At-Large Workspace: Draft Community Travel Support Guidelines

Public Comment Close	Statement Name	Status	Assignee(s)	Call for Comments Open	Call for Comments Close	Vote Open	Vote Close	Date of Submission	Staff Contact and Email	Statement Number
16 July 2018	Draft Community Travel Support Guidelines	ADOPTED 14Y, 0N, 0A	Alan Greenberg	12 July 2018	15 July 2018	16 July 2018	19 July 2018	16 July 2018	Carlos Reyes carlos.reyes@icann.org	AL-ALAC-ST-0718-01-02-EN

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Brief Overview

Purpose: This public comment proceeding seeks input on the draft Community Travel Support Guidelines.

Current Status: The guidelines reflect the initial input received from the community consultation conducted between September 2017 and January 2018. They also reflect observations of ICANN Travel Support.

Next Steps: Public comments will be reviewed and either incorporated into the final draft or forwarded as appropriate.

Section I: Description and Explanation

The draft Community Travel Support Guidelines reflect the initial input received from the community consultation conducted between September 2017 and January 2018. They also reflect observations of ICANN Travel Support. This includes clarifying the:

- Purpose of community travel support
- Scope of the ICANN Travel Support function
- Communication, financial, and other travel responsibilities of supported travelers
- Options available for travel arrangements
- Other factors associated with the travel experience

Specific feedback received during the consultation about the ICANN Fellowship and NextGen@ICANN programs was forwarded to the Public Responsibility Support department. Similarly, input about the Community Regional Outreach Program (CROP) informed discussions about the FY19 Operating Plan and Budget. The Policy Development Support department also captured comments about community recognition which will inform an upcoming consultation on this topic.

Several community groups stressed the importance of more accountability as part of travel support. The ICANN org looks forward to working with those community groups specifically and the broader community on identifying appropriate and relevant metrics to inform the development of an accountability framework for travel support. Suggestions are welcome as part of this public comment proceeding as well.

Section II: Background

ICANN relies in part on the face-to-face interaction of community members to advance policy development and other work. In addition, ICANN is committed to facilitating the participation of those members not yet fully engaged with ICANN. Outside ICANN Public Meetings, much of ICANN's work is done over the Internet and through conference calls. Community members should consider using authorized tools and methods to participate remotely in ICANN Public Meetings and other approved ICANN events. Even with these options for remote participation, meeting face-to-face continues to be an important part of the ICANN process.

Currently, ICANN supports more than 300 community members to attend each ICANN Public Meeting and spends considerable resources on travel support for community members. The ICANN org Travel Support team is dedicated to ensuring that support is implemented fairly, consistently, economically, and with administrative efficiency for all supported travelers and for ICANN. Consistent with ICANN's commitment to accountability and transparency, these *Community Travel Support Guidelines* set forth the process and scope of ICANN's support of community travelers.

ICANN Travel Support updates the guidelines periodically based on community feedback gathered from:

- Public Comment processes
- Open sessions at ICANN Public Meetings
- Formal consultation with Supporting Organizations, Advisory Committees, stakeholder groups, and constituencies
- Individual community members

The *Community Travel Support Guidelines* are intended primarily for supported travelers attending an ICANN Public Meeting or other approved ICANN event. They also contain information about travel support intended for ICANN community groups that select supported travelers.

Section III: Relevant Resources

Draft Community Travel Support Guidelines [PDF, 281 KB]

Section IV: Additional Information

- Community Travel Support Webpage
- Community Travel Support Summaries
- Community Travel Support Reports
- Community Travel Support Guidelines Consultation

Section V: Reports

FINAL VERSION SUBMITTED (IF RATIFIED)

The final version to be submitted, if the draft is ratified, will be placed here by upon completion of the vote.

AL-ALAC-ST-0718-01-02-EN.pdf

FINAL DRAFT VERSION TO BE VOTED UPON BY THE ALAC

The final draft version to be voted upon by the ALAC will be placed here before the vote is to begin.

The ALAC appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed Travel Support Guidelines.

At-Large is unique within the ICANN Community in that virtually all volunteers in At-Large activities including those involving travel do so as true volunteers. None do so in support of their employers, few are employed by what could be considered the domain name industry or in activities supporting it, and many are not even employed in jobs supporting the Internet.

Without ICANN travel support the number of At-Large attendees at meetings would be a small number indeed. That is in contrast to much of the rest of the ICANN community, who regularly attended ICANN meetings and events before there was any general ICANN travel funding.

Our comments are general organized following the Draft Community Travel Support Guidelines document and most comments will be preceded by the Section title and page.

Travel Assistance and Support, Page 6

The last sentence says there are DISCRETIONARY travel costs that are not supported. The dictionary defines discretionary as "optional, voluntary or elective". There are non-discretionary expenses which travelers incur which are not reimbursable and for which per diems are not sufficient. The Guidelines must be accurate and clear.

