
YESIM SAGLAM:

Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening to everyone. Welcome to the APRALO Policy Forum Call taking place on Thursday 12th of January 2023 at 06:00 UTC. On our call today we have Shreedeep Rayamajhi, Laxmi Prasad Yadav, Holly Raiche, Maureen Hilyard, Jahangir Hossain, Udeep Baral, Satish Babu, Gunela Astbrink, Gopal Tadepalli, Nabeel Yasin, Namra Naseer, and Samik Kharel. We have received apologies from Winthrop Yu, Ali AlMeshal, and Amrita Choudhury.

And from the staff side, we have Gisella Gruber and myself, Yesim Saglam, present on today's call. I will also be doing call management. Before we get started, just a kind reminder to please state your name before speaking for transcription purposes. And with this, I would like to leave the floor over to Shreedeep first for the introduction. Thank you very much. Over to you, Shreedeep.

SHREDEEP RAYAMAJHI:

Thank you, Yesim. Welcome to the second call of the APRALO Policy Forum. And today we have Holly. Holly will be the updater of the ICANN operational budget. So, Holly, you have the floor, please go ahead.

HOLLY RAICHE:

Okay, thank you very much. This is really an introduction to something that perhaps doesn't get enough discussion. But I had a discussion with Amrita in saying part of what's really important for a policy forum is, there are things you can do with assistance from ICANN budget money. And you need to understand what funding is there, how you actually comment, and how you can make use of it.

Now, there are really two parts to this presentation. The first is actually looking at the funds themselves, what they can be used for, who can apply, and the sorts of criteria that will be used. The second is the budget. Every year, of course, ICANN does a budget and it always has an impact on all OSCs, including ALAC.

In the past, we've spent a lot of time commenting largely on the figures, but what I would like to do is bring in some discussion on the budget as it relates to the activities that are of importance to ALAC and to RALOs. And we have not had the kind of discussion and input before or very much on the budget. So this is really a call for asking people to read what is not necessarily an easy read, but I'll just run through what's important to read.

So with that brief introduction, let me start with the first part of the discussion, which is the funds that are available to the RALOs and ALAC for activities, and funds from ICANN. Just a reminder, there is an overall budget of \$540 million that is available to ICANN. It is used for a range of things.

Now, the top bit is just the IANA. This is a PTI, the Public Technical Identifiers, what used to be IANA, and they perform under contract to ICANN the root server functions. What we're really talking about is from the line down here for the budget that ICANN proper uses. This is for ADRs and CROP. Also, the introduction of a grants program just recently in the past year was announced and should be available next year. So, that's where the revenue comes from.

Of the three types, the one that perhaps you've heard a lot about and are routinely available starting every year, generally around October or November, is called the additional budget request. They come out of the general ICANN budget. Generally, the ADRs are open for application in October or November. This year it was November.

One of the review processes, before they are sent by ALAC, is that they are reviewed. Each RALO makes a request. It can be for a range of things. It can be for funds, the ADRs can be used for material, and it can be used, for example, the most recent one was for a survey. There is a range of things. Actually, I should have put the link to the ADR page on ALAC. If you are thinking about making an application, I suggest you look at the page to see the sorts of things.

We will get to them in the next slide, this is just to remind you the ADR funds are available through the end of the year. They are reviewed, first of all, by staff, and then they are reviewed both by policy staff and representatives from each of the RALOs. There is a final review and by the end of January, ALAC then makes its submission, including all of the RALO requests, to Planning. And that's dealt with over the next couple of months. But that's the time frame.

We'll talk about what you can apply for. These are the rules and these are the criteria that each application is made against. The requests have to be directly [inaudible - 00:07:15] related to ICANN policy development, advisory, and technical work. So it has to be something directly related to ICANN work.

The next criterion would be addressing the capacity-building objectives. And if that's what you're doing -- and this would be a terrific thing to do -- what material is available. If the money is for materials, then they have to be materials that can be used online. They cannot be materials that are just face-to-face. Clearly, because ICANN and a lot of its materials are online.

