting in question, including diligently working to overcome disagreements and reach consensus to the extent it is feasible to do so;
- Treat all other members with civility and respect, and in accordance with ICANN's Expected Standards of Behavior and Anti-Harassment Policy; and
- Ensure that they are informed and up to date on the Planning Group's work.

In any instance where the Planning Group is not able to reach consensus, the Planning Group shall agree on a mechanism to break the deadlock or otherwise reach a final decision. This may, for example, consist of referring the matter to the SOAC Chairs, assigning a sub-group to make a specific recommendation or other methods. In all such cases, the agreed mechanism must not lead to unreasonable delay in the decision making or other work of the Planning Group.

In addition, Planning Group members should consider the following community-identified objectives for ICANN Public Meetings in their deliberations and decisions. ICANN Public Meetings should:

- Focus on important, timely topics that are likely to benefit from discussion during the meeting, whether those discussions take place within a specific group, or as part of bilateral meetings, or as cross-community sessions. For clarity, the Planning Group does not have any authority to determine the agenda or topics for individual community groups; however, Planning Group members are expected to be knowledgeable about their appointing group's priorities for an ICANN Public Meeting so that they can contribute to the Planning Group's awareness of each group's preferences when formulating overall meeting objectives.

- In relation to policy development and advice, be a forum for community discussions about key milestones and reporting, as well as an opportunity for broad public engagement on policy proposals from one or more community group(s).
- Include a reasonable number of networking opportunities (both within a community group and across the community).
- Allow for outreach activities consistent with the duration, location (including time zone) and objectives of the Meeting vis-à-vis outreach that may be more appropriate in regional forums or other ICANN-supported events.
- As much as feasible, maximize opportunities presented by the meeting to enhance interactivity, highlight common topics and themes of interest, and strengthen cross-community engagement.

E. Staff Support:

ICANN org provides the Planning Group with reasonable staff support for its work, including administrative and logistical support for organizing and documenting meetings and decisions. All Planning Group meetings are recorded and the proceedings made available to the community. All Planning Group decisions must be documented and published.

F. Other Matters:

The following aspects of ICANN Public Meeting planning are not within the scope of the Planning Group's responsibilities:

- Requesting, managing or otherwise deciding on sessions and matters that are within the specific remit of an individual SO, AC, GNSO Stakeholder Group, Constituency or RALO; and
- Requesting, managing or otherwise deciding on sessions and matters that are within the specific remit of the Empowered Community Administration (including requesting and managing a Community Forum or other process described in Annex D of the ICANN Bylaws) or of the Decisional Participants in the Empowered Community (individually or collectively).

ANNEX: GUIDELINES FOR MEETING PLANNING

A. Guidelines for Requesting an ICANN Public Meeting Session

There has been an increasing number of requests for ICANN org support (e.g., meetings, technical and other staff support) for community activities during ICANN Public Meetings, as well as a growing number of ICANN Public Meeting session requests from groups affiliated with ICANN’s Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees. In view of the need to ensure that ICANN resources and the Public Meeting schedule are primarily dedicated to supporting the policy and technical work of ICANN’s community structures, it has become necessary to develop guidelines that can help a community group determine what session requests and ICANN org support are appropriate for ICANN Public Meetings.

General:

All session requests (i.e., requests to have a specific session included in the ICANN Public Meeting schedule and/or supported by ICANN org staff and other resources generally provided for ICANN Public Meetings (e.g., remote participation tools, transcription, recording or interpretation)) must:

1. Be sponsored by a recognized ICANN community structure (i.e., either a Supporting Organization, Advisory Committee, GNSO Stakeholder Group, GNSO Constituency or Regional At Large Structure (“SO/AC/SG/C/RALO”)) – in this regard, “sponsorship” can mean the relevant SO/AC/SG/C/RALO is the main organizer, the session host/chair/moderator, or merely that the session has been approved for inclusion in the relevant ICANN Public Meeting schedule by the leadership of that community structure;
2. Be submitted before the applicable deadline by the relevant ICANN org staff team supporting the sponsoring community structure; and
3. Include a proposed session title and brief session description outlining the objectives, scope and desired outcomes of the session.

Session requests may be subject to additional review by ICANN org, to ensure that providing the requested support is appropriately within ICANN’s mission, does not result in ICANN org resources being used for the private benefit of a separate legal entity or otherwise entail additional legal risks for ICANN.

Guidance for Community Groups in Submitting Session Requests:

The following additional requirements apply where the session has been approved by a community structure’s leadership but will be led or conducted by persons or groups that are not the SO/AC/SG/C/RALO leaders or other leadership team formally approved by that structure (e.g., a Policy Development Process Working Group, AC Work Party or Working Group, or committee/sub-committee charged with administering SO/AC/SG/C/RALO internal business. The session request must include:

1. The name of the session leader(s);
2. A description of the nature of the group that is requesting the session under the auspices of the sponsoring SO/AC/SG/C/RALO; and
3. A description of the group’s relationship with the sponsoring SO/AC/SG/C/RALO.