Community Responsibilities, Page 7

This section lists time limits in days, not specifying if they are calendar days or work days (and if the latter, whose work days as they vary over the world). In at least some cases, the designated Travel Management Company does not operate on weekends. Travelers should be given the same courtesy having non-work days treated in a similar manner to how they are treated for ICANN staff and contractors.

Wire Transfer and FX Fees/Losses, Page 9

ICANN uses wire transfers because it is the most practical and presumably the cheapest way for ICANN to distribute per diems and reimbursements. Setting the limit for reimbursements at $50 per transfer (which could easily exceed 10% of the amount transferred) is not reasonable. All fees that can be demonstrated to be paid should be reimbursable or for regular travelers added to the amount transferred. At worst, travelers should be allowed to accumulate such fees and request reimbursement when they exceed a threshold (such as $50 or the $100 minimum for transfers described in the section on Deferred Payments.

Travel Insurance, Page 9

We suggest that the wording be changed to make it clear that travel insurance is the traveler's responsibility. Specifically "ICANN does not provide any travel insurance for travelers. ICANN will reimburse travel insurance expenses only if required to apply for visa. To be reimbursed, the supported traveler must provide proof that the insurance is required."

Travel by the Numbers, Page 10

It is unclear why the split of 0.4 : 0.4 : 0.2 is shown here. In the last, we have been told that we can split a slot with Air to one person and Hotel and Per Diem to another person. Does providing this table mean that in the future, we will be able to divide the total slot in other ways (such as including the Per Diem with Air, of fund three different travelers each getting one component of the slot? Or since they are both 0.4, we can provide two Airs and one Per Diem with a slot?

Clarity on what we may and may not do (and maybe even explaining why) would be appreciated.

Shared Funding for a Supported Traveler, Page 10

Air and other miscellaneous expenses are paid by the group that is funding the longest stay and Hotel and meal allowance can be split.

For most community travels are provided with a Per Diem to cover meals and other expenses such as local transfers. What are the "miscellaneous expenses" that are bundled with Air?

Approved Dates of Arrival and Departure, Page 10

ICANN regularly requires that a traveller take flights that arrive late at night, often after a very long trip, and the traveler is expected to be present and alert early the next morning - at times with the expected (and reasonable) result that they do not make their first meeting. If a traveler has an early morning start to meetings and the only practical flights available have late arrivals, arrival the previous day should be allowed.

ICANN quite reasonably will book a hotel room for the night prior to arrival if the flight is due to arrive quite early in the morning. But if a traveler prefers to take a flight that allows them to arrive in time to sleep in the same room for the entire night, it is not allowed. Something such as this which allows a modicum of comfort to the traveler at no cost to ICANN should be allowed.

Special Circumstances, Page 12

Presumably the reference to providing additional financial support for a single trip means a single RETURN trip.

Reimbursement, Page 12

In some cases, the $200 limit is not reasonable. Visa costs can be quite expensive, and courier fees along, which are often mandatory, can easily exceed this amount. ICANN claims it wants to be inclusive and encourage diversity. The CCWG-Accountability WS2 recommendations reinforce this. Travel Guidelines have to be realistic about the costs incurred in parts of the world and not limit them to costs that are reasonable in Western developed countries.

ICANN-Arranged Travel, Page 13.

This method ensures the lowest trip cost and allows ICANN Travel Support to manage the security and well-being of supported travelers.

This sounds very good and the ALAC understands that the implication is that if a professional travel provider establishes the itinerary, then that will be better for the traveler's security and well-being.

But the reality is that these itineraries provided by Travel Support do not always meet this standard. Layovers may be very long (10-12 hours), but if they occur during day hours (in the physical location if not the travelers biological time), no day-room or similar accommodation is provided.

Itineraries must also be effective from the traveler's point of view, and not just lowest cost.

Moreover, ICANN has at times demonstrated itself to be particularly insensitive to travelers with physical disabilities or special needs, and that is not acceptable, particularly when it is done for minimal savings at a significant cost in time, inconvenience or pain to the traveler.

Self-Arranged Travel, Page 13

The ALAC appreciates that self-arranged travel is allowed for. However, for travelers who may choose to do so, it would be far preferable to allow them to request a blanket approval for such travel and not make them request it each time, having to wait for approval to be "granted" prior to making air arrangements. Unless there are cases where such permission will be refused for regular travelers, why place the extra impediment in the way, causing delays for the traveler and extra work for ICANN staff? Of course, such travel will be reimbursed ONLY if the traveler is actually approved for that meeting and that should be part of the blanket approval conditions.

At-Large travelers have been told that Self-Arranged Travel is available only for ICANN meetings and not for, for example, CROP trips. If that is indeed the case, it should be explicitly stated. The section on Maximum Reimbursable Fares implies that this is not the case (or perhaps will not be the case once these guidelines are in effect).