The application is judged based on the availability of resources, not only the money but the staff. And if you are using the money for travel requests, it generally has to be either to attend an ICANN meeting or ICANN-organized meetings. So these are the sorts of things that you can apply for. And these are the criteria against which the application will be judged. For travel, there is another fund as well that's just resumed.

These are CROP funds. And as you can imagine, during COVID they were not available for travel because nobody was traveling. It was November this past year when they announced it was made that this particular program has been resumed. And it is available for trips, really starting in a few days' time. The criteria, again, is within a particular geographic region. The Asia Pacific region is really large so that's somewhere within the geographic region.

One out of the three applications has to be for sponsored trips to an ICANN or ICANN-sponsored meeting in the region. Generally, conferences are not covered but you can, in fact, make applications in some circumstances that may be covered. And then the submissions, this is a longer period than it used to be. So if you want to apply for CROP programming, you have to have your application seven weeks before the

beginning of the trip. At the bottom, is the page that explains all of our CROP funding. That's the link, and you're welcome to look at the link.

This is the use of funds arising from the new gTLDs application process in 2012. There has been discussion over a few years as to what to do with the funds. Ultimately, it was a cross-community working group that met and discussed a range of things -- what funds, how much, and how they should be available for what. And there was an extensive paper developed, which was accepted by the Board this past June. The total funds that are available are \$10 million.

Now, in the first year, which will be 2024, I think only \$1 million of that is going to be available. It's really a trial to see how the processes, the criteria, and so forth have worked out. Generally, the grants will be between US \$50,000, to US \$500,000. And the first allocation of limited funds will be available beginning of next year, and the funds will be allocated in separate rounds.

The objectives are pretty broad. But these are, again, the sorts of criteria that will be used. Rather broad, something that benefits the development, distribution, and evolution of the structures to support the internet's unique identifiers providing underserved populations with capacity development -- which probably is a bit more technical but in fact, there may be some projects that could meet that criterion in a very open standard for the benefit of the internet community, and perhaps most relevantly addressing the diversity participation and inclusion across developing regions.

So those are the best I can do for the criteria that come out of the paper. And those are the three funds if you're looking for funding for the activity of [inaudible - 00:13:03]. These are three places you can look. I've put links to each relevant page. Are there any questions?

This next bit is just going to be my plea for people to look at the budgets and comments on the budgets. There are three parts to a budget. If you look at the documents, there are the highlights, then there's FY24 and FY27, planning and initiatives then operating initiatives. The final document I'm looking at and that you should look at is for FY24, The operating plan, and the budget.

Because when we're looking at the budget, one of our members of the working group, Ricardo, does an absolutely thorough job of looking at the numbers and making excellent comments on the numbers. But what we haven't done is look in detail, making comments about how the money is being spent and what kind of accountability is there for the money being spent.

So if you look at the important parts of the budget, this is just FY24 operating plan and budget. It's the third document that's available on the website for the budget. The operating initiatives, there are 11 of them. There are two or three that have been identified as of particular importance to ALAC and the RALOs. And underneath that, there's a detailed list of what ICANN's going to do in the coming year. We actually achieved the operating initiatives for that year and there to the policy development and community engagement.

The operating initiatives. It was over a year ago, as a fairly large group of operating policies, we looked at all the operating initiatives and decided which ones were most important for ALAC and the RALOs. Those initiatives have slightly changed in the past year. But the thing that's been most important for us as At-Large community is the MSM, the Multi-Stakeholder Model, which is about diverse and inclusive participation in policymaking. And that's seen, pretty much overwhelmingly, as the operating initiative of importance to us in the budget.

A related objective is evolve and strengthen ICANN's decision-making processes. Because clearly, we want to be part of that and we want the tools and the knowledge to be able to be part of that. So these are the most recent operating initiatives. And the things that were identified probably 18 months ago, are still numbers 1 and 2. Just for your information, Universal Acceptance was No. 3. That's now actually very much part of the actual ICANN budget. Planning, we've identified as No. 4, and monitoring legislation is No. 5, the monitoring legislation globally that will impact. But the first two are the ones that have the most attention.

