

22 February 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on ICANN's draft Operating Plan and Budget for the fiscal year 2019.

While I am a representative of the Non-Commercial Stakeholders Group (NCSG) on the GNSO Council, serve on the NCSG's Policy Committee, and chair the GNSO's Standing Committee on Budget and Operations, I am responding to this consultation in my personal capacity. My comments do not necessarily represent the views of these (or other) groups and I have not sought their endorsement of the feedback that I am going to share in this comment.

In this comment, I will make three requests. I ask that ICANN:

- Look inward at its own overall spending patterns;
- Provide the community with an appropriate level of support commensurate with our responsibilities under the ICANN Bylaws; and
- Reevaluate the spend on capacity development programmes for their effectiveness in leading to engagement in ICANN's policy development processes and mission.

Look inward at ICANN's own overall spending patterns

Over the past decade, ICANN the corporation has grown significantly in size and value and has become an end in and of itself, rather than the means (legal entity) to an end (global management of the DNS). ICANN's 1999 annual budget totalled only \$3.4 million in expenses, however the organisation's budget has climbed steadily since its inception, with the proposed 2019 operating budget sitting at \$138 million. The projected budget for the fiscal year 2019 sees personnel costs increase to \$76.9 million, a 10% increase over 2018, and now comprising some 56% of the budget. A further \$23.4 million, or 17% of the budget, is allocated to outside consultants, attorneys, and other "professional services." There is a perception that staff and consultants make many of the real policy decisions, long before issues are packaged and presented to 'the community' for consideration.

I could provide countless examples of where I have seen this happened, but this Budget is a good case in point. Note how the draft Budget published 19 January 2018 presumes a 50% decrease in the size of the fellowship programme, however ICANN org did not begin consulting with the community until 31 January 2018 as to the future direction of the fellowship programme. The outcome appears to me to have been pre-determined.

This is not an isolated incident and I do not believe this to be merely my perception; I believe this to be a community-wide perception that can only be countered if the community sees and feels that it is being listened to. Another example: on a January 2018 call discussing the speed with which ICANN staff had assessed community comments related to the GDPR, the President of the Intellectual Property Constituency asked the ICANN CEO:

“To what extent were the community models considered and how, if so, were they integrated into these 3 compliance models [ICANN] put out? ... I would just like to point out that there was basically a two day window between when these [community] models were submitted and when these [ICANN org] models were spun out, so that must have been very challenging for you all to incorporate that all so quickly.”¹

The pace at which ICANN the corporation is growing causes concern, because enormous amounts of money and other resources can be steered or restricted by staff. It is at least my perception that ICANN staff or consultants more often than not hold the pen when it comes to drafting policy recommendations, working group proposals and reports, and the implementation details behind community decisions. It is staff who can make the call to seek (or not) external legal advice in working groups; it is staff who know and set the internal timelines that the organisation has budgeted for a working group to complete its work. And, with the removal of the Community Regional Outreach Programme (CROP) from the FY19 Budget, it seems it will primarily be ICANN staff, and not community members, empowered with the resources to attend regional events and to be the voice of ICANN. This is not a criticism of the very good work that ICANN staff and consultants do – I recognise how hard they work – but it is a flaw, in my mind, in ICANN’s governance structure and the policy development and implementation process.

¹ Recording: <https://participate.icann.org/p3rrgibbnhe/>. Comments begin 32:29.

Provide the community with an appropriate level of support commensurate with our responsibilities under the ICANN Bylaws

What I see in this budget are attempts to stifle non-commercial participation in ICANN activities, while continuing to increase the power of ICANN staff, consultants, and commercial stakeholders to engage in these same processes and to influence or make decisions. I allege no malfeasance here, but rather see this as the inevitable consequence of the proposed budget being adopted as-is.

What I have always valued in ICANN's unique, multistakeholder model has been the understanding that no one stakeholder should, or can, manage the global DNS. It is the blending of these sometimes conflicting interests that results in the 'best' policy decisions being made. However, within the proposed budget there has been a radical halving of community support through the Additional Budgetary Request (ABR) process. This is an avenue through which both commercial and non-commercial stakeholders and both the contracted and non-contracted parties can seek support, be that for internal capacity building, assistance with horizon scanning or research, or modest support to engage in outreach activities that build the community's membership, allowing new voices to be reached, and further legitimising ICANN's usage of the multistakeholder model. From time to time, the community has even received pressure from ICANN staff to submit ABRs in order for what I consider to be core activities to be undertaken.²

