

At-Large ICANN67 Feedback from SOAC Chairs

SO/AC Chairs' Call on Wed. 18 March, 2020

Attended by: Katrina, Keith, Fred, Maureen, Rod & Manal

Feedback on ICANN67 Virtual Cancun Meeting

1. ICANN did an excellent job in holding this first-ever ICANN-wide remote meeting. Great technical and organizational preparations under very difficult circumstances and at a very short notice. Overall the meeting exceeded expectations and the sessions were well attended.
2. The time zone was a real issue for the Asia Pacific region. It will obviously be better for participants from Asia Pacific if/when Kuala Lumpur is virtual, yet KL Local Time of 09:00 - 16:00 will be 01:00 - 08:00 UTC. Accordingly, one idea may be to reduce the working hours, stretching the meeting over more days to reduce painful hours to the extent possible.
3. This remote meeting was an excellent opportunity to exercise prioritization of critical and time sensitive topics, encouraging more participation with fewer conflicts.
4. To further avoid conflicts of important community sessions, perhaps a little more coordination and involvement of SO/AC Chairs, when creating the ICANN schedule, is needed. For virtual meetings, more community prioritization is needed to better utilize the virtual meeting time. Some meetings could be held outside the virtual meeting schedule.
5. Appreciation for accommodating community requests to increase real time interpretation languages, which resulted in having French added to the already planned Spanish interpretation. Hoping that more languages could be accommodated for future meetings.
6. The biggest drawback of the virtual meeting was the challenge for some volunteer community members to prepare and present for their ICANN67 activities (as well as attempting to attend other sessions) at the same time as their day jobs.
7. Another challenge for some was having no decent internet connections at home.
8. Some sessions sounded more like a webinar than an interactive session, with pre-scribed text being read, making it boring for remote participants.
9. On the other hand, positive comments were made about At-Large sessions and how they attempted to convey information supporting At-Large capacity building goals and triggering participation from audience.
10. In order to organize interesting and interactive online discussions one needs to change their mind-set from f2f to virtual, also guided by the successful example set by ALAC.
11. Based on experience with "One World, One Internet" session, that was initially proposed by ALAC as a HIT request then successfully held as an ALAC session, more coordination is suggested for future cross-community HIT sessions whether F2F or virtual. One or two from each of the interested SO/AC may start working together to discuss and propose HIT topics from a multistakeholder perspective, suggesting the best format and approach for each topic. Community feedback will ensure that appropriate messages are being conveyed as well as ideas for how to encourage greater audience participation and engagement.
12. Importance of sharing, in advance of the sessions, relevant material that would give a sense of the speaker's view point before the meeting. This would help to have more interactive discussions during the meeting.
13. Zoom Chats were very useful, witnessed very interesting community discussions and indicated a wealth of knowledge shared at the same time of the presentations. ALAC, for example, are leveraging off these sources of information for ICANN Learn material etc.
14. Given the difficulty in identifying SO/AC members/participants within the attendees, there was a suggestion for ICANN to establish a naming protocol for remote meetings (as with asking questions or making comments). Training is needed for participants as well as presenters.
15. While it cannot be helped in our current situation, we need to be mindful of the heavy ICANN-related workloads that some volunteers have and ICANN needs to consider how they can ensure retention of those key participants, especially in these stressful times when they are still being expected to contribute. The community appreciates learning as soon as possible what decisions are being made by ICANN regarding planning for future virtual and F2F meetings.
16. The need to have a skeleton structure for virtual meetings like what we already have for Community Forum, Policy Forum, and Annual General Meeting. We also need to start thinking out of the box and change our F2F mind-set, in order to accommodate special requirements and characteristics of virtual meetings.
17. This successful experience is expected to encourage more remote participation during future F2F meetings.
18. There may be technical challenges with online platforms going forward, with everyone moving their activities online.
19. Call upon ICANN to document their experience in holding this meeting and make it available to other worldwide organizations and governments who are moving their meetings, events and activities online.