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# Summary of Community Feedback on Recommended Strategic Changes for Future ICANN Public Meetings

21 December 2020

## High-Level Overview

- ⦿ Improvements to virtual elements of the meetings should be prioritized separately from changes to the overall meeting strategy.
- ⦿ More time and community consultation is needed to establish strategic changes that would be applicable to future face-to-face meetings.
- ⦿ There is an immediate need to set a block schedule for ICANN70 to facilitate schedule development and planning.
  - A reduced, four-day meeting is preferred with a schedule that allows sufficient time for community groups to meet and is not limited to plenary sessions.
  - Networking slots should be fewer, clearly defined, and offer both intra- and inter-community networking opportunities.
- ⦿ The terminology we use is often interchangeable and we need to better define what we mean when we use certain terms or phrases to avoid confusion. (i.e., Cross-Community Policy Work vs. Plenaries, Networking)
- ⦿ The majority of groups oppose moving sessions currently held during ICANN Public Meetings to be spread throughout the year. Primary concerns are:
  - Increase in workload throughout the year is likely to increase volunteer burnout; community members prefer to do concentrated work over four or five days during the meetings.
  - Potential to create unforeseen conflicts with other Internet community events.
- ⦿ A unified online calendar for SO/AC work outside of the official meetings is supported but not seen as a tool to support the redistribution of public meeting sessions throughout the year.

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- ⦿ Requests to increase existing language services such as interpretation and real-time transcription (RTT) should be evaluated before implementation of new services to support the meetings.

## Summary of Feedback

### Reduce session overlap and conflicts to allow more opportunity for community wide participation.

The ccNSO warns against imposing attendance of sessions on attendees with exclusion of ability to attend a session which is of more interest to them. Alternatively, they suggest that sessions targeted at the same audience should be avoided. (For example, Tech Day and a session on Sub-pro could very well be organized in parallel.)

### Determine goals and overall meeting objectives early in the planning process to facilitate more effective engagement and progress during the meetings.

The ccNSO fully supports the recommendation to determine goals and overall meeting objectives early in the planning process and notes that the reduced time to plan for ICANN70 has prevented this process.

### When virtual, reduce the meeting length (fewer days/fewer hours per day) to prevent volunteer burnout

The ccNSO and the SSAC both indicate support for reduced number of days compared to ICANN69 but oppose a meeting with just eight sessions in total.

### SO/AC work sessions and intersessional meetings spread throughout the year

The ccNSO strongly opposes the elimination of ccTLD-related sessions during the ICANN Meetings as it would discourage ccTLD Managers from participating.

The ccNSO also notes that spreading the number of sessions throughout the year may serve to increase conflicts with other Internet-related events and weaken participation.

The GAC opposes the spread of work sessions throughout the year as it would dilute the GAC's focused public meeting efforts without any demonstrable improvements between meetings. They wish to maintain an effective working program of 4 to 5 focused days to conduct approximately 15 sessions during the ICANN Meetings.

Alternatively, the GAC might be able to time-shift its sessions out of the core meeting week, but only by a week or two before or after the core meeting week.

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The GNSO believes it is possible to hold SG/C/Council meetings outside of the official meeting dates for virtual meetings only, but also feels they would need to be held the week prior, or the week after the official meeting.

## Unified Online Calendar

The ccNSO Council strongly supports the development and use of a unified calendar but cautions against the potential workload of maintenance and warns that up and until the calendar is functional, the proposal would serve to increase conflicts.

The GAC supports development of a unified calendar and would support it by sharing calendar information about public GAC activities to increase opportunities for cross-community understanding and collaboration.

The ccNSO and GAC both see the unified online calendar as separate from the public meeting strategy rather than a tool to redistribute public meeting sessions throughout the year.

## Enhanced Networking Opportunities

At-Large feels the networking slots should be defined and utilized as opportunities for cross-community interaction.

- Sessions could be quick intros to various groups.
- Virtual booth format for one networking session.
- Suggest one ICANN-organized session (perhaps one cultural / a tour)
- LACRALO could organize an event as part of their virtual GA

The ccNSO supports increasing network opportunities, however, for both intra- and inter-stakeholder groups and not at the expense of excluding other kinds of sessions. Overall, limited enthusiasm from the ccTLD community regarding the proposed enhancements and the networking slots.

The GAC welcomes various experiments and pilot efforts to determine additional ways for community members to “network” in a virtual meeting environment, however, it does not support devoting nearly a third of the meeting block schedule to networking events at the expense of substantive community meeting or drafting time. Alternatively, one networking session per day is suggested.

The GNSO points out that networking often takes place during internal SG sessions or activities dedicated to newcomers/Fellows/NextGen. They appreciate that there is a focus on networking during the meetings but need further clarity on what the blocks committed to networking will look like in practice for a virtual ICANN70. One idea could be parsing “networking” into various components: Internal (within a group) networking, outreach across groups with the option of break out rooms/designated areas on the schedule in order encourage interaction between various groups.

## Trained Staff Facilitators

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The ccNSO feels that trained staff facilitators can only be effective if they participate in session planning and preparation leading up to the event.

The GAC believes its public sessions are already operating efficiently and points out that cross-community sessions have had professional staff members or community moderators in place to moderate sessions where appropriate.

## Participation Tools / Language Services

At-Large would like to see the following enhancements to participation tools and language services provided during the ICANN Meetings:

1. Interpretation for all sessions including networking sessions and Prep Week/pre-meeting activities
  - Consider use of machine translation to supplement human interpreters if needed
2. Real-Time Transcription (RTT) for all sessions (EN/FR/ES)
3. Use of the following participation tools for all cross-community sessions:
  - Zoom breakout rooms
  - YouTube streaming
  - Google Jamboard

The ccNSO supports the proposal to encourage use of video cameras by all participants and increase visual/video/graphic elements so long as it does not deter participation, particularly for attendees with lower bandwidth Internet connections.

## Meeting Structure and Block Schedule

At-Large states that the proposed schedule was viewed with some favor by the group.

The ccNSO suggests we turn our immediate attention to ICANN70, using ICANN68 Policy Forum as a foundation for the block schedule with a reduced program and more focused attention on session development to improve the overall meeting experience for participants.

The GAC supports one Public Forum for virtual meetings as proposed but does not support the overall block schedule due to its lack of flexibility for community groups to conduct sessions that meet their operational needs.

The GAC supports up to three plenary sessions per meeting, but only if there is strong support and substantial evidence of cross-community interest.