This budgetary envelope was developed initially through a bottom-up process, and has developed into a major way to engage communities. Given this, I cannot support any cuts to the allocated budget for ABRs. This is not to say that all requests submitted must be approved; all requests should be reviewed for their benefit to ICANN's core mission and activities, and those which do not meet this criteria should not be funded. However, I am concerned that the present approach to cuts will result in important and legitimate community requests for modest support not receiving the necessary funding to fulfil our outreach, onboarding, and in-reach objectives. As I and others rely on the input, advice, and participation of the broader ICANN community in order to remain informed on the various issues, I foresee negative implications impacting the community's policy work arising from the proposed cuts to the ABR envelope.

² For instance, the GNSO Council was asked by ICANN staff to submit an ABR for a working group enrolment tool.

I am greatly troubled by the absence of references to the Community Regional Outreach Programme (CROP) in the FY19 Budget. In its most recent staff assessment following a year-long review, ICANN staff concluded, “It remains Staff’s view that CROP can be a useful tool for volunteer structures (e.g., Constituencies, RALOs) to develop and strengthen their stakeholder groups.”³ In addition, on the ICANN website CROP is referred to as a core activity that ICANN org has recognised as being a success:

“Following another successful implementation of the CROPP in FY17, the “pilot” program label has been removed and the activity has been moved to the Policy Development Support budget as part of the core activities to be coordinated by that staff in collaboration with the GSE team.”⁴

Following an enquiry, the Finance department has confirmed that CROP has been discontinued in the FY19 Budget.⁵ From what I understand, a Senior Vice President made the executive decision that CROP be cancelled over the objections of other staff who saw the merit of CROP. Every division within ICANN was given targets for cuts, and this individual decided to focus their cuts on community-related expenditure in order to protect their staff.

I believe that CROP has been successful at attracting new, diverse, and active community members to the various member constituencies, both commercial and non-commercial. It has increased public participation in the multistakeholder model. It has widened ICANN’s international engagement efforts, and it has enhanced trust in ICANN as an institution. I do not only support CROP’s continuation, I support its enlargement. I believe this initiative should be open to the entire ICANN community, including both the contracted and non-contracted parties, because CROP creates a bridges between the ICANN community and the outside world. In cutting CROP you weaken community participation in ICANN’s policy development processes, and by extension, hamper ICANN’s own legitimacy. The community sometimes comes under fire for not reaching a consensus policy or responding to an issue in a timely manner. You cannot expect the community to be meaningfully engaged in policy development if our budget is cut and we are left significantly under-resourced.

³ See page 14 - <https://community.icann.org/download/attachments/71601389/CROPP%20Summary%20Report-FY17%20%28final%29.pdf?version=2&modificationDate=1507291071000&api=v2>

⁴ <https://community.icann.org/display/soaceoutreach>

⁵ <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/draft-fy19-opplan-budget-questions-responses-13feb18-en.pdf>

At ICANN 55 in Marrakech, representatives of the NCSG communicated to the Board that we needed to build our capacity to absorb an increased, growing, and specialised workload.⁶ Since then, we have been asked to participate in more and more working groups, review teams, and to comment on more and more policy issues. We have done this; submitting 31 public comments in 2017, a substantial increase from the 7 comments we submitted in 2016.

I am not saying that CROP alone has been behind this increase in productivity, but it is one variable. The NCSG's leaders and community veterans have identified volunteer burnout within our community as having reached a critical juncture, and it has been an operational priority for us to encourage new, long-term participation in our ICANN activities. I have personally used CROP to recruit new members to our community who were already active in other Internet policy activities and who had a demonstrated professional interest in using policy to achieve social and political change. These are people who had the capacity to be quickly brought up to speed on ICANN's policy work. Other CROP recipients have told me that their attendance at forums with the support of CROP has allowed them to promote and assess the embodiment of ICANN principles in other Internet governance processes.

The best case for the continuation of CROP lays in the year-long staff analysis of the programme published in 2017. It works, and at an extraordinarily low cost to ICANN.

Moving forward, I would like to introduce additional metrics and accountability for CROP expenditure (in other words, it is not enough to send people to conferences to do "outreach"; there has to be a deliverable or subsequent outcome of some kind).

