

## **Statement on CROP funding FY18/19**

The more expensive locations of the ICANN-appointed Public Meeting venues in FY19 and ICANN resources remaining stable, have been quoted as the reasons for the decreased support for constituent travellers in the draft FY19 budget. ICANN also suggests that to preserve the core constituent travel support to SOs/ACs, CROP must be eliminated. Both of these decisions are top-down from ICANN Org. Although ICANN's volunteer community is integral to the consultation process with regards to its mission based activities, in the interests of affected global end-users, these important organisational decisions have been made with NO consultation with the volunteer communities who will be most affected by these decisions.

In FY18, Additional Budget Requests were in the order of \$600,000. The FY19 budget says that these have been cut by more than 50%. Since in the past, many Additional Budget Requests (ABRs) were rejected and it was suggested that CROP(P) be used instead, in FY19, these two cuts are compounded.

The At-Large Outreach and Engagement WG and the RALO leadership strive through their annual CROP strategic plans to maximize the impact of their Outreach and Engagement with very few interventions funded by ICANN. CROP has been one of the major tools at the RALO's disposal to make a tangible difference for recruitment and building awareness of the role and purpose of At-Large to the wider Internet community. The elimination of CROP funds will greatly impact regional outreach and engagement.

After the success of the CROPP program and its subsequent transition to ICANN's core budget, RALOs were encouraged to include CROP as integral to their long-term regional Outreach and Engagement Strategies. But the sudden and unforeseen elimination of the programme will affect RALOs the most during FY19. In some regions, CROP has already been planned for major regional events which have been targeted for increased ICANN focus.

Furthermore, there is still a need to reach out to potential Individual members particularly to previously underserved regions to enhance multi-stakeholderism as well as encourage them to contribute to the At-Large Policy Development Process. Lack of support and funding will greatly affect the outreach strategies of the different RALOs. CROP's benefit is that it enabled ALSes to attend, present and represent ICANN At-Large at conferences. Without CROP, many ALSes will not be able to carry out these activities.

### **Recommendations**

The team recommends that

- Preserve CROP spending at current levels
- Despite the fact that the discretionary funds cannot be used for travel and are limited to local outreach, CROP outcomes must provide actual outputs that benefit the ICANN mission. The slashing of the CROP for the FY 18/19 shows that it contributes less to the ICANN Mission.