The GAC indicates a need for 13 to 15 GAC public sessions per meeting to allow for policy discussions, GAC Communiqué drafting time and room for consensus discussions to plan intersessional activities and strategies.

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The GAC identifies the need for distinction between cross-community policy development work and plenary sessions.

The GNSO also highlights the need to define “cross-community” in terms of “cross-community interaction and policy development work” in order to understand what criteria would determine if a proposed session is “cross-community.”

The SSAC points out that the proposal runs counter to some of the formal recommendations that came out of the recent review which recommended more outreach and collaboration with the community, including at ICANN meetings.

The SSAC indicates the need for time to conduct important sessions such as SSAC Public Meeting, DNSSEC Workshop, ccNSO Tech Day, and other bilateral meetings.

The ccNSO, GAC, GNSO, and SSAC oppose the recommendation to conduct 10-minute updates to the ICANN Board. As an alternative, the ccNSO and the GAC suggest written or pre-recorded updates, and the GAC notes that the ICANN Policy Outlook Report circulated before each public meeting would be a good vehicle by which to circulate this information.

## Time Zone

The ccNSO agrees with rotation of the time zone, but also suggests reducing the rotation to three time zones (i.e., NA/LAC, AF/EU, AP).

The ccNSO also suggests that sessions (i.e., plenary sessions) should be spread out so they do not all start at the same time throughout the week to allow more participation from across the globe.

The GAC notes that time zone will remain an inconvenience for participants from some regions during the virtual meetings, however the committee supports staff efforts to identify common times that present reasonable accommodations for as many potential attendees as possible and agree that the proposed rotation through ICANN’s five regions offers the best compromise.

## Regional Meetings

The ccNSO is unclear whether regional meetings will be held in conjunction with an ICANN meeting or take place at another time.

The ccNSO does not see value in adding ICANN-organized regional meetings to the existing structure of regional meetings currently organized by the ccTLD Regional Organizations (AFTLD, APTLD, CENTR, and LACTLD), which are already attended by the majority of the ccNSO membership and ICANN observers.

The ccNSO is concerned that ICANN regional meetings and the yearly spread of the overall ICANN Meeting may result in significant clashes with other events.

The GAC supports the concept of regional meetings as a reasonable means to begin the return to in-person meetings on a larger scale.

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The GAC would endorse financial support or other sponsorship (by ICANN or other parties) of supplemental regional meetings in conjunction with an otherwise in-person public meeting where community members could gather safely and follow all appropriate health protocols being observed in that region.

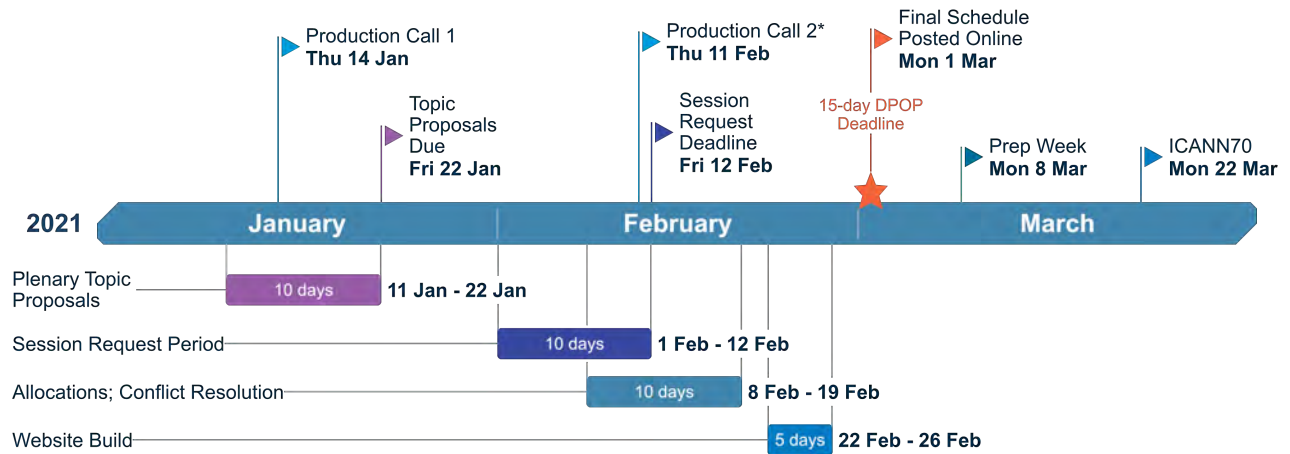
## Implementation

Most groups expressed an expectation that this process would focus on virtual meetings and felt that there was insufficient time to determine strategic changes for the overall meeting strategy. There is little support for implementation of any major changes for ICANN70.

For the longer-term goals, the ccNSO Council suggests we first look at the potential consequences and impact of the proposed meeting enhancements; and use the time to undertake a more detailed and community-focused impact analysis before taking a decision on changes to the strategy for future meetings.

# ICANN70 | Community Forum

## Schedule Production Timeline (8 weeks)



January 2021						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

February 2021						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

March 2021						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

## Time Zone

UTC-time	Cancún	Buenos Aires	Los Angeles	Istanbul/Nairobi	Singapore	Sydney
	EST, UTC -5	ART, UTC -3	PST, UTC -7	TRT/ EAT, UTC +3	SGT, UTC +8	SGT, UTC +8
14:00	9:00	11:00	7:00	17:00	22:00	1:00*
15:00	10:00	12:00	8:00	18:00	23:00	2:00*
16:00	11:00	13:00	9:00	19:00	0:00	3:00*
17:00	12:00	14:00	10:00	20:00	1:00*	4:00*
18:00	13:00	15:00	11:00	21:00	2:00*	5:00*
19:00	14:00	16:00	12:00	22:00	3:00*	6:00*
20:00	15:00	17:00	13:00	23:00	4:00*	7:00*
21:00	16:00	18:00	14:00	0:00	5:00*	8:00*
22:00	17:00	19:00	15:00	1:00*	6:00*	9:00*

