



AL-ALAC-ST-0514-04-01-EN

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STATUS: Final

AT-LARGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ALAC Statement on the ICANN Strategy Panels:
Multistakeholder Innovation

Introduction

Holly Raiche, ALAC member from the Asian, Australian and Pacific Islands Regional At-Large Organization (APRALO) and ALAC Leadership Team member composed an initial draft of this Statement after discussion of the topic within At-Large and on the Mailing Lists.

On 30 April 2014, this Statement was posted on the [At-Large ICANN Strategy Panels Workspace](#).

On 02 May 2014, Olivier Crépin-Leblond, Chair of the ALAC, requested ICANN Policy Staff in support of the ALAC to send a Call for Comments on the Recommendations to all At-Large members via the [ALAC-Announce Mailing List](#).

On 08 May 2014, a version incorporating the comments received was posted on the aforementioned workspace and the Chair requested that Staff open an ALAC ratification vote on the proposed Statement on 09 May 2014 and close on 15 May 2014.

On that same day, the Chair requested that the Statement, referenced AL-ALAC-ST-0514-04-00-EN, be transmitted to the Public Comment process, copying the ICANN Staff member responsible for this Public Comment topic, with a note that the Statement was pending ALAC ratification.

On 16 May 2014, Staff confirmed that the online vote resulted in the ALAC endorsing the Statement with 14 votes in favor, 0 votes against, and 0 abstentions. You may review the result independently under: <https://www.bigpulse.com/pollresults?code=3897Mv3KfEPxzifKaluzmd4F>.

Summary

1. The ALAC supports the report from the Panel on Multistakeholder Innovation with some reservations.
2. This panel is a useful reminder of the need to reach beyond the 'usual suspects' with suggestions on how new techniques and technologies can be used to support global engagement.
3. However, we are concerned that some of the suggestions, such as crowdsourcing, for obtaining broad-based input may be seen as alternatives to existing methods of reaching consensus on issues. New techniques should not be seen as replacing the valuable policy processes of collaboration and dialogue. Crowdsourcing for policy input risks breaking the truly bottom-up policy development.
4. We suggest the development and use of tools to assist participation for those whose voice should be heard but do not communicate, or not communicate easily in the English language.
5. Ultimately, multistakeholder innovation should be targeted at enabling widespread participation at grassroots level as opposed to encouraging counter-arguments at top level.

The original version of this document is the English text available at <http://www.atlarge.icann.org/correspondence>. Where a difference of interpretation exists or is perceived to exist between a non-English edition of this document and the original text, the original shall prevail.

ALAC Statement on the ICANN Strategy

Panels: Multistakeholder Innovation

The ALAC strongly supports the report from the Panel on Multistakeholder Innovation. Although the Panel was developed prior to the US Government's announcement about the IANA function, it nevertheless provides valuable insights and recommendations for ICANN's expanded role in Internet Governance.

This panel is a useful reminder of the need to reach beyond the 'usual suspects' at ICANN meetings to move from what the panel calls 'stakeholder engagement to global engagement', with suggestions on how new techniques and technologies can be used to support that engagement. However, we have serious concerns with some of the Panel's findings.

The ALAC is troubled that some of the suggestions for obtaining broad-based input, for instance crowdsourcing, may be used as alternatives to existing methods of reaching consensus on issues. While new techniques may be valuable to obtain additional, diverse input on issues, they should not be seen as replacing the valuable policy processes of collaboration and dialogue through working group discussions and face-to-face meetings. Furthermore, crowdsourcing for policy input risks breaking the truly bottom-up policy development taking place both in the GNSO and in the ALAC, thus compromising hard work in Working Groups. Crowdsourcing also has the potential to offer a stage for vocal and organized participants whilst smothering the input of stakeholders that are less well represented or whose native tongue is not English. ICANN should promote working group level participation in its component organizations and not promote more top-heavy individual, sporadic and potentially disrupting participation at higher levels of the pyramid.

One suggestion that would encourage wider, global participation is the development and use of tools (in addition to other interpretation provided) to assist participation for those whose voice should be heard but do not communicate (often deprived communities), or not communicate easily in the English language (thus requiring reliable automated translation).

Ultimately, multistakeholder innovation should be targeted at enabling widespread participation at grassroots level – the base of the Policy Development Process – as opposed to encouraging counter-arguments at top level, once the work to reach consensus has already been done.