

Assessment Report
Document Development and Drafting Pilot Program
Community Facilitation Pillar

In response to calls for support from ICANN community stakeholder group leaders, in 2016 ICANN Policy Development Support staff launched an effort to develop a functional capability to provide substantive community writing/drafting support to assist ICANN stakeholder groups in their policy development activities.

Community leaders asserted that they could be more effective and efficient in their policy development work if they had increased resources available to them to assist in the comprehensive process of researching and developing their policy positions and in drafting/writing their formal documents within ICANN policy processes.

Executive Summary

The objective of Document Development and Drafting Pilot Program was to provide ICANN Communities and Community leaders with additional capability and bandwidth to more fully participate in ICANN comment opportunities. The program was designed to allow flexibility for each community to utilize the drafting resource in a way that best suited the unique approach each community took towards the development and drafting of comments.

Communities utilized the research writers in the program for the full range of development and drafting activities – unique community research projects on past comments; research for preparation of comments; drafting of comments; editing of draft comments; participation in community calls to plan and discuss issues and comments; and finalizing comments for submission.

The flexibility of the pilot program was a critical element to the success of Phase I as each participating community developed a unique working relationship and work plan for the research writer assigned under the program.

Phase I of the pilot program allotted roughly 25 hours per month of research writer service for a four-month period for participating communities. This time allocation proved to be both reasonable and valuable for each community. Based on this, Phase II will allot the same 25 hours per month for a five-month period to further evaluate the effectiveness of this service for ICANN communities within the comment process.

Based on the lessons from Phase I, Phase II of the pilot program placed a stronger emphasis on the critical role of management and communication from the ICANN communities' leadership at the outset of the pilot and sustained engagement with the research writer to ensure the best output from the program. This component of

the program has been strengthened for the next phase with new ICANN communities participating in the pilot.

Background – Program Formation

Through extensive inquiries, interviews and conversations with community leaders, ICANN staff (Rob Hoggarth and Carlos Reyes from the Policy Development Support Team in partnership with Dan O’Neill of WBC Global (the study group));

- 1) determined that these were potentially achievable goals that could enhance the policy development process; and
- 2) created a framework for a pilot program to identify and develop the best functional capabilities to effectively and efficiently provide these resources to community groups in the most practical way within the constraints of ICANN’s existing resources.

A pilot program was designed to test the potential for enhancing the contribution of ICANN communities to the organization’s policy development discussions with a variety of support tools including improved information and knowledge about policy issues/matters, additional research support resources, and practical drafting/editing capabilities.

The objective of this Document Development and Draft Pilot Program (DDP) was to design, develop and launch a pilot program to assess the potential, practical processes and mechanisms for providing ICANN community groups with support for the research, development, collaboration, drafting and editing of documents for submission within the policy development processes of ICANN.

Overall DDP Design

The DDP was designed with two major components in mind – an Individual Community Assistance component (described in this report as “facilitation”) and a policy development process “primers” component. Information about the primer component of the pilot can be found on the ICANN community wiki - here - <https://community.icann.org/x/qo3DAw>.

Facilitation Expectations

The facilitation portion of the pilot program featured the following capabilities:

- One hundred hours of research/writer support for a four-month pilot period to community groups to utilize in the preparation of community comments.
- Pilot Resource available for four months for interested and prepared ICANN community groups (eligibility criteria was based on informational

questionnaire completion and further input to ensure productive use of the resource).

Program Preparation

The study group conducted a series of interviews with interested and experienced community volunteers to identify and understand the specific community needs and challenges within the entire document development and drafting process and to explore options for how to design, develop, deliver and maintain a capability (or resource) which can potentially meet the various unique needs of individual communities to assist in their greater participation within the ICANN policy development process.

Interviews were conducted with:

- Humberto Carrasco, LACRALO (Latin American and Caribbean Regional At-Large Organization).
- Rafik Dammak, Non-Commercial Stakeholders Group.
- Rudi Vansnick, NPOC (Non-Profit Operational Concerns) Constituency.
- Steve DelBianco, Business Constituency.
- Marc Trachtenberg, Intellectual Property Constituency.

Additional input was gathered from ICANN staff and advisors including:

- Berry Cobb
- Marika Konings
- Mary Wong

The “core” element of the service function were:

- Assistance with “front-end” research on the specific ICANN issues;
- Assessment of past activities of ICANN communities on specific issues – and comments submitted on these issues;
- Participate in community calls/online chats on the specific issue where “position-setting” is focus -- keep notes of the call/chat and prepare report for circulation to community members;
- Formulation and drafting of the initial community response for circulation; and
- Supporting community document drafters to provide assistance in making revisions and edits to draft comments.

Within the pilot program, a concerted effort was made to allow community groups to utilize these research/writer support resources in a way that was most valuable to them and the unique manner in which their community organizes their drafting process. The pilot program wanted to ensure the flexibility for communities to identify the specific areas in which they are most comfortable utilizing the new resource to assist and expand the capability of their community to participate in the ICANN drafting process.

While the pilot was designed not to micro-manage the specific use of the research writer – the program does clearly specify that the hours needed to focus on the document development process – utilized by the community in a way which reflects the needs of their community – research, preparation of issue overview, participation in community calls, writing, editing, or any combination.

The pilot program also emphasized the need for the participating ICANN communities to have the proper structures and processes in place to effectively engage with the drafting resource to ensure the focus of the activity on increasing community capabilities and broadening participation in ICANN public comment processes.