## Revised Draft Block Schedule

Block	Dur	Cancún CST, UTC-5	Mon, 22 March	Tue, 23 March	Wed, 24 March	Thu, 25 March
1	60	09:00-10:00	Block 1	Block 1	Block 1	Block 1
Break	30	10:00-10:30	Networking TBD	Break	Break	Break
2	90	10:30-12:00	Block 2	Block 2	Block 2	Plenary (TBD)
Break	30	12:00-12:30	Break	Break	Break	Networking TBD
3	90	12:30-14:00	Block 3	Block 3	Block 3	Block 3
Break	30	14:00-14:30	Break	Break	Networking TBD	Break
4	90	14:30-16:00	Block 4	Plenary (TBD)	Block 4	Public Forum
Break	30	16:00-16:30	Break	Networking TBD	Break	Break
5	60	16:30-17:30	Block 5	Block 5	Block 5	Block 5
			<b>DAY 1</b>	<b>DAY 2</b>	<b>DAY 3</b>	<b>DAY 4</b>
			Tech Day DNSSEC Workshop	Board & SO/AC/SG/C Sessions (60min X 9)	Board & SO/AC/SG/C GAC Communiqué GNSO Council	Public Forum Wrap-ups

Draft Subject to Change

- ⦿ Community feedback supports a reduced, four-day meeting.
- ⦿ Plenary (2) and Public Forum to be non-conflicted. Other cross-community session to be scheduled as determined by the community.
- ⦿ Plenary sessions and virtual networking slots scheduled at varying times of day to provide more opportunity for participation from different time zones.
- ⦿ Reduced networking slots based on community feedback.
- ⦿ The proposed session for “Community Updates to the ICANN Board” is undesirable, however it is unclear whether this implies all SO/AC/SG/C meetings with the Board should be conducted during the official meeting.

### At-Large suggestions for ICANN70:

#### Plenary topics:

1. Registry Voluntary Commitments: Practicality and Enforceability
2. Applicant support: What does success look like?

#### Cross-community Policy Session:

- SubPro – interactive, cross-community session

#### Other Cross-Community Session:

- A session involving NextGen primarily, but also former Fellowship and ATLAS participants who currently work in constituencies across ICANN, to discuss the future of the internet from an ICANN policy perspective.

#### Other:

- LACRALO General Assembly may be held outside of ICANN70 to enable them to participate in policy, plenary, and networking sessions during the meeting.



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## At-Large Comments

**From:** Maureen Hilyard <maureen.hilyard@gmail.com>

**Date:** Thursday, December 17, 2020 at 3:42 PM

**To:** Tanzania King <tanzanica.king@icann.org>

**Subject:** [Ext] At-Large ideas for ICANN70

Hi Tanz

During our first ICANN70 session we had a bit of a brainstorming session about what we might do if we were to follow the proposed schedule - which was viewed with some favour by our group.. for lots of reasons.

But these were some of the ideas proposed:

### **Networking sessions:**

More information is needed about the 8 networking sessions.

Networking lots are opportunities and should be utilized. Various SOACs/SGs/RALOs may focus on a session but not all.

Networking should be cross-community - not internal to one community.

Networking sessions should be shorter and fewer.

Networking sessions could be quick intros to various groups.

Virtual booth format for one networking session.

At-Large would see interpretation as important during some networking sessions - either live or machine.

At least one ICANN-organized entertainment (during the later slots) - perhaps one cultural (a tour).

LACRALO could organize one social/cultural event as part of their virtual General Assembly.

Interpretation for all sessions, including any prep week/leadup activities. (Perhaps supplement human interpreters with machine translation?)

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### **Cross community policy sessions:**

Sessions should be Inclusive and cross-community.

One session on SubPro - interactive.

Has ICANN had a look at Google Jamboard?

Use of You tube streaming and breakout rooms

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Interpretation for all sessions, including any prep week/leadup activities. (Perhaps supplement human interpreters with machine translation?)

RTT for all sessions (EN, FR and ES?)

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**Plenary topic suggestions:**

1. Registry Voluntary Commitments: Practicality and Enforceability
  2. Applicant support: What does success look like?
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Additionally:

The LACRALO GA has currently been assigned to during the ICANN meeting, but it will be discussed by the group that that may take their GA outside of the actual ICANN meeting schedule so that they don't miss out on any of the policy, plenary and networking sessions.

Matthias H, has suggested a session concept involving NextGen primarily, but also including former Fellowship and ATLAS participants who currently work in constituencies from across ICANN, to discuss the future of the internet from an ICANN policy perspective. Would this be appropriate for a cross community policy session??

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## ccNSO Council comments on the Recommended Strategic Changes for Future ICANN Public Meetings

The ccNSO Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on ICANN's Recommended Strategic Changes for Future meetings. In preparing this response, the ccNSO Council worked closely with the ccNSO Meeting Programme Committee (MPC) and sought direct input from the ccTLD community by email and by conducting two interactive webinar sessions. The summarized results of the consultations are included as Annex A to this note.

We appreciate and support the effort of the ICANN Board to seek community input to the strategy of progressively returning from fully virtual meetings to face-to-face meetings. We also strongly support the effort to make virtual meetings more effective. However, we also have strong reservations about applying this strategy prematurely to ICANN70.

As a result of our internal discussion and consultations, we urge ICANN to separate the short-term goal of organizing ICANN70 from the longer-term strategic considerations and goals. For the short term, we urge ICANN to set the block schedule and other parameters for the ICANN70 meeting as soon as possible. We strongly advise to use and start the block schedule based on the ICANN68 (KL meeting) meeting format. We recognize that ICANN68 was a Policy Forum and ICANN70 will be a Community Forum; however, in our view, the fact that both will (most likely) be 100% virtual is more important. We also urge the community to restrain themselves and limit the number of sessions they intend to organize, and to prepare these sessions properly to enhance the experience of the audience.

For the longer-term goals, we suggest to first look at the potential consequences and impact of the proposed meeting enhancements and use the time to undertake a more detailed and community focused impact analysis, before taking a decision on future meetings and future meeting strategy.

In this feedback note we will focus first on our major reservations with respect to the short term, immediate impact on ICANN70 and then focus on the longer-term aspects.

### Short-Term Implications

If we interpret the community consultation document correctly, the recommendations in the document will be launched for implementation for the ICANN70 Community Forum in March 2021, subject to Board approval. As a result of this approach, we note that the ccNSO preparations for ICANN70 are unnecessarily frustrated and strained.

- To serve the ccNSO and broader community, the ccNSO meeting program and related sessions are published well before (at a minimum two months) the meeting, whether this is an in-person or virtual meeting during which the ccNSO is organizing sessions. The reason is to allow people to schedule their attendance in time, without too much interference into their day jobs. It has been our experience that this is even more important when participating remotely. We realize that for ICANN70 it might not be possible; however, ICANN68 and 69 have proven that timely availability of schedules and meeting agendas is feasible.

