



16 July 2018

Draft Community Travel Support Guidelines

Com Laude is a corporate registrar which provides domain name management and online brand management services to businesses. Com Laude's sister company, Valideus, provides new gTLD consultancy and registry management services to prospective and existing new gTLD registry operators.

Com Laude and Valideus welcome the opportunity to comment on the draft Community Travel Support Guidelines.

We note that within Part III Travel Guidelines the section entitled "Business Class Travel" states that business class travel is available only for the current chairs of the three SOs, four ACs and the NomCom. There does not appear to be any discretion to fund business class travel in other circumstances and, if so, this would appear to be a change from the FY2014 Travel Support Guidelines, which state on page 4 that "Exceptions may be granted based on individual circumstances". Assuming our understanding is correct, we support this change. We see no justification for ICANN-funding to be used to pay for business class travel (unless of course this class of travel is actually cheaper than a standard economy fare for some reason). Generally, business class fares are likely to be double that of an economy ticket, or higher.

We believe that in the past, exceptions to this rule have been made on the basis of medical need. Assuming this is to continue, then transparent and predictable criteria should be developed and published, to ensure that all members of the community understand what these are and that they are applied uniformly.

The costs to ICANN of funding more than 300 community members to attend ICANN meetings is substantial and ICANN has a responsibility to keep this cost to a minimum. It should be borne in mind that extensive remote participation facilities are provided for each meeting.

We also note that the proposed Travel Support Guidelines do not set any limits on the travel support that an individual might receive. There is a perception that many of the same individuals receive funding meeting after meeting. Whilst these individuals may be very active members of the community, volunteering substantial time to the work of the organisation, nevertheless their repeated receipt of travel funding must inevitably prevent its allocation to others. There must be a balance, in order to enable less-longstanding members of the community to become more engaged. We would suggest that consideration be given to imposing restrictions on the number of meetings an individual may receive funding for within a time period. For example, no more than six meetings in a three-year period; or no more than four meetings in a row; or no more than a fixed sum to be allocated to an individual during a calendar/financial year. An exception to this could be made for the SO/AC Chairs whilst in post.

Although ICANN does produce travel support reports per meeting, these should be expanded to capture the number of meetings for which an individual has received support, and the total funding.

Finally, we urge that ICANN is flexible in its administration of travel support in order to get the best value for money. For example, if a candidate for travel finds that arriving a day early for a meeting means an overall saving for ICANN on air fares, even after taking into account the additional night's hotel stay, then ICANN should support this where the candidate is willing to do so.

Thank you for considering these points.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Payne
Head of Legal Policy
Valideus Ltd

28-30 Little Russell Street
London WC1A 2HN
T: +44 7421 8299 W: www.valideus.com