AT-LARGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ALAC STATEMENT ON FIRST CONSULTATION ON A 2-YEAR PLANNING PROCESS

Introduction

On 21 December 2018, public comment opened for First Consultation on a 2-Year Planning Process. The At-Large Consolidated Working Group (CPWG) decided it would be in the interest of ALAC to develop a statement on behalf of Internet end users. During the CPWG meeting that week, members of the working group discussed the comment, and initial penholders volunteered to draft the statement.

Judith Hellerstein, member of the North American Regional At-Large Organization (NARALO) volunteered as penholder for the ALAC statement.

On 24 January 2019, ICANN policy staff in support of the At-Large community created a Google Document for the penholders to consolidate comments. Judith Hellerstein consolidated initial comments into a template for CPWG discussion, and several meetings with the ALAC Subcommittee on Finance and Budget (FBSC).

On 27 January 2019, a first draft of the ALAC statement was posted by Judith onto the Google Doc. The CPWG and FBSC members contributed comments onto the Doc, with additions incorporated from the At-Large community each subsequent week.

On 15 February 2019, a final draft ALAC statement was presented to the CPWG for comment after input from the ALAC Chair, Maureen Hilyard.

On 18 February 2019, ICANN policy staff in support of the At-Large community sent a final call for comments to the CPWG and ALAC mailing lists.

To be confirmed:

On 19 February 2019, Judith Hellerstein incorporated final comments from the CPWG and At-Large community into a final version of the statement.

On 19 February 2019, the ALAC Chair, Maureen Hilyard, requested that the statement be transmitted to the ICANN public comment process, copying the ICANN staff member responsible for this topic, with a note that the statement is pending ALAC ratification.

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Summary of the ALAC Responses/Preamble:

The ALAC/At-Large community appreciates the opportunity to comment on this public comment; a consultation on whether ICANN should move from a 15-month plan to a 2-year. The ALAC/At-Large community have been following this issue closely and have been active participants on all ICANN financial planning and ALAC Finance and Budget Subcommittee (FBSC) meetings, both in person and in ICANN org conference calls.

The ALAC/At Large community are pleased to offer the following responses to the questions asked by ICANN in its initial call for public comments on the topic:

Does the community agree that the yearly planning cycle does not provide sufficient time for community extensive input and interaction on the operating plan and budget?

The ALAC/At-Large community agree that more time should be given for additional community involvement. As we have previously noted, the current timelines are very compressed, to the detriment of full and effective participation by our volunteers. In addition, the priorities are often not known in advance. ICANN Org publishes a list of projects but does not give any particular clarity as to the priority given each project and how it compares to other projects on the list in terms of priority. If we extend the budget process to two years, it is essential the community has a better idea of the established priorities of all projects in the published list.

The ALAC/At-Large community proposes a listing of priorities and statements on the impact of each project on ICANN org and on each of the unique ACs and SOs. This would be helpful, in the context of a vast number of ICANN org projects. If At-Large were aware of ICANN org priorities, it would help the community reshape our agenda to become more in line with the ICANN org workflow. It would give us an idea of which issues we need to emphasize, should we feel an issue is extremely critical. Without an understanding of the priority of each of ICANN project, it is difficult for the community to respond and advocate effectively.

For example, in At-Large, ICANN IT staff built an **automated email translation service** to enable regular communication and interaction within the ICANN community, particularly for policy work. We encourage ICANN org to provide the appropriate level of resources to ICANN IT for continued exploration, testing and support of such resources to ensure that the service that is eventually provided is not only robust and reliable, but also fit for purpose.

It would also be helpful for At-Large if the community had a better idea of what specific items were included in non-discretionary funding, and the total budget they consume. This would give all constituencies a better idea of the priorities and how much of the budget is spent on these items. The community would also benefit from more information about the prioritization of items in the discretionary funds.

Does the community believe that more time for planning provides more transparency?

The ALAC/At-Large community believe if the community is more aware of priority ranking of projects or has collaborated with ICANN org on priority ranking, than yes, the additional time from 15 months to 2 years would provide more transparency. The extra time would allow more community involvement and increase the collaboration of the different ACs and SOs with the ICANN Planning and Finance departments.