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- It is the experience of the ccNSO that organizing virtual meetings requires a lot more preparation time and effort. Several preparatory meetings are needed on top of the usual work of identifying topics, defining the goal and objective of the sessions including, but not limited to, identifying the intended audience, finding presenters, moderators, etc. However, specifically scheduling ccTLD (related) sessions only makes sense if the high-level block-schedule and related parameters are known in advance.
  - Related, the MPC started its preparations for ICANN70 on Friday 23 October 2020, as usual one day after closure of the previous meeting to do a review of the previous meeting. Since then, the MPC has held several calls to prepare for ICANN70, but as the block-schedule of ICANN70 and other logistical parameters are up in the air awaiting decisions from the Board and ICANN Org, the effective time to define, organize and prepare the meeting has been reduced from 18 to 8 weeks. Instead of the intended reduction of volunteer fatigue and burnout the short-term impact is quite the opposite.

With respect to the short-term impact of the proposed enhancements we make the following observations:

- ***Continue the three-meeting schedule annually but increase concentrated time for cross-community policy work.***

The impact of this enhancement is unclear. The ccNSO policy work is open to all who want to participate or observe the proceedings. We appreciate that in the ICANN environment this may be more in the context of GNSO originating policy efforts, but we want to warn against imposing attendance of sessions on attendees with exclusion of ability to attend a session which is more of interest to them. As an alternative, we propose that sessions targeted at the same audience should not be scheduled at the same time. For example, Tech Day and a session on Sub-pro could very well be organized in parallel.

- ***Reduce session overlap and conflicts to allow more opportunity for community-wide participation.***

Again, it is the view of the ccNSO that overlap, and conflicts of sessions targeted at the same audience should be avoided. This relates clearly to the next point as well.

- ***Determine goals and overall meeting objectives early in the planning process to facilitate more effective engagement and progress during the meetings.***

The ccNSO fully supports this enhancement and strongly suggests taking the intended audience of the session into consideration as well. As mentioned above, the preparation time for sessions has been reduced substantially due to the decision-making process regarding ICANN70.

- ***Increase time for networking and develop better tools to support networking opportunities during virtual meetings.***

The ccNSO supports increasing network opportunities, however, for both intra- and interstakeholder groups and not at the expense of excluding other kinds of sessions.

- ***Increase visual/video/graphic elements and encourage use of video cameras by all participants.***

We support this enhancement as long as it does not make the experience of participants deteriorate, especially those on lower bandwidth Internet connections.

- ***Add trained session facilitators.***

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As our experience has shown, the role of facilitators is less critical than due preparation of a session. This is particularly the case if a session is intended to be interactive and having a dialogue between panelists and/or with the audience. As noted before, preparation time more than doubles in a completely virtual and remote environment. Adding trained (staff) facilitators only makes sense if they participate during the preparation.

- ***When virtual, reduce the meeting length (fewer days/fewer hours per day) to prevent volunteer burnout.***

The ccNSO agrees with this enhancement. The vast majority of the people who participated in the consultations in preparation of this note prefer the ICANN68 meeting format. From a

ccTLD perspective that meeting was limited in duration and included a limited set of ccTLD relevant sessions.

- ***Rotate the time zone for meetings among ICANN's five geographic regions.***

The ccNSO, being a truly global constituency, concurs with a rotation basis. However, for the short term it will most likely have no impact. We also wonder whether reducing the number of time zones to 3 (i.e., NA/LAC, AF/EU, AP) and rotate accordingly in the virtual environment might be equitable.

- ***One session for SO/AC updates to the Board.***

The way we understand this proposal, it is intended to replace the bilateral meeting between the Board and a community group, such as the ccNSO. We note that such an approach has already been tested before (at the Hyderabad meeting) and not continued. We believe that the same reasons not to continue such a session are still valid. If such a session were to be pursued, it may be worth to pre-record the updates.

## Long-Term Implications

With respect to the proposed enhancement of ICANN public meetings, the ccNSO strongly supports the development and use of a unified calendar. Such a tool adds to transparency and understanding of all the work the SOs and ACs undertake. In our view, such an instrument adds value, independently of the meeting strategy. However, we want to caution against the potential workload of maintaining such a calendar.

With respect to the proposal to spread SO/AC work sessions throughout the year, we would like to understand the implications and impact before any further steps are taken. Currently, ccNSO WGs do meet and conduct their business throughout the year. The ccNSO also undertakes other activities throughout the year such as conducting topical meetings and webinars (for example, the very recent consultation on the meeting strategy paper). However, if the implication is that no ccTLD related meetings are organized during ICANN meetings, the ccNSO strongly opposes such an approach. Feedback we have heard from ccTLD managers is that ccTLD related sessions on the schedule are the reason for them to attend an ICANN meeting (either in person or remotely). It offers them the opportunity to meet and contact their peers from other regions. In addition, it was noted that up and until the proposed calendar is functional, the proposal would increase, rather than decrease, conflicts.

Related, and as also noted during the consultation, ICANN is not the only environment where the duration of meetings is extended, and the number of sessions is prohibitively high to attend.

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Already, ccTLD related participants find that ICANN and other meetings are back-to-back and therefore they find themselves in a position that they cannot attend all relevant sessions at ICANN and other meetings, as this would be at the detriment of their primary responsibilities. We believe that with spreading the number of meetings and sessions this unwanted side-effect will increase, and as a result, at least for some ccTLD managers, ICANN and ccNSO meetings would become non-attendable.

With respect to the suggestion for Regional face-to face meetings, the ccNSO community would first like to understand what is intended. Will these regional meetings be held in conjunction with an ICANN meeting? Are they foreseen to take place at another time? We note that ccTLDs have regional meetings organized by the ccTLD Regional Organisations (AFTLD, APTLD, CENTR, and LACTLD), Those meetings are attended by the majority of the ccNSO membership and ICANN observers for that matter. It is unclear to us how ICANN's regional meetings would add value. In addition, we are of the opinion that the unwarranted side-effect with respect to spreading the meeting will be reinforced by ICANN organizing regional meetings.

On behalf of the ccNSO Council,

Katrina Sataki

Chair

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## Annex A: Consultation Results

The MPC Chair hosted two consultation sessions via Zoom, aimed at collecting the ccTLD community's feedback regarding [ICANN org's recommended strategic changes for future ICANN Public Meetings](#) and its impact on the ccNSO schedule. During the consultation sessions, feedback was sought on both the short-term impact on the ccNSO (ICANN70), and the long-term impact (post-ICANN70 meetings).

