FY18 COMMUNITY REQUEST FORM

All questions and completed forms should be sent to controller@icann.org.
Please remember that the deadline for FY18 Budget consideration is **10 February 2017.**

REQUEST INFORMATION

Title of Proposed Activity		
Public Media Initiative		
Community Requestor Name	**Chair**	
ALAC	Alan Greenberg	
ICANN Staff Community Liaison	**Requestor**	
Heidi Ulrich	Evan Leibovitch	

REQUEST DESCRIPTION

1. Activity: **Please describe your proposed activity in detail**

SUMMARY:

Production of independent, factual, end-user-targeted information regarding the worldwide use and administration of domain names, as well as other components of the ICANN functions. This program will identify and deploy creative approaches to explaining difficult Internet concepts through the use of clear, colloquial language, using non-traditional media and presented in a light – humorous, if possible – tone.

RATIONALE:

As part of an attempt to block the IANA transition in late 2016, US Senator Ted Cruz, along with political collaborators and proxies, launched a global campaign of false information, conspiracy theories, and even personal attacks on the then-CEO of ICANN. With a communications strategy aimed at policy-makers, the domain industry and technically-savvy users, ICANN was ill-equipped to counter this. While Senator Cruz's campaign to derail the transition within Congress did not succeed, the results were far closer than expected and trust for ICANN as an organization was diminished within the end-user population. Moreover, the polarization, inaccuracies and hostility created by the campaign have subsided but not been eliminated; they could be revived at any time, and their tone can easily be repeated by actors in other countries hostile to the ICANN multi-stakeholder model.

In a society that honors free speech, ICANN cannot simply wish away or ban that which is hostile or false. The answer to malicious and false information is to confront it with utility and fact. While such confrontation will not change the minds of those attacking ICANN and multi-stakeholderism for political ends, it may succeed in reaching the billions of neutral observers who, in the absence of truth and clarity, have only heard from the fear-mongers and conspiracy theorists.

Moreover, a number of examples exist that demonstrate the ability to present complex Internet issues in clear lay language, often using humor to help convey the message. Two examples:

- "John Oliver: Net Neutrality" (June 1 2014, HBO)
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpbOEoRrHyU

- "Adam Conover: The Terrifying Cost of 'Free' Websites" (Dec 7 2016, TruTV and collegehumor.com) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pFX2P7JLwA

THE PROJECT:

Using a contest aimed at communications and visual arts students, we hope to find sources of independent, creative approaches to providing publicly-focused factual information through a variety of media (web, video podcasts, etc). An advisory committee will determine the priority topics and judge the winning proposals, a secretariat will create and publicize the contest, conduct supporting research/fact-checking, and oversee the execution and distribution of the final material.

The advisory committee is tentatively to be composed of:

- ICANN communications staff
- Expertise in video production
- Expertise in journalism
- Members of the ICANN At-Large Community
- Other expertise in Internet Governance

While the project (obviously) is counting on the support of ICANN and others, it is intentional that the media content produced as a result of the contest be independent and not official ICANN communications. Indeed, it is possible that some analysis and humor may not be totally in-line with ICANN messaging, but that is acceptable. What is most important is accuracy, relevance and understandability (and thus trustworthiness) by a maximum audience.

2. Type of Activity: e.g. Outreach - Education/training - Travel support - Research/Study - Meetings - Other

The activity is primarily one of education; however if successful, this program should also have the effect of increasing public involvement in ICANN's At-Large and non-commercial communities.

There is also a research component to ensure that content is factual and evidence-based.

3. Proposed Timeline/Schedule: e.g. one time activity, recurring activity

From the allocation of funding, approximately one year:

- Assembling of secretariat and advisory committee: 2 months
- Contest duration: 3 months
- Winning selection(s): 2 months
- Production of materials: 4 months
- Distribution: 1 month

Translation may extend the timelines.

Recurring activity is possible, depending on success of the initial project.

REQUEST OBJECTIVES

1. *Strategic Alignment.* **Which area of ICANN's Strategic Plan does this request support?**

1.2 **Improved regional engagement with stakeholders** through improved lay-language communications

2.3 **Support stability and trustworthiness of the domain name system** through reliable and accurate information, and specifically providing cogent responses to "false news" and baseless accusations

3.3 **Develop a global culture of knowledge and expertise** by improving access to factual information – not just

by organizations and people with a direct interest in ICANN, but in the global population

4.4 **Increase trust** through reliable access to information that builds understanding and confronts mis-truths

2. *Demographics.* What audience(s), in which geographies, does your request target?
The contest itself is going to be aimed at the journalistic and creative communities, primarily in educational environments The target of the program itself is the "billions": Internet end-users who have no experience (and likely no interest) in buying or selling Internet domains, yet are affected by domain-allocation and accountability policies. To get there the materials, once produced, should be brought to the attention of global NGOs, schools and universities. The geographical reach will only be limited by the languages and localizations supported.
3. *Deliverables.* What are the desired outcomes of your proposed activity?
One or more media products (which could be video, documents, audio, or graphic materials) that meet the criteria of the advisory committee regarding informational content.
4. *Metrics.* What measurements will you use to determine whether your activity achieves its desired outcomes?
Downloads and views of the materials is the immediate metric. Secondary metrics include: - Mainstream media attention - Social media activity - Increased interest and participation in At-Large and other ICANN constituencies.

RESOURCE PLANNING – INCREMENTAL TO ACCOMMODATE THIS REQUEST

Staff Support Needed (not including subject matter expertise):

Description	Timeline	Assumptions	Costs basis or parameters	Additional Comments
Publicity	At the beginning of the project (publicizing the contest) and the end (promoting the videos)	ICANN comms/PR staff have sufficient access to mainstream media		
Media production assistance	During creation of the media materials	ICANN has in-house media production facilities	Depends on what wins the contest	This would be supplemental to the contest winners' own resources if available
Administrative support	Throughout the project			if possible but not required if the secretariat is adequately resourced

Subject Matter Expert Support:

Primarily in assistance in finding judges for the selection committee, as described above

Technology Support: (telephone, Adobe Connect, web streaming, etc.)

Extensive teleconferencing support for use by secretariat and judges.
Internet-based hosting of winning materials
Media editing tools (as required, if available)

Language Services Support:

The intent is that the product(s) of this project will be applicable to a global audience. Real-world accessibility will be limited by the languages supported. Support could take the place of written translation, dubbing or subtitles depending on the chosen media. At very least: if the winning contest entry comes from non-English-native sources, an English translation of the media will be required.

Other:

If the Secretariat cannot be funded through this budget request, external funding/sponsorship will be required. This cannot be expected to be a wholly-volunteer activity, at very least because of the time requirements.

Travel Support:

1) For one person on the Secretariat, to an ICANN meeting where the contest is launched, to explain the concept, solicit for potential judges and advocate for wide awareness to maximize participation
2) For one person on the Secretariat, to an IGF meeting to explain the concept, solicit for potential judges and advocate for wide awareness to maximize participation
3) (optional) For the contest winner(s) to an ICANN meeting, for a ceremony to celebrate the selection

Potential/planned Sponsorship Contribution:

It is expected that additional external support is not only anticipated by would be extremely helpful in establishing the trust and independence of the materials. A number of other organizations are being identified as potential collaborators.