These are just some of the comments that [inaudible - 00:17:26] -- she's a member of ALAC -- made in relation to the [inaudible - 00:17:33]. These are the things that I am asking people to do if they want to actually comment on the budgets. Look at the initiatives and then the functional activities. And whether we think those will actually produce the outcomes that we're looking forward to -- and remember those functional activities include policy development and policy research and stakeholder programs -- we need to ask the mechanisms. Because you go through the budget and you have to say, "Well, is this going to achieve

the outcomes, or do we, as a RALO, think that there are things that could be done with ICANN money and support to achieve the objectives, and what is the process for evaluation?"

Marita last year commented, "There's no way to follow progress on the multi-stakeholder model issues." And she's absolutely right. I read this year's budget and I'm thinking that's still a comment I would make. And the suggestion we made last year, I think we're going to make again this year, is a regular inclusive progress report to stakeholders so that we don't just read from one year to the next what ICANN says it's going to do without some kind of feedback as to how those objectives have been achieved in relation to the At-Large community.

That's my 10 minutes, there you go. I welcome any and all comments, but I would please urge you to try to understand the money that is available within the ICANN budget for Community purposes. Understand the funds and understand their allocation processes and the timing. I would urge everyone there is a page set aside specifically for comments on the budget. Have a look, particularly at FY24, and whether you think there are processes in there so that we can understand the way that ICANN funds are being spent, amongst other things, to achieve ALAC At-Large community objectives.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Okay, thank you.

SHREEDEEP RAYAMAJHI: Maureen?

MAUREEN HILYARD: Yes, thank you. And thank you, Holly, for that great introduction and the work with the OFB. It's really good to see that we do have APRALO representation there, not just yourself, but others. But I would like to suggest that we give some focus on how we --

YESIM SAGLAM: Maureen, you dropped out,

MAUREEN HILYARD: I'd like to see APRALO focus on auction proceeds because that is something that is going to come up. And before we can look at it, as you say, people need to be able to understand the funds and the allocation process. And I think that that is really important. And I guess it's probably more so because I'm now on the GNSO guidance process for applicant support. And it's the same thing. There's a process, and people didn't understand it last time.

The SubPro report has some excellent recommendations in there that say there's got to be more guidance on people being able to understand what is there and how they can use it. And it's ICANN's responsibility to provide some support. So at this present point in time, there's not anything that's specifically on our auction proceeds, but if we can add it to our list of priorities then we'll have a small team looking at it. I'm sure ALAC's going to do something but we can start looking at what is important to us within APRALO. So if anyone's actually thinking about --

HOLLY RAICHE:

Excellent suggestion. What we've got is the Cross-Community Working Group. It's a lengthy document, it was passed by the Board in June. There are suggestions there. The initial allocation, which as I said, starts in 2024. So we've got a while to get our heads around the process. All we've got is that Cross-Community Working Group plus Board reactions.

I'm absolutely happy to have another session on that and go into a lot more detail because, as I said, the first allocation is not going to be much, it's just going to be a trial. But after that, it'll be in rounds. And in those rounds, the idea is that people will have the opportunity, whether it be ICANN itself and the SOs and ACs will have a better understanding of the process.

Now, as I said, the objectives are fairly broad. So I don't know. And in fact, there's nothing I could find that tells you more. But it's something that we will be following. And in the next several months, it's something that we need to get our heads around. Because we, like everybody else, what are they going to do with \$10 million? And I don't have the answer, frankly. The answer is not there yet, Maureen, but you're absolutely right.

MAUREEN HILYARD:

Well, for example, with the GGP, what the SubPros said was that people should be made aware of it at least six months before their applications open. That's what we need to be doing. Lots more comments are needed. Thanks.

HOLLY RAICHE: Good point, and let's go on. Let's not deprive other people of their time. But absolutely, I'll come back. I'm happy to talk more about all of these if people are happy.

SHREDEEP RAYAMAJHI: Okay. Thank you, Holly, for that excellent presentation. It was indeed great to know about such an important topic and the budget. Now we have Cheryl for the CPWG update. Cheryl?

CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: Thank you very much, Shreedeep. All right, so a couple of things. First of all, with the rotating time that I explained to Shreedeep that I want to explain to everybody else, I only attend every second one of the Consolidated Policy Working Group calls. I don't feel at all motivated. And if I'm already awake for other meetings, to be on calls at 1:00, 2:00, and 2:30 am, when I have three and four of those nights in a row during my week.