There were two options to participate, on 15 and 16 December 2020, respectively. A recording has been made available [here](#).

The topic has also been discussed by the ccNSO Meeting Programme Committee (MPC) during its 10 December meeting, and by the ccNSO Council during its 17 December meeting. Deadline for comments by the ccTLD Community is 17 December 2020. The ccNSO will submit its consolidated feedback to ICANN org on 18 December

Highlights of the input received via the ccTLD community consultation webinars:

- Timely planning, with a clear goal setting of the sessions is a must.
- The block schedule should become available early in the planning process. 2 months ahead of the meeting is an absolute minimum.
- Preference for a short ICANN public meeting (1 week, similar to ICANN68), with a limited number of sessions, including ccNSO sessions
- The ccNSO sessions should be included on the ICANN public schedule, to allow for cross-community interaction, to showcase the work of the ccNSO, to recognize its relevance, and to maintain the value of ICANN and its Public Meetings for ccTLDs.
- A meaningful interaction by the ccNSO with the full ICANN Board is important. The proposed SO/AC update session, with limited time for each SO/AC, could easily be converted into a written update.
- Out of all the proposed enhancements proposed by ICANN org - (1) SO/AC work sessions and intersessional meetings spread throughout the year; (2) Unified online calendar with all SO/AC work sessions and intersessional meetings; (3) Enhanced networking opportunities and tools; (4) Trained staff facilitators for interactive sessions during the public meetings; (5) Revised proposed meeting structure; (6) Rotate meetings across 5 time zones; (7) Regional Meetings – the unified calendar was welcomed the most. The ccTLDs mentioned that SO/AC work is happening already in between ICANN meetings, including ccNSO policy work. The unified calendar would increase the transparency around the work done by the various SO/ACs. This enhancement is not directly related to the public meeting strategy.
- Effectively, there are 3 major time zone blocks: NA & LAC | AF & EU | AP. A rotation among these blocks at a minimum seems fair. Rotation among the 5 geographic zones is accepted. One should strive to equally inconvenience all and at the same time to find time slots that cause least pain for all. When scheduling sessions, even within a limited block schedule, try to spread them, to allow for participation from across the globe. (e.g., not all plenary sessions starting at the same time, throughout the ICANN week(s))

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- It is unclear what the involvement of trained staff facilitators would mean for the role of volunteers from the ccNSO.
  - Online networking cannot replace face-to-face networking. Limited enthusiasm from the ccTLD community regarding the proposed enhancements and the networking slots on the proposed ICANN block schedule



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## **Governmental Advisory Committee Comments Regarding Community Consultation on ICANN Public Meetings: *Recommended Strategic Changes for Future Meetings***

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### **Introduction**

As described in a recent document prepared by ICANN org staff, a number of ICANN org proposals have been made regarding particular ICANN public meeting enhancements - as interpreted by analysis of recent community survey responses regarding the future of ICANN public meetings.

The proposals include a range of potential public meeting changes including time-shifting some community (SO/AC) meeting sessions from the core public meeting week to be potentially spread throughout the calendar year, development of a unified community event/meeting calendar and enhanced working opportunities and tools for ICANN community groups.

Additional proposals are directed toward the structure of future meetings, time zone considerations based on a planned rotation among ICANN regions, the use of regional face to face meetings and other specific implementation recommendations relating to a phased return to face to face public meetings.

The comments offered by the GAC in this document attempt to address each element of the proposals, in turn. For organizational purposes, the various proposals from ICANN org have been numbered and summarized so that the GAC comments can be easily identified.

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## General GAC Comments

The GAC appreciates the intentions of ICANN org to continue to review and assess its public meeting capabilities to best serve the various community groups and to help them operate efficiently and effectively. As presented, the proposals appear to offer some potentially positive improvements for how ICANN public meetings can be organized, but any changes will need to preserve substantial flexibility for community groups to conduct sessions in conjunction with public meetings that meet their operational needs.

The GAC has worked very hard over the last nine months to evolve its virtual meeting program to a framework that balances time, attention and workload demands into a discrete period. The proposals seem to head in a different direction, suggesting that the committee now embark on a new set of expectations with few attending benefits. If implemented, the proposals would serve to have the GAC begin that adjustment process all over again.

The fundamental concern the GAC perceives from the combined proposals is the effect of shrinking the current GAC meeting structure to a compact four-day period that provides only limited opportunities for substantive internal and cross community opportunities - instead, providing a series of more superficial production periods that will make it difficult to produce progress on issues of importance to governments. At a time when Board-approved Work Stream 2 Accountability and ATRT3 recommendations demand more accountability and transparency from community groups, the proposed meeting structure would challenge the GAC, and likely other communities, to maintain some hard-won operational efficiencies achieved over the last nine months of virtual meetings.

There is certainly room for improvements in the public meeting structure and implementation, but the GAC supports evolutionary changes and not revolutionary ones.

## Proposed Enhancements to ICANN Public Meetings Based on Perceived Community Recommendations

### ICANN org Recommendation 1 - Rescheduling Community Sessions Away From Public Meetings:

ICANN org staff recommends that SO/AC work sessions and intersessional meetings be spread throughout the year to make more efficient use of time. As justification for the proposal the staff suggests that such a change would:

- Reduce stress on the schedule and prevent volunteer burnout during the public meetings.
- Eliminate session conflicts and allows public meetings to focus on cross-community interaction and policy development work.
- Create more flexibility to schedule other sessions throughout the year in preferred time zones.

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### **GAC Reaction 1:**

For all their perceived flaws, ICANN public meetings provide the GAC with a unique opportunity to bring Members and Observers together in a discrete high profile focused time period three times a year to conduct targeted discussions, learn issues and topic details and build consensus. ICANN public meetings provide a valuable “cross-roads” opportunity for all communities, including governments, to gather and discuss matters of common interest. Government representatives garner valuable insights by meeting together and by interacting with members of other communities that make up the ICANN ecosystem.

The suggestion to limit or eliminate time blocks available for community sessions and spread them throughout the year fails to appreciate that the GAC already manages a very active intersessional calendar populated by GAC leadership and working group meetings as well as a full calendar of cross community PDP work. The new proposals would dilute the GAC’s focused public meeting efforts without any demonstrable improvements intersessionally.

The proposals would potentially take away the current benefits of focused government attention on ICANN work and cause the GAC to try to squeeze more and less-well-attended intersessional meetings into an already busy calendar. Ironically, the dilution of the collective GAC-wide meeting focus three times a year would actually only “shift” the perceived attendee “burn out” to other times of the year (or the whole year) rather than have community members focusing their energies on a discrete period of time that is then “over” before the cycle begins again.