The program required participating communities to have a designated policy board or working group in place with a clear strategy which outlines a plan for utilizing the drafting resource; designate a direct contact person to engage with the drafting resource and provide direction on work assignments; and agree to utilize the drafting resource only for work directly linked to responding to ICANN requests for comments or other ICANN drafting activities.

Overview of Pilot Phase 1

The communities that stepped forward to participate in the Document Development and Drafting Pilot Program were:

- Business Constituency (BC);
- Intellectual Property Constituency (IPC);
- Internet Service Providers and Connectivity Providers (ISPCP); and
- Registries Stakeholder Group (RySG)

A key component of the pilot program was to engender the trust of the stakeholder community with the research writer. To accomplish this, the program ensured that each community would have its own unique research writer.

The pilot program made a concerted effort to present an international spectrum of candidates for each community with a background in Internet Governance; the workings of Domain Name System (DNS); and ICANN operations.

Each community was presented with a choice of potential research writers with whom to work with in the pilot. This design was intended to foster greater ownership of the relationship and to assure a higher level of comfort with the background, capability and skill set of the research writer. Each community was also given an opportunity to interview the research writer candidates for their respective communities.

Phase One Implementation

The first phase of the pilot program had the following research writers for each community:

- Business Constituency (BC) – **Pam Covington**
- Intellectual Property Constituency (IPC) – **Angie Graves**
- Internet Service Providers and Connectivity Providers (ISPCP) – **Jamal LeBlanc**
- Registries Stakeholder Group (RySG) – **Wim Degezelle**

As expected, each one of these working relationships was unique to the document development process for each stakeholder community. Not all of the experiences were successful in the traditional sense, but there was a tremendous amount of learning done that will allow for the second phase of the pilot to be more successful based on all of the experiences.

The questionnaire and the direct interview element with the ICANN community was a key element in focusing attention on:

- the possibilities of the pilot service for the community;
- the need to be structured and determined to create a meaningful role for the research writer in the document development process
- the need for the community to be dedicated to working with the research writer on an ongoing basis to maximize the output of pilot service;
- the requirement to have a designated individual or team to work directly with the research writer;

Community Experiences

For one community, the focus of the work of the research writer was on a very specific research project which was of great interest to the community and its leadership – but they had not had the bandwidth to undertake previously. The outline, goals and vision for this project were already developed – and the pilot program was able to provide the resources to research and develop the project.

There was excellent interaction between the community leadership and the research writer on the objective for the project as well as regular engagement and feedback through the project cycle. This level of engagement on the part of the ICANN community has been found to be the most critical element in the success of the document drafting pilot.

The approach of two other pilot community groups were both very similar and comprehensive – they found a meaningful role for the research writer within the

entire life cycle of the document development process for their respective communities. There was work in:

- front-end research in the development of a community position; an understanding of other comments on a particular issue; and other pressing elements;
- involvement in regular community calls to prioritize the issues within the comments and the share information and insights;
- Original drafting of comments – either singularly; with a community member; or as part of a drafting team;
- Receiving feedback from the community to draft comments; prioritizing issues and objections which were raised;
- Incorporating community feedback into the subsequent drafts; and making the necessary edits to reflect the strength; content; and spirit for the final comments to represent the views of the community.

These two relationships demonstrated various important elements of the program:

1. The **flexibility** of the program design to allow communities to make individual decisions on the most effective way to deploy and utilize the research writer within their own unique document development process;
2. The importance of **trust** in the research writer to work within the community structure. This started with communities involved in the selection of the research writer and was built through engagement and collaboration through the drafting process.
3. The ability of the participating ICANN community to work with the research writer to **understand the proper role** within their unique system allowed for this individual to add significant value to the development and drafting process and increase the output of the ICANN community within the document development process to the benefit of all communities.
4. The critical aspect for success is the ICANN community **embracing** the research writer at the outset by providing **clear instruction** and staying engaged throughout the process to create a better product.
5. Successfully incorporating the research writer in the document development process demonstrated the value of additional bandwidth for community participation in this ICANN comment process.

The information gathered from the least successful of the community relationships merely reinforced the message of the key element for success – the commitment and engagement of the community to the program. Without it – the research writer was left with little direction or feedback; deadlines were missed and the pilot was not able to make a positive impact on the document development for this community.

A commitment by the community to engage and manage the research writer is to the key to success – we saw the positive and negative side of this same coin within

the first phase of the pilot.

Recommendations and Expectations for Pilot Phase 2

The first phase of the Document Development and Drafting Pilot Program provided both a valuable service to the ICANN communities that participated – as well as valuable information for improving the structure and performance of the program as phase two is launched. Phase II will be designed to build on both positive and experiences of Phase I and to continue the effort and commitment to be responsive to the expressed needs of the ICANN communities in this area.

Building on the lessons and the accomplishments of the Phase I pilot activities, the Phase II pilot program will place a strong emphasis on the commitment and organization of the participating ICANN communities prior to the start of the work phase. In addition to completing the questionnaire to demonstrate the appropriate level of understanding and commitment to the parameters of the program, each new participating community will participate in an extensive interview. This interview will inform, and assure the necessary level of management for the research writers within the pilot program to ensure this key component to the success of Phase I.

Phase II of the Document Development and Drafting Pilot Program will incorporate new ICANN communities beyond those that participated in Phase I and thus expand the reach and the benefits of this pilot. Phase II will incorporate all of the feedback provided to date and be better equipped to provide the focus, structure and implementation tools to make the Document Development Pilot Program a strong component of tools available to communities to increase their ability to more fully participate in the ICANN comment process.