So all I have done is review the transcripts and the meeting materials, as opposed to actually attending. I'm happy to take you through some of the things that went on in what, for me, was last night or early this morning's call. Sarah Kiden was in attendance. And one of the things that I was going to draw our attention to is the very important matter of the work that's going on and being discussed within the Consolidated Policy Working Group in its weekly meetings regarding this [inaudible - 00:27:28] to do with applicant support. Because applicant support, the outreach, and engagement that's required under the subsequent

procedure recommendations and guidelines are very much the work that she and Sarah Kiden are involved in at the moment.

Now, whilst this is not a PDP process, it is something that is fleshing out or giving depth and color to the implementation of the recommendations that Subsequent Procedures made regarding new gTLDs, an effective and efficient and measurable applicant support program. Some of you may know a little bit more about it than others. We've got some excellent background material even from previous policy work that we've done here within the region.

But it is something, apart from all of those briefings that I'm not going to get into now, that we should all be taken very seriously in terms of policy and feedback on these policies, specifically to do with applicant support because it was predicted that our region would be one that would benefit greatly from an effective applicant support system. And of course, the first round we had at it in the 2012 round was a failure on a number of levels for a number of reasons. But we don't want that to happen again.

So if you can forgive me, I would really like to suggest that Maureen spend some of the time I have allocated for me to take you into a little bit more depth on what is going on in the work that she's now leading up to. And I will, just before I hand over to her, mentioned the other fairly important opportunity that, if not now, a little later on when they come up with their more final reporting, that we might want to have particular consideration and discussion about being put on is something that anyone who is a registrant of domain names might have some particular interest in it.

And that is to transfer policy work that is going on. And Sarah and Daniel, and a couple of others are doing great work on that and weekly, taking us through within the Consolidated Policy Working Group. Very detailed analysis of what they're talking about and seeking input from that CPWG meeting on what they should be saying is in the best interests of At-Large.

Whilst I'm not suggesting, we suddenly try to get ahead of that particular pathway, we do need to recognize that there will be a call for comment on these things. And perhaps we could look at a small team being put together to have a little bit of a more in-depth analysis of the work that is being done and whether or not there is a regional view that might [inaudible - 00:31:05] past forward. So that's just a bit of future work that you might want to consider.

Other stuff does happen at these meetings but my takeaway from the review I did of what happened in the most recent meeting is that these are probably two of the most important things. I could talk about the operational design phase and all those sorts of things but we'll have plenty of time to get to those later. Maureen, do you mind if I pop back to you on this very important area of applicant support?

MAUREEN HILYARD:

No, not at all. Quite a big yes to that, about this new group that I've become part of. In 2012, I had only just gotten onto the ALAC and they had already started the program when I first went on so it took me a while to figure out what was going on. And it wasn't until the application process had gone through and domain names had been assigned, that I got some feedback. This is five or six years down the track.

I got some feedback from people who had applied from within our region and were very disappointed with the way that the process had taken place. So what [inaudible - 00:32:44] the new SubPro final report in Topic 17 there's a whole section on applicant support. And they've listed some recommendations and implementation guidance that's moving the applicant support into a more positive area and trying to make it so that we're supporting applicants to be successful in their application. Because there are a lot of people they were supposed to do and they still got knocked back, and never really understood why they got knocked back.

I think what's coming through and the SubPro recommendations are that there's got to be more communication, there's got to be more outreach, and there's got to be more input. Are they aware of the business implications of their application? They've got to be running a registry or a registrar. There's a lot of work that's required, but it's justified. The application of the guidebook, for example, was published and they opened the applications straightaway.

What they're recommending this time is that before the applications open, the guidebook needs to be made available to potential applicants at least six months before. I mean, it makes sense. The people need to know what they're getting themselves into. Our GGP, GNSO Guidance Process is tasked with providing that guidance. And the guidance is based on what was recommended and the implementation guidance that was provided in the SubPro final report.