As it stands, the expectation of CROP recipients is that we are responsible for recruiting our own members at events, staffing our own booths, arranging our own panels and workshops, and preparing our associated talking points. We must also prepare a strategy for the event before our travel is booked, and report back within three weeks of the event concluding on the outcomes. These are fair and reasonable expectations, but I am happy to enter into a conversation around how we can do a better job at assessing the return from ICANN's spend. I would also like to work on revising the selection criteria to ensure that only community leaders and pioneers, and not newcomers, are receiving this resource. I believe this is more in line with the spirit of the programme and what it is setting out to achieve.

⁶ <https://meetings.icann.org/en/marrakech55/schedule/tue-board-ncsg/transcript-board-ncsg-08mar16-en.pdf>

A part of me wonders if this cut is meant to be purely symbolic. There has long been the claim advanced that ICANN is a traveling circus. If the intent behind cropping CROP was because it would reduce the community's visibility at external events, I ask that this decision be re-evaluated please. During the Non-Contracted Parties House Intersessional in February 2018, the CEO said that it was important that the Global Stakeholder Engagement team attend events face-to-face and conduct outreach, because "we all believe, at least I believe, how important it is to bring that notion of diversity into ICANN's world."⁷ This is a notion that the community similarly supports. If there is a need for ICANN staff to attend events and to frame ICANN as a welcoming and open space where new voices can speak and be heard, I believe it is equally important for ICANN community members to continue engaging in these same spaces evangelising about how others can become involved in ICANN processes.

On a process front, I consider it unacceptable to remove a core activity from the Budget without first notifying the community. Its withdrawal will have a significant impact on community engagement and volunteerism. This is further problematic because, being unaware that CROP was being cut, the community was unable to submit ABRs for these very activities, as we had expected them to continue to be funded through the core budget, as had been the case for all of recent memory.

Finally, the stabilisation in funding for constituency-supported travel concerns me for another reason; it suggests to me that feedback shared with ICANN as a part of the November 2017 consultation on the allocation of community resources has not been actioned upon. In the NCSG's response, for instance, the NCSG said "We believe there should be a common travel policy for all ICANN funded travellers who are active participants in ICANN policy work, whether they be ICANN board members, ICANN senior management, or community members" and recommended "reasonable adjustments [be made] to the community travel guidelines to ensure that participants are able to travel to meetings at reasonable cost and in reasonable comfort."⁸ Given the projected cost budgeted for each supported traveller for FY19 remains fairly stable, it seems that ICANN has not sought to make modest and reasonable improvements to the travel guidelines to ensure supported travellers arrive at each ICANN public meeting able to work productively from day one.

⁷ https://community.icann.org/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=69278510&preview=/69278510/79433420/transcript_intersessional_CEO_020218.pdf

⁸ https://docs.google.com/document/d/1CNZrZ1OK9SL416h-IYuearVqDI_8grDsXLEKhqwQBHA/edit?usp=sharing

The impact of these three decisions – to reduce the budget for ABRs, to eliminate CROP, and to make no modest improvements to constituency travel – will disproportionately hurt the community, and in particular, non-commercial stakeholders. There is another argument that could be advanced (but which I have opted not to include) that posits the disappearance of other projects from the proposed Budget, like the Community Onboarding Programme, could also be seen as hindering non-commercial participation in ICANN processes.

The reality is that the vast majority of ICANN community volunteers are a part of the domain name industry, or are persons whose job functions are directly or indirectly linked to ICANN-related matters. With or without the aid of the ICANN organisation, volunteers seeking to expand trademark rights or to eliminate consumer protections will continue to come to meetings and to participate in working groups. After all, their livelihoods depend on ICANN. But the situation is different for non-commercial stakeholders. For most of us, our livelihoods are not dependent on ICANN. We are volunteers in the purest sense in that our employers do not fund or sanction our participation at ICANN, and we have no financial ties that see us want to do anything but facilitate ICANN's stated objective of promoting the global public interest. In return, we legitimise the concept of the Empowered Community, with our public interest-orientated contributions providing balance against commercial interests.

While we are structurally marginalised at ICANN, with less voting members on the Nominating Committee than the Commercial Stakeholders Group has for instance, fulfilling our chartered mandate becomes ever more difficult because it is difficult to retain qualified volunteers. Volunteers with the right background and qualifications accept not being compensated for the time they spend in working groups, reviewing documents, or building their constituencies, but find the disrespect that they are paid by the organisation particularly painful. When there are such large cuts being proposed to community support and, at the same time, the resources being allocated to personnel are increasing by some 10%, it is difficult not to think that the work that community members do is not valued by ICANN org. It is puzzling why ICANN has paid so much attention to the small sliver of the budget allocated towards the community, taking a hatchet to hack away at our crumbs, when it has not paid a similar level of attention to the rest of the organisation's spend. I do not believe that the community should be subjected to the most significant cuts when our modest expenditure represents such a small percentage of the overall budget.

