Working group 1: ENGAGEMENT IN ICANN

Draft statement
Authors[1]

The actual state of affairs shows a lack of effective participation from the At-Large community in the activities of ICANN.

The commitment and the participation of the different parts of the community require some pre-knowledge of the things at stake in the issues being discussed. In order to improve the quality of the participation, it is important to be informed about the ICANN mandate, the stakes and the impact sought for. A major awareness campaign across all the RALOs and the ALSes, in their respective languages, would be a first step towards this. A meaningful participation also requires a better identification of the issues on which decision must be taken.

The implementation of a specific calendar in order to stimulate the best possible amount of participation is needed. This calendar would permit to plan the proper mechanisms for participation such as face-to-face meetings, forums, teleconferences, videoconferences, electronic votes and also the more traditional information and communication media which can reach a larger public of potential internet users than the one that can be reached through those media.

The next chapters will help highlight the preoccupations of the At-Large community.

I General participation

The general participation is examined here at 5 different levels:

1) **With regards to the IDN policy**

Multilinguism is a very important matter for our At-Large communities, since not every alphabet are based on the roman characters.

ICANN, in collaboration with other stakeholders, must intensify its communication efforts in order to ensure that all the information on the today possible options be available to all the potential applicants of the various regions in order to reach a larger public than the one made of the people that are already familiarized with ICANN work and already take part in the development processes of the ICANN policies.

The funding of a well thought of information campaign that is pro-active in its approach and reaches the general public during the next year and witch based itself upon the efficiency assessment of the information means that have been available so far, would be a first step in the good direction in global outreach.

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[1] Sub WG1, Re chapter I (Yaovi, Hawa, Monique), SWG2 Re Chapter 2 (Fatimata), SWG3 Re Chapters 3 & 4 (Dessi, Cristian)

2) **Participation of local communities**

We wish to promote a more democratic participation. The facilitation of timely translations is important but a proper preparation of the discussions and the public consultations is even more so. We know for a fact that we must document, inform and clarify the issues for the users to be able to make an inform contribution and take part in the public consultation. The richness of the democracy lies in the preparation of a meaningful participation and not only in the opportunity to express opinions and to vote, but in the good preparation of these actions.

We wish to insist once more upon the need for regional At-Large meetings once a year. These would enable the participants to discuss the issues and identify the ones that are specific to each region of the At-Large community.

In order to achieve this goal, ICANN, with the help of the RALOs, will give privilege to communication media such as local radios or SMS.

3) Participation in the GNSO

This type of participation also requires some background knowledge of the community on the mission and mandate of ICANN.
Can the users contribute in its work?
Can the users influence the development process of the various policies that will affect their lives in a direct way?

We believe that the answers to these two questions can render the participation in the GNSO more effective.

For example, let's consider that the actual rules directing the public consultations require that the meaningful contribution must come from people with relevant experience and that duration of 20 days is fixed by consultation, it seems obvious that the At-Large communities that would not count such experts would feel estranged to the consultation process. The efforts to render the grounds for each choice in a language easier to understand for all and the orientations based upon guiding principles could help obtaining the users or potential user's participation. The technological decisions that would follow would have to give results that would agree with these principles.

Data protection and access for all are to be taken into consideration in order for the ICANN policies to agree with its mission and be the result of effective bottom-up policy processes, which is what ICANN wants.

4) Participation in the ICANN meetings

Many recommendations have been made through At-Large communication to the ICANN Board on 11 December 2008. Among other things, there was the suggestion for the creation of a committee charged with the organizations of the meetings. We hope that several of them have been taken into account and that we will able to assess their implementations.

Opening period for the preparation of the participants

It would be wise that the teleconferences as a preparation to the ICANN meeting start at least six weeks before the meeting. This would allow sufficient time for the newcomers to assimilate the concepts and basic facts in order to be able to participate in the ICANN meetings in a meaningful and effective way.

5 Follow-up mechanisms

Once the proper tools for a meaningful participation have been defined and implemented, we wish to implement follow-up processes and assessment tools to measure the improvement in terms of participation. For instance, in order to get an idea of the number of organisms to consult in each region and determine how many members actively participate. The follow-up reports could include information such as ' before public consultation – after public consultation'. Each annual report of the corporation can make a synthesis on what has been adopted and the effective contribution of the distinct parts of the community, of the main agreements achieved each year. Some tables could illustrate to all the state of progress of the different issues.