We think there needs to be more detailed explanation of where funds are going, how large the non-discretionary funds are and how they are composed. This would give us and other constituencies much more clarity on the smaller, non-discretionary budget.

How and who should set ICANN's priorities?

As the ALAC/At-Large community wrote in its response to the ICANN Strategic Plan, we believe that keeping the system up-and-running, safe and maintaining the multistakeholder system are the top priorities. Beyond these priorities, the community should be directly involved in setting other priorities. As priorities are usually linked to funding, the community should also have an opportunity to identify and point out the impact of changes to funding. Ample time needs to be given for community input.

Should policy development and implementation activities be integral to the planning cycle?

The ALAC/At-Large community believes that while policy development and implementation activities are integral to the planning process, so are other activities, such as those that enable communications, collaboration, and outreach, between RALOS, At-Large members and other constituencies. Such activities are integral to the planning process. A jointly developed priority list would help the community advocate for the projects they feel are essential to each constituency. It would also help us plan better and target our own policy and outreach and engagement activities.

What activities, other than policy development, should be planned and by whom?

Examples:
- ICANN reviews
- Cross community working groups (CCWGs)
- Outreach and engagement resources, as well as activities outside of ICANN meetings
- Discretionary spending and potentially CROP

The ALAC/At-Large community is very supportive of the CCWG process, as it believes any activities which promote the collaboration of more than one constituency are beneficial to ICANN. The more people in various constituencies collaborate, the more trust can be built up, and problems resolved. As such, the creation of a "CCWG, CCEG" or any other cross community group to solve or collaborate on problems or policy issues is critically important to the functioning of ICANN. ICANN does not represent just one constituency, and therefore the more people in different constituencies work together to solve problems and create solutions, the better. However, we do realize that forming a cross community group, as defined by ICANN, may not work for every problem. In essence, cross community groups are a way for groups from different constituencies to work together, to help expand and better react to threats to the multistakeholder form of governance. An example is the current CCWG on Internet Governance for which a CCEG (Cross Community Engagement Group) would allow different constituencies to continue their collaboration, working to improve ICANN Internet Governance.

Should the planning process include a formalized, dedicated phase to plan for SO/AC activities? If so, how many years should be planned for?

Process Questions
1) **Would it be beneficial to insert, in the early part of the planning process, a phase of activity planning resulting in a document submitted for a first public comment period, and follow it by an operating plan and budget development phase which would be the subject of a second public comment period?**

The ALAC/At-Large community believe it would be very helpful to have a phase of activity planning inserted into the planning process, for ACs and SOs to give the community time to provide their feedback. This feedback can then be incorporated into the operating plan and budget development phase.

Once these budgets are created the community should have another opportunity for review. This will allow the community to have a better understanding of and contribution to the budget process.

2) What are the barriers to community engagement in the planning process?

The ALAC/At-Large community believe the following items pose seven barriers to community engagement, but are just a small set of the problems people in the community face when engaging with ICANN:

- Understanding the concept, process and timelines
- Difficulty in understanding the terms and acronyms used
- Lack of available time?
  - Volunteers have limited time and the time they spend on this process should be welcomed.
- Translation into other languages besides English
- Captioning or real time translations
- Limited bandwidth
- Accessibility issues

The ALAC/At-Large strongly believes that for ICANN to be as inclusive as possible, documents should be translated into multiple languages. Further, important community meetings should be held in different time zones and in different languages, with real time translation (language channels) and captioning / real time transcription (RTT) provided on all calls. Captioning has the capacity to create better understanding of technical or unfamiliar terms.

We encourage the regular use of real time transcription (RTT) services in English and in other languages to support the needs of those with hearing disabilities, as well as those whose first language is not English, or for participants with limited bandwidth. Thus, RTT allows them to participate and stay engaged.

Many people who engage with ICANN live in bandwidth-challenged countries, so call quality varies considerably. Having the meeting written down in a text-only stream allows these individuals to better engage and follow the process. Embracing cultural diversity and inclusion through the implementation of this technology would help remove barriers to engagement and participation.