Outreach, engagement, and capacity building efforts are critical to the community maintaining a sustainable source of volunteers from diverse regions and backgrounds, and the absence of ABRs, CROP, and sensible revisions to the community travel guidelines will see us either lose our most qualified volunteers to other projects, or be unable to bring said volunteers to meetings to offer public interest-orientated contributions that provide balance against state and market interests.

I believe this impact that non-commercial volunteers are likely to uniquely suffer, as commercial stakeholders and government actors will continue to have access to the resources to travel to external conferences and public ICANN meetings, for instance, is inconsistent with recommendation 10.5 of the Accountability and Transparency Review 2 report. This report was accepted by the Board in June 2014 and called for ICANN to “facilitate the equitable participation in applicable ICANN activities, of those ICANN stakeholders who lack the financial support of industry players.”⁹

The right thing for ICANN to do, in my opinion, would be to level the playing field and to modestly support those who are trying to advance policy objectives that would make ICANN a more effective, accountable, and inclusive institution.

Reevaluate the spend on capacity development programmes for their effectiveness in leading to engagement in ICANN’s policy development processes and mission

I have given significant thought to the proposed reductions in size to the ICANN fellowship and NextGen programmes, and think ICANN is right in outcome (but not in process) to trim spend here. It is my opinion that the ICANN fellowship programme is not fit for purpose and has not been for some time, and so I strongly support the proposed rightsizing of the programme in the FY19 budget. I think the optimal size of the fellowship programme would be 15 participants per meeting, including coaches, booth leads, and Indigenous ambassadors. Similarly, while I support the continuation of the NextGen@ICANN programme, with the passage of time it has grown to become too large. I believe the optimal size is six participants, including one ambassador. Finally, I believe the ICANN Academy and ICANN Learn initiatives must be re-evaluated in the context of the current budgetary situation.

⁹ <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/final-recommendations-31dec13-en.pdf>

This is a very different position than I would have taken two years ago, when I was a great advocate for ICANN investing in various capacity building activities. However, and it saddens me to say this, I have come to question their effectiveness and no longer believe they offer an appropriate return on investment. I think that if we are honest, and take a balanced look at the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead as we think about how we can bring new voices into the ICANN community, we have to say that ICANN's programmes at the moment aren't working. For these programmes to be sustainable, they must work.

I consider myself to be new to the ICANN community, because objectively I am. After participating in the NextGen@ICANN programme in Dublin at ICANN 54 in October 2015, I joined the NCSG and subsequently began participating in ICANN policy activities. As far as I am aware, I am the only alumnus of the NextGen@ICANN programme who serves in a community leadership role. Over the past two and a half years I have had significant interaction with all subsequent NextGen participants and many of the ICANN fellows. Based on these interactions – having spoken at five ICANN meeting fellowship newcomer days, and having served thrice on the selection committee of the NextGen@ICANN programme – it is my view that without serious structural changes to how fellows, NextGenners, and other participants in capacity building programmes are selected and onboarded into the community, these programmes will never accomplish their important goals.

When I speak to new participants it quickly becomes apparent that they do not have a rudimentary understanding of what the Domain Name System is, nor is it of interest to them. Most fellows are interested in broader Internet governance topics, like expanding access to the Internet, addressing cybersecurity challenges, or preventing Internet shutdowns. These are important issues but they are not within ICANN's mission and are not what ICANN does.

ICANN's capacity building programmes were established to provide access to ICANN meetings to individuals from underserved and underrepresented communities, but I do not believe this happens in practice. In practice, fellows tend to be friends of past fellows and come from relatively privileged backgrounds in their home countries. There is also not a high turnover of participants. There have been creative ways advanced by ICANN staff to expand the programme and to get around what was supposed to be a hard limit of only being a fellow thrice – becoming a mentor, coach, senior coach, booth lead, ambassador, "honorary fellow."