GAC members are able to manage the annual committee workload chiefly because they can focus and leverage their week-long GAC public meeting experience. Most government representatives manage many other policy, diplomatic and internal government matters as part of their portfolios. The dedicated week-long meeting format gives them the opportunity to manage their collective calendars and join to focus on priority matters that result in a consensus Communiqué document.

During the virtual environment in 2020, the GAC has actually managed to increase its meeting attendance. Proposals to change an approach that seems to be working appear to be unnecessary and counter-productive.

The GAC hopes to solidify its productivity and attendance gains and maintain an effective working program of 4 to 5 focused days of meetings with time availability for about 15 scheduled sessions. If this does not turn out to be possible, the GAC hopes that it might be able to time-shift its sessions out of the core meeting week, but only by a week or two before or after the core meeting week, all focused in one week.

### ICANN org Recommendation 2 - Unified Online Calendar

Development of a unified online calendar for the community to populate with all SO/AC work sessions and intersessional meetings to provide greater opportunity for community participation. This recommendation includes continued technical support for virtual participation of select sessions throughout the year.

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### ***GAC Reaction 2:***

A unified online calendar showing a variety of community meetings and activities throughout the year would be a valuable information and collaboration tool for all stakeholders in the ICANN community. The GAC supports development of this proposal and would support it by sharing calendar information about public GAC activities to increase opportunities for cross community understanding and collaboration. This proposal is not necessarily dependent on any public meeting proposals.

#### ICANN org Recommendation 3 - Enhanced Networking Opportunities:

ICANN org recommends that enhanced networking opportunities and tools be offered during ICANN Public Meetings. These enhancements would include non-conflicted networking sessions following each plenary session to allow time for further community discussion on important topics; ability to engage in discussion boards directly from session webpages and ability to request and schedule one-on-one meetings with all publicly registered attendees.

### ***GAC Reaction 3:***

While networking can be a valuable tool for meeting participants, it is not entirely clear that all members of the community define the term the same in a “virtual” context. The GAC welcomes various experiments and pilot efforts to determine additional ways for community members to “network” in a virtual meeting environment. It is not clear that a networking session after EVERY substantive public meeting session is needed. Discussion boards and potential one on one meetings are novel ideas that could be attempted as pilot efforts.

The GAC does not support devoting nearly a third of the meeting block schedule (6 hours out of 18.5 hours) to networking events at the expense of substantive community meeting or drafting time. Perhaps one networking session could be held each day as an initial pilot effort.

#### ICANN org Recommendation 4 - Trained Staff Facilitators:

ICANN org staff proposes the availability of trained staff facilitators for interactive sessions during the public meetings.

### ***GAC Reaction 4:***

GAC public sessions have operated quite smoothly with committee members, GAC leadership and working group chairs moderating various sessions. Generally, cross community sessions have already had professional staff member or community moderators in place to organize and moderate sessions where appropriate. An additional option of making trained facilitators available for certain sessions is potentially a good option to have available for certain sessions.

## Proposals for Structure of ICANN Public Meetings

Draft Block Schedule				DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4
Block	Dur	UTC	CST (UTC-6)	Mon 22 March	Tue 23 March	Wed 24 March	Thu 25 March
1	90	16:00-17:30	10:00-11:30	SO/AC Updates	Cross-Community Policy Work	Cross-Community Policy Work	Cross-Community Policy Work
2	45	17:30-18:15	11:30-12:15	Networking 1	Networking 1	Networking 1	Networking 1
3	90	18:15-19:45	12:15-13:45	Plenary Session	Plenary Session	Plenary Session	Public Forum
4	45	19:45-21:00	13:45-15:00	Networking 2	Networking 2	Networking 2	Networking 2

Note: ICANN70 Community Forum shown above is for illustrative purposes.

### ICANN org Recommendation 5:

Each Public Meeting would feature the following sessions:

- a. One session for SO/AC Updates to the ICANN Board - with an opportunity for each SO/AC to brief the ICANN Board and community on current work - 10 minutes per group (9 total groups)

### **GAC Reaction 5(a):**

The joint Board-GAC meeting is an important session that has been held at every in-person and virtual ICANN public meeting and it should be retained in the core meeting schedule. The meeting provides an important communications vehicle for both bodies, is a highly attended session of interest for the whole community and it has been acknowledged as an important event by a number of community accountability and transparency reviews.

The GAC does not believe that the joint meeting should be replaced by an alternative 10-minute update from the committee that can be done by email.

Some GAC members would value a collection of community updates in written form. It has been suggested that the ICANN Policy Outlook Report circulated before each public meeting would be a good vehicle by which to circulate this information.

- b. Three sessions for Cross-Community Policy Development Work

### **GAC Reaction 5(b):**

The distinction between cross-community policy development work and plenary sessions is not particularly clear in the proposal document. If “cross-community policy development work” means participation in ongoing GNSO or ccNSO work efforts where the meeting session furthers that work, then the GAC would be supportive as GAC members find cross-community work efforts to be quite productive and informative.

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- c. Three plenary sessions designed to be interactive and inclusive

***GAC Reaction 5(c):***

The distinction between cross-community policy development work and plenary sessions is not particularly clear in the proposal document. If “plenary” sessions are defined as the current practice of community members gathering to discuss common topics of interest, then the GAC is supportive of holding up to a maximum of three of this type of sessions per public meeting. At past public meetings GAC members have been aware of criticisms that some plenary sessions do not add value to what is discussed in actual policy-development sessions. Considering how scarce time is in the new proposed block schedule, such sessions should be only held if there is strong support and substantial evidence of cross-community interest. Otherwise those slots should be left open for policy work sessions or internal SO/AC work.

- d. A Public Forum for community comment and Board response

***GAC Reaction 5(d):***

Public Forums are a fundamental part of the ICANN Meeting DNA. It is reasonable to limit the number of public forums to one per week in a virtual environment.

***General GAC reaction to all four Recommendation 5 proposals:***

The GAC appreciates the recognition that the virtual environment creates its own unique stressors for meeting attendees. The GAC learned over its experiences with ICANN67, 68 and 69 that fewer targeted sessions devoted to substantive policy topics and adequate Communique drafting time were important for the committee in a virtual environment. A substantial majority (83%) of GAC survey respondents indicated that the ICANN69 schedule presented an appropriate number of sessions for the GAC. This represents an apparent comfort zone of about 13 to 15 GAC public sessions per meeting to allow for substantive policy discussions, adequate GAC Communique drafting time and room for consensus discussions that help the committee plan intersessional activities and strategies. Perhaps only the GAC has the need for this amount of time during the meeting week. A reasonable accommodation might be to extend three of the four days by one or two work block sessions to permit these sessions to be scheduled by individual communities, if necessary.

