

Memo

To: ICANN Budget Officers

From: TBD

Date: TBD

Subject: In support of the ICANN Contractual Compliance budget request for improvements to Consumer Complaint Intake System

Background

The GNSO Inter Registrar Transfer Policy (IRTP-B) and Registration Abuse Policy (RAP) working groups have made extensive data-requests of Contractual Compliance over the past several months. Members have found the data extremely helpful in their policy conversation (and Contractual Compliance very responsive), even as Contractual Compliance has struggled with time-consuming manual processes to support those requests. This experience highlights the need for more and better information processes going forward.

Some members of the GNSO IRTP-B working group learned that Contractual Compliance is submitting a \$50,000 to \$100,000 budget request to enhance the Consumer Complaint Intake System and offered to prepare this informal memo in support of that request. The opinions expressed in this memo are those of the signatories and not their employers nor the Working Groups they're participating in.

Problem Statement

Several groups of people would benefit from improvements in the Consumer Complaint Intake System:

- **End-users and registrants** find it confusing and difficult to identify the most appropriate problem-reporting venue or action to take when they experience problems.
- **Registrars and registries** are frustrated if their customers file complaints in error, in the wrong place or without first seeking help from the provider.
- **Working and advisory groups** find their work hampered by the difficulty in obtaining reliable (rather than anecdotal) data upon which to base policy decisions.

- **ICANN Contractual Compliance** is likely to face an ever-increasing demand for timely information and analysis, which divert substantial staff resources from work that requires actual human type people to accomplish.

Goals

A project to upgrade the Consumer Complaint Intake System could address the following goals:

- **Improve overall DNS process quality** – by providing better data, more quickly, in formats that lend themselves to better analysis by a wide variety of participants and stakeholders. The foundation of the old quality adage “that which gets measured gets done” is credible granular data backed up with good process-analysis.
- **Make us more nimble** – by helping to identify emerging problems, and evaluate the effectiveness of fixes, more quickly.
- **Enhance the value and effectiveness of voluntary anti-abuse process-investments of registrars and registries** – by helping the community identify and correct the actions of non-compliant organizations.
- **Drive out fear** – by moving policy and compliance conversations from the anecdotal and emotional towards the factual, plus highlighting Registrar best practices and success stories in addition to failures.
- **Reduce costs and improve Contractual Compliance service responsiveness** – by automating the largely manual processes that are currently in place.
- **Advance ICANN goals** – good data about the experiences of users of the DNS and IANA processes will be very helpful in measuring progress toward the four major ICANN goals.

Critical Success Factors

We have some ideas about things that should be done well, so that this project succeeds. Most of us have implemented trouble-ticket systems of one sort or another over our careers and most of our companies are very sophisticated users of such systems. So we’d like to share some “lessons learned” with you:

- **Look outside your silo** – this system has a lot of customers both inside and outside of ICANN. Make sure you understand their needs when you do this project. Involve those stakeholders from the start – as advisors or members of a steering committee. We can help you avoid a lot of mistakes.
- **Don’t reinvent the wheel** – trouble-ticket systems have been around a long time and there are lots of good ones available. There are even really good open-source ones that can be acquired for free.

- **Don't confuse acquisition cost with implementation cost** – budget some (most?) money/time/attention on implementing the system. That's where the value and benefits are achieved. Involve stakeholders in the process.
- **Be bold - don't tinker around the edges** – avoid the temptation to incrementally-change a system that may not scale up to the future that's rushing towards you.

Observations

We have several points we'd like to share with the Budget Officers regarding this and similar budget requests from ICANN staff.

- We share a concern over the growth of the ICANN budget and do not want this statement of support to be construed to mean that we offer carte blanche support for budget expansion
- We are much more enthusiastic about technical and process-improvement budget items that directly improve the quality and responsiveness of ICANN's operations (hence this memo)
- We would encourage ICANN to break out the budget in more detail, so that specific projects, like this one, are visible to those of us who will ultimately vote to approve the budget
- This more-granular approach to budgeting will also help ICANN move toward the goal of greater transparency

Statement of Support

We support the budget request for improvements to this system and hope that this memo will advance the cause with the Budget Officers. A number of us would also be willing to help with the project as it unfolds.