I believe the inability to recruit suitable candidates for these programmes is a staff failure. When I served on the selection committee for the NextGen programme, I would be forwarded applications that did not meet the advertised selection criteria (for instance, the applicant was older than 31, or did not live in the meeting region). For one meeting round, I suggested the call for candidates be re-advertised, as I believed none of the candidates I had been sent were qualified for the NextGen programme. From what I understand, ICANN staff have a metric that requires they fill the seats, but not necessarily to fill the seats with qualified candidates. ICANN needs to improve its external recruitment efforts to bring awareness of these opportunities to potential fellows and NextGenners, as current efforts are ineffective.

From conversations I have had with ICANN staff I understand it is extremely difficult to find candidates for these programmes. It should not be difficult to find applicants for a fellowship which includes funded travel to an international conference, but it is, and I believe this is contributing to the disturbing trend whereby one participates in the NextGen programme, then serves subsequently as an ambassador, and then becomes a fellow three times, a fellow coach another three times, then a senior fellow coach three times, and sometimes then a booth lead. The NextGen and fellowship programmes are meant to be separate and distinct. I find it problematic that there is an increasing overlap of participants between the two tracks, but it seems this is the only way that ICANN is able to fill the funded seats.

This is happening across all of the capacity development programmes. One of the current participants in the community onboarding programme, for example, has been funded by ICANN to attend more meetings than I have, despite having never taken the pen on a comment, not being a member of a working group, and routinely skipping the ICANN meeting itself as a funded traveller to participate in sightseeing activities. When I brought this to the attention of the Fellowship Coordinator at ICANN 56 in Helsinki, I was told that ICANN staff were “not in the business of assessing whether or not someone is an active community member.” Maybe they should be in a fairly objective sense. If, after being a NextGen participant, NextGen ambassador, fellow multiple times, and a community onboarding participant for six meetings, and one still cannot display any involvement in community activities and does not come to the meeting venue every day, perhaps it is time for ICANN to cut its losses and to try educating someone else.

I would never call for austerity at the expense of good judgement. If I thought these programmes were succeeding in bringing new active participants into ICANN policy processes, I would enthusiastically support their continuation. After all, their cost as a percentage of the overall budget is negligible. But I feel very strongly that they do not work.

However, there is a final point that I would like to make, and I believe it to be an important one. While I support ICANN in its decision to reduce the size of these programmes, I have a procedural objection. I do not support drastic and dramatic cuts being made to core budgetary items without community consultation. This budget, which contained the proposal to shrink the fellowship and NextGen programmes, was published on 19 January 2018. It was not until 31 January 2018 that ICANN staff opened a consultation to understand community perspectives on the future of the fellowship programme. No such consultation has been opened on the NextGen programme, with the fellowship consultation documents specifically requesting that the community not comment on NextGen. This is improper. ICANN should not put forward such proposals without first listening to community input on the effectiveness of these programmes (in terms of leading to engagement with ICANN's policy development processes, and ICANN's core mission) and publishing evidence supporting the reduction in the programme's size. I believe the organisation holds enough data already to be able to make the case: the names of the fellowship alumni are public, as are the names of those who are in leadership roles both within the community and on the Board. It should not be a huge task to map out just how effective the fellowship programme has been at bringing in new, active participants into the ICANN community when there is 10 years of data already available.

ICANN should do this. Just as I have anecdotes of where I have seen the programme fail, others will have anecdotes of fellowship success stories. Anecdotes can guide us just as easily as they can mislead us. There's the inevitable selection bias (only the exceptional cases make for interesting stories), there are no controls for confounding variables, and sometimes they aren't even verifiable. But ICANN can generate objective, systematic data by mapping out what has been the actual progression of fellowship alumni into ICANN leadership roles.

There is one ICANN-funded capacity development programme that I think does have the potential to work: the pilot community onboarding programme. I understand that this project is not being funded in FY19, and I support that decision, but I would suggest this perhaps be re-considered in FY20 and beyond following community consultation.

The reason why I support the onboarding programme not returning in FY19 is because the original programme was always meant to end but, with the passage of time, its original objectives became lost and the programme's name has caused community confusion over what it was intending to achieve. The initial goal of the programme was to enable each part of the ICANN community to develop a set of evergreen onboarding materials that would allow newcomers to that community to quickly be brought up to speed on how to contribute to that community's policy work. However, some parts of the community were not familiar with this goal, and instead appointed total newcomers to it, expecting that they would be onboarded by ICANN staff on how to participate in policy work. The programme's original administrator mismanaged it and had no expectations of participants. She continued to allocate travel resources, meeting after meeting, even to participants who were not engaged and had expressed on the public record that they did not care for the Domain Name System. The programme received a new administrator in mid-2017 who quickly changed this, setting clearer expectations for participants and holding them to account for performance failures. Now that these evergreen materials have been developed, the programme's original objective has been met, and the programme should rightly be terminated.