**Meeting Time Zones Proposal**

ICANN org Recommendation 6 - Rotating Time Zones:

ICANN org staff noted that for virtual ICANN public meetings, community survey responses indicate a preference to rotate the time zone through ICANN’s five geographic regions and therefore future meeting schedules will be planned during general working hours of the assigned region for each meeting.

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### **GAC Reaction 6:**

The GAC notes that it is unfortunate that a single time-zone approach is not possible for all community participants around the world. Recognizing this reality, the committee supports staff efforts to identify common times that present reasonable accommodations for as many potential attendees as possible but notes that with a global community reach, participants from some region will always experience the inconvenience for a particular meeting. The rotation system seems to offer the best compromise.

### **Proposals Regarding Regional Face-to-Face Meetings**

Where pandemic conditions allow, ICANN org proposes the following:

ICANN org Recommendation 7 - Regional meetings to be held on specific topics or issues to support regional/sectional community engagement and networking opportunities

### **GAC Reaction 7:**

Prior to the global pandemic, the GAC leveraged regional community and Internet industry meetings for capacity building and networking opportunities. The GAC supports this concept as a reasonable means to begin the return to in-person meetings on a larger scale.

ICANN org Recommendation 8 - Regional hub meetings to be held during Virtual ICANN Meetings

### **GAC Reaction 8:**

Some GAC Members recall past ICANN public meetings where local or regional conditions prevented some community members from traveling to and attending the public meetings in-person. It is recalled that during those meetings, local/regional hub meetings were hosted by various members of the multistakeholder community. The GAC would endorse financial support or other sponsorship (by ICANN or other parties) of these supplemental regional meetings in conjunction with an otherwise in-person public meeting where community members could gather safely and follow all appropriate health protocols being observed in that region.

### **Other Implementation Proposals for Return of In-Person Meetings**

ICANN org also recommends that the strategic changes proposed for ICANN Public Meetings also apply to all phases outlined in an additional Draft Proposal for Phased Return to Face-to-Face Meetings (i.e., proposed Phase 0 through Phase 3) including:

ICANN org Recommendation 9:

During Phase 2, the schedule will include the sessions outlined in Phase 0 but held in person at the meeting venue.

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***GAC Reaction 9:***

The GAC agrees that whatever proposed block schedule is finally agreed to, it can be used as a productive initial template to begin organizing an in-person event. For attendee planning, this would apply particularly to the appropriate number of calendar days needed for the meeting.

ICANN org Recommendation 10:

Face-to-face SO/AC-specific working sessions and additional cross-community sessions will be added to the schedule as requested.

***GAC Reaction 10:***

As already indicated in its more general responses to the ICANN org proposals, the GAC expects to ask for additional sessions both at in-person and further virtual meetings to enable it to conduct its necessary business in conjunction with ICANN public meetings.

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## GNSO COMMENTS

**From:** Steve Chan <steve.chan@icann.org>  
**Date:** Friday, December 18, 2020 at 12:07 PM  
**To:** Tanzanica King <tanzanica.king@icann.org>  
**Cc:** Mary Wong <mary.wong@icann.org>, <philippe.fouquart@orange.com>  
**Subject:** Consolidated GNSO Feedback to the Community Consultation on ICANN Public Meetings: Recommended Strategic Changes for Future Meetings

Dear Tanzanica,

On behalf of Philippe Fouquart and in turn, on behalf of the SG/C leaders as well, please see bulleted feedback garnered in their review of the Community Consultation on ICANN Public Meetings: Recommended Strategic Changes for Future Meetings. If you have any questions, concerns, or prefer feedback be sent in a more formal manner, please let us know.

Best,

Steve

- There was surprise from many that the results of the survey were seemingly extrapolated to influence the overall and ongoing meetings strategy, not just virtual ICANN Public Meetings.
- While it seemed that at least most of the SG/C/Council leaders that took part in the call are supportive of the principles under “Proposed Enhancements to ICANN Public Meetings Based on Community Recommendations,” there are concerns about the implications for the virtual environment, but also and mainly when the meetings return to face-to-face.
  - In particular, building GNSO SG/C communities and conducting/advancing work that is both specific to them or common to the GNSO or the Community is sometimes only possible in face-to-face meetings, and that opportunity must not be lost when we return to this format of meetings. The paper faithfully reflects the results of a survey and it is quite likely that what was intended by “increased networking opportunities” in that virtual context was also referring to SG/C specific engagement and work: the ability to network (engage face-to-face) both within our own constituencies and with the broader community are equally important.
- Specifically, there are concerns about the “focus on cross-community interaction and policy development work,” as it is unclear what the definition of cross-community means in this context. To that end, the GNSO welcomes further clarity on what criteria may be used to determine if a proposed session is adequately cross-community. For example, much of the GNSO policy development is of importance across the community, but does it meet the threshold to be considered “cross-community policy work” and included in the official ICANN meeting schedule (or perhaps it will depend upon the specific PDP and set of circumstances)?

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- Participants appreciated that there is a focus on “Networking” during ICANN Public Meetings, which is indeed just as important for virtual as for F2F meetings but are unsure how that effectively translates to a virtual setting.
    - Examples of typical sessions with a component of networking include:
      - SG/C open meetings where the purpose is not strictly networking, but it is indeed an important component of the session (in addition to simply conducting SG/C business, performing outreach, and information sharing, all of which can be construed as cross-community in nature). SG/C open meetings in a face-to-face setting are well positioned to meet those multiple goals, many of which can be considered aspects of networking.
      - Some slots for either internal SG or activities dedicated to newcomers/fellows/next gen as meetings have been a place for SG/Cs to showcase their groups and have new members joining in. Continuous community engagement has become an even more acute challenge in a virtual environment.
        - Therefore, the SG/C/Council leaders welcome additional clarity on what the numerous blocks committed to Networking will look like in practice for ICANN70, as currently envisioned.
        - One idea could be parsing “networking” into various components: Internal (within a group), networking, outreach across groups with the option of break out rooms/designated areas on the schedule in order encourage interaction between various groups.
    - Specifically, for the virtual format, at least most on the call believe it is possible to hold SG/C/Council meetings outside of the specific time allocations for ICANN70, although not far from the ICANN week (e.g., the week after or before).
    - However, if this were to serve as the trend after the return to face-to-face meetings (i.e., forcing member meetings, open meetings, and Council meetings off the ICANN meeting schedule), there will likely be substantial opposition from across the community. More generally, there are some concerns that changes made for ICANN70 and potentially future virtual meetings may establish a precedent for the return to face-to-face meetings.
      - There was general consensus for saying that there was strong benefits in holding SG/C/Council meetings during the face-to-face meetings.
      - Given the tight timeframe for input, there was wide agreement that there is inadequate time and community consultation to establish an ongoing meetings strategy, especially one that would also be applicable to face-to-face meetings.
    - One specific element of the proposal, the single session for SO/AC updates to the ICANN Board, met wide skepticism. Allocating only 10 minutes per group leaves no time for interaction and dialogue, which seemingly makes this a poor use of time.