Although the maximum reimbursable airfare is based on a nonrefundable economy class ticket, supported travelers may purchase any type of fare and any class of service, as long as the fare is under the maximum reimbursable fare for their region.

Is this accurate, or is it the case that a traveler may purchase a ticket at any cost but will only be reimbursed the Maximum fare specified? Certainly in the last it was the latter.

Reimbursement for Self-Arranged Travel, Page 14

There is no excuse for a travel expense to take 50-60 days after approval for payment. Surely ICANN has sufficiently advanced financial systems so as to pay creditors, including volunteers in a timelier manner.

Preferred Travel Itinerary, Page 14

In cities which ostensibly have more than one large airport, there can be very significant cost (both financial and time) to the traveler in selecting one airport over another. This must be factored into itinerary selection.

Business Class Travel, Page 14

It is appreciated that ICANN provides business class travel to those who volunteer to lead out SOs and ACs. However, the same courtesy and message of appreciation should be extended to those who Chair ICANN Specific Reviews. These Bylaw-mandated reviews (formerly Affirmation of Commitments Reviews) require a very significant time and effort commitment and should be similarly treated.

Consideration should also be given to extending the same courtesy to selected Cross-Community working groups. The IANA Stewardship Transition and Accountability CCWG are two such examples where the Chair or Co-Chair commitments were indeed impressive and should be recognized.

Unauthorized Dates of Arrival or Departure, Page 15

On page 6, in the section on the Purpose of Travel Support it says:

When travel support is economical and feasible, ICANN can support the maximum number of travelers.

Yet, in this section it says that early arrival or late departure will not be allowed, even if the net cost to ICANN factoring in hotel and other costs) is less. It is appreciated that ICANN does not want to be seen as providing free vacations to its volunteers. But if ICANN's designated Travel Management Company certifies that there is a net savings, at times a savings of several thousand dollars from allowing a traveler to arrive early or leave late, and the traveler is willing to extend their travel away from work and family, what is the possible justification for not availing ICANN of the savings.

To be clear, this is not a hypothetical question. There are demonstrable cases) one of them as recent as the ICANN62 meeting) where travel on the assigned dates would cost ICANN thousands of dollars more, but the ICANN decision was to pay the higher fare unless the traveler was willing to pay for their own hotels room and other costs for several days (and of course, ended up working on ICANN matters and not taking the time off).

Rail Travel, Page 17

It is not reasonable to deny a traveler first class rail travel, which is often the only way to obtain a reserved seat (something that ICANN will pay for with air travel), when such travel is under the minimum cost of economy air travel. The ability to have a reserved seat is a minimum requirement.

It is similarly unreasonable to not allow a traveler to book their own rail travel and be reimbursed.

Early Check-In and Late Check-Out, Page 18

In many parts of the world, very late night departures are common. A traveler may well have had to check out of their room early in the day and then wait for a flight that might leave well after midnight. ICANN should at the least provide one or more rooms which a traveler can reserve for a period of time to shower and change cloths before departing on a long-haul journey late at night. The cost to ICANN would be low and the benefit to travelers great.

Ground Transportation, Page 21

It is understood that Per Diems are INTENDED to cover any ground transportation, but in cases where home-airport travel is demonstrably more expensive than the norm, it must be reimbursable.

Per Diem, Page 22

For travel to other approved ICANN events, ICANN Travel Support confirms the per diem amount via email.

If this is supposed to be the current case, it is broken, as it does not happen, at least in some cases.

At one point, ICANN notified travelers by e-mail whenever a Per Diem was transferred, giving the details (number of days, daily amount and value in the currency on the recipient). This happened sporadically and stopped several years ago. It should be reinstated as it makes it crystal clear to the traveler what is happening.

For years, Per Diems were transferred in the traveler's preferred currency (as ICANN does for any vendor). That stopped several months ago (at least for some travelers).

General Comments

ICANN and its designated Travel Management Company should be subject to service level commitments. At times the response from Constituency Travel and Travel Management Company is absolutely fabulous. And at other times it takes DAYs to get a simple answer.

Related to this, the designated Travel Management Company should be given the discretion to ticket itineraries that are within certain guidelines without having to wait for Constituency Travel approval, which at times can take days. ICANN should contract with a firm it trusts, periodically audit it and not need to intervene in every case.

Typo:

Communications Responsibilities, Page 7, Numbered item 4: ICANN travel Support sends a <u>FOURTH</u> email.

DRAFT SUBMITTED FOR DISCUSSION

The first draft submitted will be placed here before the call for comments begins. The Draft should be preceded by the name of the person submitting the draft and the date/time. If, during the discussion, the draft is revised, the older version(S) should be left in place and the new version along with a header line identifying the drafter and date/time should be placed above the older version(s), separated by a Horizontal Rule (available + Insert More Content control).

Posted by Alan Greenberg, 11 July 018

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