However, I feel fortunate in that I am able to speak to how one of the unintended consequences of the programme – the failure of the original administrator to police participation – helped assimilate me into the ICANN community. To be very clear, I took my role in this programme seriously, and always adhered to the spirit of the programme, developing evergreen materials for the NCUC from the very beginning. But in large part I consider the programme to have been effective in keeping me engaged in ICANN activities because it gave me, as a relative newcomer to the community, the travel support to know that I would be able to come to ICANN meetings for at least a year. This meant that I could plan ahead and find projects to be meaningfully contributing towards during that time. It meant that I signed up for working groups, as I knew I'd be able to see them through well into the future. After I participated in the NextGen programme I wasn't sure what concrete actions I could take to actually *be* a part of the ICANN community. One of the strengths of the onboarding programme is that it gave me the possibility to know I'd be around for the next year, so I should make myself useful. It saw me take ownership of tasks within the NCUC and it prepared me for further leadership roles by offering me the opportunity to interact with longstanding community members with whom I hope to maintain lifelong friendships.

This was an unintended consequence and not the original objective of the programme. However, as someone whose primary interest is influencing policy, this programme did afford me ample opportunities to pursue my own projects and paired me with a wonderful set of colleagues from across the ICANN community who have shared with me invaluable feedback, mentoring, and intellectual stimulation. I have enjoyed seeing the multistakeholder model of Internet governance in action and being able to actively and constructively contribute to the various agenda-setting and decision-making processes. I think there could be value in ICANN creating a new capacity development programme akin to this, one which gives participants ongoing support to participate for three or six ICANN meetings, so that they develop community roots. This will only work, however, if the participants are chosen by their individual constituencies or stakeholder groups and required to develop an action plan as to how they will make a meaningful impact within the community (and, critically, are held accountable and removed from the programme if they do not make sufficient headway).

I believe that such a programme, which I suggest should be funded in a cost-neutral manner through a further reduction in either the fellowship or NextGen programmes, would be very effective if kept small. I would support there being ongoing funding for one mentor and one mentee from each community, with the community responsible for generating strict metrics to justify this allocation of resources and choosing their participants, and ICANN org responsible for making sure these expectations are adhered to (and participants removed if failing to perform). As someone with a junior profile and who is new to Domain Name System policy, I have found my volunteerism within ICANN to be incredibly rewarding. ICANN has helped me to build skills which I have been able to apply both inside and outside of ICANN. I have been able to learn the language of policy. I have learned the process of policy making. And with the support of ICANN I have been able to moderate workshops and to speak on panels at a variety of fora. I think a programme like the one I have just described could help other individuals author their own enriching journeys within ICANN.

Conclusion

I believe that the ICANN community should not be the first group to be affected by drastic cuts to the budget; it is my strongly held view that budget cuts should happen at all levels, and the organisation too should take steps to reduce the costs of its own operations.

As you move forward, I ask that you:

- **Look inward at ICANN's own overall spending patterns.**
 - Stop the growth in the size of the organisation's staff, and explore how, as a proportion of the budget, personnel costs and the significant spend on professional services can be decreased.
- **Provide the community with an appropriate level of support commensurate with our responsibilities under the ICANN Bylaws.**
 - Allow the Community Regional Outreach Programme to continue in FY19.
 - Don't decrease the Additional Budgetary Request envelope from FY18 levels.
 - Champion sensible revisions to the community travel guidelines that permit constituency-supported travellers to arrive at meetings at reasonable cost and in reasonable comfort.
- **Reevaluate the spend on capacity development programmes for their effectiveness in leading to engagement in ICANN's policy development processes and mission.**
 - Consider reducing the size of the fellowship programme to 15 participants per meeting and reducing the size of the NextGen programme to six participants.
 - Re-evaluate the ICANN Academy and ICANN Learn initiatives in the context of the current budgetary situation.
 - Consider making the resources available for a revamped pilot community onboarding programme in FY20 with new, community-defined objectives.

Thank you again for opening this conversation up to the community. I am grateful to ICANN for this opportunity to share my views on the proposed budget for the coming fiscal year, and trust you will find my recommendations helpful.

Sincerely yours,

Ayden Férdeline