II.
GLOBAL OUTREACH

Introduction:

By Global Outreach, we mean more participation and engagement of the worldwide Internet-using community, regardless of their geographical location, their language, and their economic and social backgrounds. ICANN need end users' participation to influence, provide orientation for the making of the decisions within ICANN and to give feedback about its policy development and implementation.

Identified problems:

Uneven participation and engagement of the community in the ICANN related issues;

Lack of differentiated approach to involve a diverse community in the management and the implementation of ICANN activities

Lack of mechanisms to connect ICANN with the end users (ICANN is very far from the users at the local level to benefit from their participation)

However, some efforts have been made to overcome the identified problems. For example, in his report, on January 29, 2008, Paul Twomey, President and CEO of ICANN, explained the "Nonbinding partnering relationships with private IGOs to
aid in outreach to governments and local Internet communities" with organizations in all the continents" (Asia, Pacific Islands, Africa, Europe, America

There is a continued support for participation by our community from ICANN (travel support, Summit, provision of translation, remote participation systems) but there is still a lot to be done for a better participation and engagement from the user community..

Recommendations:

- Leverage the various communities in ICANN to be representative of the worldwide Internet-using community, reflecting its diversity.
- Increase global outreach through regional outreach (ICANN regional offices) to allow local hiring and provision of rapid interactions and support framework.
- Sub-contract the ALSs to provide support to the local users (Information / sensitization / training seminars on ICANN related issues with radio, TV, etc.)
- Sub-contract ALSs to collect end users views in PDP
- Provide better remote participation systems.
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III

- TRANSCRIPTION AND TRANSLATION

Multilingual transcriptions and translations of ICANN's documents are crucial for the international community. Since ICANN is dealing with issues of significant importance for the whole information society, it is necessary to allow wider and equal access to strategic discussions and decisions, which are taken in the name of and are affecting the overall Internet community

Identified problems

The issue of language accessibility has been a long-standing issue for ICANN documents and working processes. Providing translations of working documents has been identified as a matter of central importance. Lack of translation of strategic documents, consultations and policy development processes is questioning ICANN's credibility and transparency.

Within ICANN, the importance of becoming a truly multilingual organization is not given high-enough priority. This is alarming the At-Large community and introduces a significant barrier for participation.

Despite of the efforts done in the direction of facilitating multilingual support, namely increasing budget allocation and draft translation framework, the community still cannot equally participate, when it is a matter of language diversity.

Recommendations

ICANN should continue to work closely and use the created best practices of other international organizations, such as UNESCO.

Organization of translation sprints, scholarships or other initiatives, aiming at development of a critical mass of translated strategical documents might also help ICANN to become a truly multilingual organization.

Travel Support

Travel support is a mechanism to facilitate participation of geographically dispersed communities in order to secure their due influence into the decision making processes of the organization. Due to the largely volunteer-based structure of the At-Large, travel support is essential to allow participation and work collaboratively on important issues in meetings, providing valuable feedback to ICANN.

Identified problems

The administrative handling of travel support has increased over the past years, but there are still issues that require attention and improvement.

The per-diem payment arrangements process needs to take into account that in some countries, receiving international wire transfers is impractical or impossible. In many cases it is difficult for some participants to cover their expenses on their accounts before the per diem or reimbursement is received.

Choice of the locations for the international ICANN meetings sometimes is made in a way which is excluding some of the stakeholders simply because of the high prices of accommodation.

Recommendations

Development of alternative mechanisms for handling per-diem in cash.

ICANN should consider providing opportunities for the regional communities to work together on specific issues face to face and with regional groups on horizontal level, which can then feed back into the process on international level. This model has the potential to improve the policy development process by voicing regional differences in views in a more comprehensive way. This model would also allow more regular face-to-face interaction than would be possible with international meetings alone.

ICANN should make ensure that locations for international meeting are chosen also according to criteria of affordability. This should include a more timely selection of the location to allow for earlier travel arrangements, which will help reduce cost.

ICANN should avoid accommodating volunteers ALAC member and representative from ALS's in low-quality hotels that are very remote from the main venue.

For regional meetings, all members of Bylaw-recognized bodies from that region should receive travel and expense support on the same basis and to the same extent as at International Meetings.

Amending the Rules and Procedures for Travel Support in a way to comply with the proposals from the [At-Large Advisory Committee Statement to the ICANN Board on the Public Consultation Related to Development of a Travel Policy, May 5, 2008" AL.ALAC/BUD.SC/0308/1/1](#)