We're not going to make any policy recommendations or anything. It's already being done. Our job is just to use those recommendations and

to flesh it out to make it so that it is useful and meaningful, and will help potential applicants to be successful.

This was my first meeting and I'm quite excited about it. The other members come from different sections of the Community. Sarah Kiden from AFRALO, and I, are the representatives for the ALAC. We will be reporting to the CPWG after our meetings that we have. I'm prepared to also update APRALO. I think it's really important. As Holly said, in order for Community members to contribute, you have to understand it. So if you've got any questions, please ask. Because we can take those questions back to [inaudible - 00:36:55]. Thank you.

SHREDEEP RAYAMAJHI: Thank you, Maureen, for that information. And I think Gunela has a certain announcement. Gunela, you have the floor.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Thank you very much. Shreedeeep and I have been discussing the possibility of a new person or someone who might have been around for a little while to work together with Shreedeeep, possibly as a co-Chair. And it could be in a capacity-building type role or it could be sharing experiences. Shreedeeep is going to go through the working document on activities straight after so it would be great if there's someone enthusiastic who would like to learn a little bit more about policy, or already knows a lot about policy, who could work together with Shreedeeep.

Shreedeeep and I were thinking if there were any persons who wanted to put their hand up to be nominated, either now or think about it while Shreedeeep is doing a review of a policy for a working document, and then we can talk about it some more under AOB. If there are any particular persons now who would like to ask a question about this or wish to nominate, please, it's over to you. Thank you.

SHREDEEEP RAYAMAJHI: Thank you, Gunela, for that announcement. We certainly need people, and the more people, the better. Regarding the document, Yesim, can you pull up the document? The document is there. A lot of the comments have come in. Very supportive comments from Cheryl and Maureen. And as Maureen suggested, we need to promote more of the ICANN policy courses, and we would be doing that in the coming days as well.

And I will also be needing help with the document as well so if there are any volunteers who are interested in working on this document or helping us in getting a better vision of the policy forum, please do help. And we encourage more people to get into the group and help.

The document is open, so you can also put in your points if you have any ideas or think of any specific ideas about policy discussions or what we should be doing. And as Cheryl suggested, to form a smaller group. I will put that in mind as well. If anybody has any questions, please do raise your hand. Okay. If there are no questions then let's go into the document.

Regarding the documents, most of the points are there and people have commented. It's quite interesting, the way the comments have come in. We will probably refine it today and create a better version of the document. Does anybody want to speak? Are there any updates or anything? If there are no updates, then I would go into the final section of the AOB. The next call, Yesim, I think next month, the first week, first Thursday. Will that be good for everyone? Yes, Satish?

SATISH BABU:

On the document, I suggest that you, and colleagues, clean it up, incorporate these comments and clean it up. And then for the next meeting, we can work on the clean document so that we have time to now put comments into it until the next meeting. Otherwise, next meeting, we're going to come back to the same document which will not be very productive. So I would suggest that your team work on the document and finalize it. Put in the comments and then perhaps one more round we can do during the next meeting. Thank you.

SHREEDEEP RAYAMAJHI:

Yes, sure, Satish. That is the idea. Holly, you have the mic.

HOLLY RAICHE:

I absolutely agree with Satish. I think we need to work on the document. As Cheryl and I and everybody have said, the hours of the meetings of the policy committee are not friendly, if I can put it that way. And very often you don't have enough APRALO participation for that reason.

I think this is important, to have a policy discussion and have some kind of crossover between the CPWG -- for that matter, even have somebody like Olivier, who's now in the Asia Pacific region anyway, because he's in Istanbul -- but have a report back and discussion, and if we can add that to the paper and work on this. I think if you send out to the APRALO list, the link to this document, or a revised link, I think that would be really helpful so that we can get a policy discussion on APRALO. I think that'd be great. Thank you.

SHREDEEP RAYAMAJHI: Sure. Thank you for that suggestion. Any more suggestions? Okay. There was a date suggested, I think, Thursday, February 2nd -- first Thursday. Is that okay with everyone for the next meeting? Gunela, you have the mic.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: I have a feeling that maybe Yesim wanted to respond to the meeting time before I go ahead. Is that correct?