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## SSAC COMMENTS

From: Rod Rasmussen <rod@rodrasmussen.com>

Date: Friday, December 18, 2020 at 5:17 PM

To: Tanzania King <tanzanica.king@icann.org>

Cc: Steve Sheng <steve.sheng@icann.org>, Kathy Schnitt <kathy.schnitt@icann.org>

Subject: [Ext] Re: [soac-chairs] Updated Paper on Recommended Strategic Changes to Future ICANN Public Meetings

Hi Tanzania,

Here are some thoughts on the proposed strategic changes to future ICANN public meetings from the SSAC. We appreciate the ongoing dialogue amongst the community and the ICANN Org on how to make our meetings more effective both during the pandemic and beyond. This input largely reflects the discussions of the SSAC Admin Committee with some inputs from our membership, but as you may have surmised from the few responses to the original survey, the SSAC membership has a wide range of views on the topics raised.

Our immediate response is focused on the short-term proposed changes for the virtual ICANN70 meeting, as those raised significant concern and are most time constrained. We would appreciate clarifications and further dialogue on this. Longer-term changes can be discussed with the luxury of time, but we have a few thoughts as inputs to that process below.

Firstly, we greatly appreciate the effort to lessen the marathon experience of the last ICANN meeting (3 weeks!) and to reduce conflicted sessions. However, we are quite concerned after studying this proposal more closely, that there is now a proposal for a one-week only meeting with a completely non-conflicted schedule that consists of a total of just 8 sessions and 8 networking events in 5-hour windows per day. That seems to severely constrain the normally wide-ranging meetings we have to a very tiny window that precludes the ability for cross-collaboration in some of our normal fora. We are particularly concerned that long-standing technical events and chances for collaboration and outreach will be curtailed or abandoned by this approach.

Specifically, the following events would not appear or be supported as part of ICANN70:

- The public SSAC meeting - our chance to update the community on our activities, take questions, hear about new items we may want to explore, and undertake outreach for potential new members.
- The DNSSEC Workshop - a continuous marker for a strategic goal for ICANN - the optics of not supporting this would be very poor, especially in the eyes of the technical community.
- ccNSO Tech Day - again, the optics of not supporting this would be very poor, especially in the eyes of the technical community.
- No opportunity to schedule supported bi-lateral meetings with translation support - typically we have that for a bi-lat with the ALAC for instance

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- Board interaction limited to 10 minutes per SO/AC in a 90-minute marathon

Our understanding is that any meetings/sessions/etc. beyond those on the main schedule will not be supported by the meetings team (no translation, live transcription, etc.), will not appear on the public agenda, and are being discouraged. Holding bilateral meetings or interacting with the Board, or other items would have to be done separately and not considered part of ICANN70.

If these assumptions are correct, then the SSAC would strongly object to cutting the public SSAC meeting, the DNSSEC Workshop, and ccNSO Tech Day. Hopefully, this is either a misinterpretation on our part, or something we can rectify. We would also be very disappointed not to be able to have translation support for potential open bilateral meetings where appropriate (likely just with ALAC in our case but noting that other SO/ACs have greater needs). We would also like to see a proposal for continuing our series of in-depth discussions with the Board on a regular basis if that is not going to occur during ICANN meetings.

While we truly appreciate the desire to focus the meeting on essential cross-community sessions, there are several outreach and technical discussions that are being jettisoned by this current approach. We are also concerned that the 90 minute “SO/AC-Board Parade” (my description) will not be very useful. Moving many of the bilateral meetings that do not require extra support makes sense and scheduling our time to confer with the Board where they are not overwhelmed with other work may also be prudent. However, there are some things that really make sense to get done as part of the formal meeting from a comms/outreach perspective or where robust translation is highly desirable.

For the longer-term outlook, here are a few things to consider as inputs for further discussions:

The main thrust of this proposal seems to be to limit the focus of the ICANN meetings to broad cross-community meetings. Broad cross-community meetings can be viewed as a layer that exists atop two other key layers. The bottom layer is the work done within each SO or AC. The middle layer are the bilateral interactions between pairs or groups of SOs/ACs. This proposal removes support for these two fundamental layers. These layers are essential to have throughout the year. If they are removed from the ICANN meetings, their functions will have to be replaced by some other means. Perhaps each SO and AC will have to create its own set of meetings.

The proposal runs counter to some of the formal recommendations that came out of the Bylaws-mandated SSAC review that we recently completed. That review specifically recommended more outreach and collaboration with the community, including at ICANN meetings. Other organizational reviews have provided similar recommendations.

The thrice-yearly ICANN meetings are usually the only time for community members to interact with ICANN staff across the organization. The proposal reduces opportunities for that.

A comment from one of our members that offers some important perspectives:

*“SO/AC work sessions and intersessional meetings spread throughout the year to make more efficient use of time.” This means having more online meetings away from the thrice-yearly ICANN meetings. First, in-person meetings with our colleagues (inside and outside of SSAC) are always better, and the thrice-yearly meetings are the only opportunity for that. Second, the proposal just offloads more work onto volunteers. I would rather do concentrated work for five days at an ICANN meeting, rather than become obligated to more meetings throughout the*

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*year. It will be like being pecked to death. The proposal adds more load to an already overloaded volunteer corps. The doc is worried about “volunteer burnout during the public meetings” but burnout from more meetings held more often is certainly worse.”*

Thank you again for all the hard work that you and the entire ICANN team is doing to support the community and we look forward to continuing these important discussions.

Cheers,

Rod Rasmussen  
SSAC