In preparing these sponsored session requests, community groups are encouraged to consider the following questions prior to submitting the requests:

1. What are the session objectives?
2. Is the session being planned as an open or closed meeting (i.e., will attendance at the session be open to the public)?
 - a. Presumptively, all sessions should be open. If the group nevertheless decides to sponsor a closed session, a rationale as well as a description of the authorized audience must be provided.
3. Is the requestor a formally/legally organized entity (e.g., is it incorporated)?
 - a. If so, the legal nature of the entity and the jurisdiction where it is organized must be provided.
 - b. Note: ICANN org cannot provide support for an entity's meetings that are required by its corporate status or applicable statutes and regulations (e.g., an annual members' meeting or other statutorily-required organizational meeting.)
4. Is the requestor a trade association (or equivalent)?
 - a. Note: While this will not automatically mean that ICANN org cannot support a requested session, there may be additional legal questions that require further ICANN org review.
5. Does the entity receive any funding?
 - a. If so, the funding source(s) (e.g., membership dues, sponsorships) must be disclosed.
 - b. Note: While this will not automatically mean that ICANN org cannot support a requested session, there may be additional legal questions that require further ICANN org review.
6. How is the requestor connected to the ICANN community? If it is a formally/legally organized entity, how does its charter further ICANN's mission and purpose?

B. Guidelines for Proposing Plenary Topics for ICANN Public Meetings

Plenary sessions at ICANN Public Meetings are intended to be unconflicted sessions where the topics are those that are timely, of high interest to a substantial cross-section of the community, and that may benefit from cross-community exchange and dialogue. Given the limited session availability during an ICANN Public Meeting and the resource commitment required to organize, run and participate in a plenary session (from both ICANN org and the community), it is necessary to ensure that only topics meeting specific requirements are selected for plenary sessions.

Plenary Topic Proposers should consider the following questions prior to submitting a topic proposal:

1. In what way is the topic a timely one for the ICANN community?
2. Is the topic one that can reasonably be considered to be within ICANN's remit (as defined by the Bylaws)?
3. Which community structure(s) is/are interested in or will be affected by the topic?
4. Which community groups or viewpoints should be represented in the session?
5. What are the objectives of holding a plenary session on this topic - e.g. raising awareness; continuing previous discussions with a specific goal in mind (such as agreement to commence

policy work within ICANN's remit); engaging and soliciting broad community feedback on a specific policy, technical or other proposal germane to ICANN's work?

6. What concrete follow up action(s) is/are anticipated as a result of the plenary session; and will ICANN org or community resources be required for the follow up?
7. Is this anticipated to be a one-off session, or will more than one plenary session (including at consecutive ICANN Public Meetings) be required to achieve the stated objective(s)?
8. If the topic has been the subject of a previous plenary session, what is the rationale for a new plenary session on the same topic?
9. What (if any) additional resources will be required, over and above the provision of session support by ICANN org (including preparation, organization, logistical, technical and other staff support)? (e.g., speaker fees, content licensing costs etc.)

All topic proposals must be submitted in the format prescribed by ICANN org's Meetings Team and must include a brief session description outlining the session objectives, rationale and desired outcomes. If a proposal includes suggestions for specific speakers or representatives from particular groups or organizations, the proposing group must obtain the relevant individual or organization's agreement to participate prior to submitting the proposal. Each topic proposal form must include an acknowledgment that the topic has been approved for submission by the relevant community group.

ICANN org will facilitate the Planning Group's decisions on plenary topic selection by providing sufficient time and opportunity for the Planning Group to obtain clarity about specific topic proposals (e.g., by convening a meeting for presenting and discussing the proposals and/or by managing a simple voting process.) The Planning Group is expected to consider the following questions (as a minimum) in reaching its decision on a specific topic proposal:

1. Is the topic timely and likely to be of substantial cross-community interest?
2. What (if any) relevance does the proposed topic have to current community work and priorities? To potential new work within ICANN's remit? To ICANN's Strategic Plan?
3. Does the topic title and description provide sufficient information about the objectives, required resourcing and expected outcomes?
4. In view of the other topic proposals, how would this topic rank in terms of priority (whether of timeliness, urgency or importance of community discussion)?
5. What (if any) will be the implications if the topic is not selected for a plenary session at this ICANN Public Meeting?

Additional Notes:

- The plenary session organizer is expected to include, in its plenary planning process, representatives from the community groups whose viewpoint or participation it noted in its submission. This does not mean, however, that every group that may have an interest in the topic must be included in the plenary planning process.
- A plenary planning group is expected to update the main Planning Group on the progress and status of preparations for the plenary session. Where, in the course of planning, it becomes

necessary or expedient to substantially change the session focus or level of community participation, this must be reported to the main Planning Group.

- Specifically, where a plenary planning group believes it will be necessary to cancel or postpone a plenary session to the next or a future ICANN Public Meeting, the main Planning Group must be notified as soon as possible. Any decision to cancel or postpone a plenary session must be made as soon as it is clear that it will not be feasible to proceed and preferably no later than ten (10) working days before the start of the ICANN Public Meeting in question.
- The main Planning Group may elect to replace a canceled plenary session with another topic; however, this will be possible only if the decision to do so takes place at least one (1) month prior to the ICANN Public Meeting and if ICANN org confirms that it can provide the necessary staff, technical and other resources needed to support the new session.

C. Community Communications

- ICANN Community Communications Support Guidelines (published in June 2020):
https://community.icann.org/display/soacabout/ICANN+Community+Communications+Resources?review=/115638511/136119584/ICANN%20Community%20Communications%20Support%20Guidelines_FINAL.pdf
- Templates, Zoom backgrounds and other related resources:
<https://community.icann.org/display/soacabout/ICANN+Community+Communications+Resources>

Note: The above-linked wiki space will also house regularly-updated templates, backgrounds, social media guidelines and similar resources for community use at each individual ICANN Public Meeting.