YESIM SAGLAM: Thank you, Gunela. Yes, I did want to but then I realized that I'm mixing up the debate. Shreedeep, I believe you're suggesting Thursday, the 2nd of February, right? Same time?

SHREDEEP RAYAMAJHI: Yes, sorry.

YESIM SAGLAM: Okay. I was just double-checking the calendar and it seems okay if everyone agrees on the date and time. Thank you. And thanks so much, Gunela.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Yes, that's no problem. I noticed in the chat that Nabeel raised his hand, which is fantastic, in regard to possibly contributing to the capacity-building section. I think we have a volunteer, which is wonderful. Thank you. So, if Nabeel wants to maybe say a couple of words we can do it informally in regard to the capacity-building part of the work or Nabeel could take on being a co-Chair which shouldn't be too daunting. Nabeel, would you like to say a couple of words, please?

I'm sorry that Nabeel can't speak because of the microphone. Maybe Nabeel and Shreedeeep can have a talk offline and work through how they can work together. So, thank you very much, Nabeel for that. That's really great news. It will be an excellent pathway into policy development and so forth. I also noticed that there was a comment from Maureen about volunteering for the applicant support group. And Maureen is prepared to lead on that one. Maureen, did you want to say anything about that?

MAUREEN HILYARD: Thank you, Gunela. No, just as Holly mentioned, it's good to get some feedback on various topics from the APRALO group. And this is a good place to do it. And just as Holly's trying to encourage people to contribute

to the feedback that's required for the operations and the finance and budget activities because I'm very much involved in the applicant support group, if there's a there is a number of people who are interested in providing some support for me to take comments back to the working group, I'm happy to discuss them with the team members who want to join. And we can either do it by email or a Zoom call.

I can arrange those or something. Is anyone interested? Just let me know and we'll organize something. Satish is the one who's offered and I'm sure I can rope in Cheryl to give us some support. Or Holly, probably. There's a framework that we're working on, which is a bit unusual.

But at the same time, I'm sure, there are some comments that we can provide that will be quite valuable. Because one of the things that were said in the SubPro report [inaudible - 00:51:20] Cheryl led that section of the report. There are some very valid points that are relevant to anyone from APRALO who might want to apply. So, it would be good to be able to talk about those things. And no pressure, just, you know, if anyone's interested.

SHREDEEP RAYAMAJHI: Cheryl, you have the mic.

CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: I do. Thank you very much, Shreedeep. I don't think that the small team with applicant support leading into the GPP just is as critical. It's not time critical yet. So it might be a good idea to collect names between now and the next meeting. I think it would be an ideal opportunity for not just us

old and perhaps somewhat jaded practitioners of policy to be involved in that. I think this would be an ideal opportunity for people who want to get used to being engaged in policy and maybe work with a few of us who are a bit longer in the tooth on these things. So, think about it.

It might be an ideal time for you to throw your hat in the ring to be engaged in a fairly tightly controlled -- because the framework already exists -- activity of developing some comments that will still be very useful to Maureen in the work she's doing. That's pretty much all I wanted to say. I'm still not sure that this group or the leads in this group have a clear and unambiguous mandate or charter for what the leadership team of the RALO expects of them.

And I think while we're promulgating getting into documents and sharing all sorts of things, and that's all worthy work, but right now I'm just -- We've had the development of a document, the document doesn't have a clear direction. It has a whole lot of fluffy stuff in it. I think the leadership team of the RALO needs to come up with an absolute unambiguous, clear, achievable, short-term, 12-month mandate [inaudible - 00:54:59] to actually work with. Because right now it seems they're trying to find their way, design it, build it, fly it, and do everything else. Thank you.

SHREDEEP RAYAMAJHI: Thank you, Cheryl, for that comment. We will certainly be working with the APRALO leadership team and trying to figure out a focused strategy. If there are any comments, I think we are at the last hour. So if there are

no comments, then we would like to officially end the call. If there is anything, please do raise your hand. Yesim, you have the mic.

YESIM SAGLAM:

Thank you very much, Shreedeeep, and thank you all for joining today's meeting. This meeting is now adjourned. Have a great rest of the day. Bye-bye.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]