

WP2: Categorizing Public Comment Replies

Section: Reconsideration Process Enhancement

Aims

The goals of this categorization exercise were:

- i) To identify common topics that those who submitted replies wished to discuss, so that WP2/CCWG can organise itself to discuss these topics;
- ii) To show the relative popularity of each topic as an item for discussion, so that WP2/CCWG can prioritise its focus accordingly;
- iii) To collect the comments on a given topic together, and separate them from unrelated comments, so that when WP2/CCWG discusses an issue it has readily before it all the feedback received on that issue
- iv) To ensure that items that were new to CCWG and which did not receive much attention were captured, so that these additional ideas were not excluded from consideration categorising

Methodology

The reviewer read the Public Comment Replies¹ and sought to identify broad topics or issues to which particular comments were addressed. These topics were drawn broadly, and value neutral as to the position taken on the topic.

Outcome

The process produced a number of themes for WP2/CCWG to discuss, plus several random comments not widely mentioned.

Most commenters who addressed the reconsideration process supported proposed measures for improvement, with some expressing specific support for “improvement,” “strengthening,” and/or “expanding scope.” Others mentioned recommendations for improvement specifically targeted at one facet or other (or more) of the process. Once commenter (JPNIC (211)), however, suggested that improvements in the reconsideration process may be left for WS2.

Those indicating support in the manner indicated above were: auDA (198), DBA (199), AFRALO (201), AFNIC (203), IA (204), eco (205), RySG (206), JH (207), BC (208), USCIB (209), LINX (210), JPNIC (211), IPC (212), CDT (215), USCC (216), CENTR (219), NIRA (220), Sivasubramanian M (comment posted June 13), and DotMusic (comment posted June 13).

Breakdown of comments follows:

¹ The starting point for this exercise was the summary of public comment replies supplied by staff support, not the original replies themselves.

Main topic area	Sub-topic area	Number commenting on this topic
Enhance Overall Process		19
	Clarify RR/IRP distinctions; consider integration	1
	Consider addressing RR in WS2	1
Ombudsman Role		
	Ombudsman do preliminary review	10
	ICANN legal staff not involved in preliminary review	6
	Policy issues to go directly to BGC	1
Composition of Board Reviewers/Conflicts		
	Not review decisions in which member participated	2
	Rebuttal right	3
	Conflict-of-interest audit	1
	Full board votes	1
Review Standards		
	“Relevant” vs. “material” – keep “material”	4
	“Relevant” vs. “material” – use “relevant”	1
	Material information change	1
	Definition of “material” harm	1
	Review of external panel decisions	1
	Clarify distinctions between board and staff actions	1
Standing		
	Participation in policy process	5
	Is RR a requirement for IRP standing?	1
Deadlines/Timelines		
	Expanded filing deadline	2
	Narrowed decision timeline	1
	Deadline flexibility due to extraordinary circumstances	1
	Deadlines are sufficient	1
Transparency		
	Transcript/recording of Board discussions	2
	Full documentation of BGC dismissals	1
	Better DIDP	3
	Independent RR body may be needed	1
Other Comments		
	Other solutions needed for RR results than board member(s) removal	1
	Avoid frivolous/vexatious RRs	1
	Legal fees financial burden unfair to ICANN board	1
	Disputes involving Internet number resources should not be covered in RRs (or IRP for that matter)	1

Scope of topics

Enhance Reconsideration Request (RR) Process

There were no commenters who specifically declared themselves as being against changes/improvements to the RR process, most expressly support it.

- One commenter, however, indicated that clarification is needed between the RR and IRP processes, saying differences are neither explained nor self-evident. The commenter suggested consideration should be given to integrating RR into the IRP program.
- Another commenter requested more clarification on why RR must be addressed in WS1. The commenter noted other accountability measures in WS1 and said RR may well be considered as WS2 if it should become contentious.

Ombudsman Role

There were a number of commenters who recommended an expanded role for the ICANN Ombudsman. Under this topic two specific sub-themes emerged:

- First, that the Ombudsman undertake a preliminary-review role with respect to RR petitions; and,
- Second, that the Ombudsman displace ICANN legal staff in this role (i.e. that legal staff not have a role in this respect).
- One commenter agreed that the Ombudsman should do the initial review without ICANN legal staff doing an initial substantive review, but said that issues regarding policy should instead go directly to the BGC.

Composition of Board Reviewers/Conflict of Interest Checks

A number of commenters argued for changes in this area, including:

- Establish a requirement that board members not sit in review of decisions they made;
- Perform an annual audit of Board for relevant conflicts-of-interest;
- One commenter asked that the full board vote on final RR determinations.

Review Standards

A number of commenters suggested changes in areas where the RR standard of review is involved, including:

- The standards regarding the Board's reliance on false or inaccurate "relevant" information – some commenters wanted to retain the "material" standard instead of the CCWG's suggested change to "relevant."
- A commenter wanted to amend one of the above standards (insofar as reliance is concerned) to include actions/inactions taken on reliance on information that, subsequent to the action/inaction, materially changed.
- A commenter requested a definition of "materially affected" or "materially harmed," including whether this involves economic harm or is broader.
- A commenter's request for clarity as to how RRs handle disputes concerning decisions made by external panels (including discrepancies in results among multiple external panels).

- A commenter suggested trying to make the difference between board action/inactions vs. staff action/inaction easier.

Standing

- Some commenters said that RR petitioners should have in some manner participated in the policy development process in order to file an RR concerning such policy (not to “stand on side-lines” as policy is developed and then argue against that policy in an RR).
- Another commenter asked if RR is a requirement before one could bring an IRP (thus related to IRP standing).

Deadlines/Timelines

- Some commenters urged a filing deadline for RR petitions that is more generous than 30 days.
- Another thought the 120 deadline for a board decision was too long, proposing 90 days.
- Another commenter felt that these deadlines (including decision deadlines) should have a provision for extension in the event of extraordinary circumstances.
- One commenter specifically said timeframes and deadlines are sufficient.

Transparency

A number of commenters urged more transparency in RR proceedings, including:

- Give RR petitioner option to have transcript/recording of substantive Board discussions of case;
- Require full documentation of BGC’s dismissal of any RR.
- Allow RR petitioners to rebut BGC’s final recommendation (without raising new issues) prior to final Board decision;
- Greater responsiveness by ICANN’s DIDP (document disclosure policy).

Other Comments

- Financial arrangements: One commenter said that ICANN board bearing burden of legal fees seems unfair.
- One commenter said that in light of the CCWG proposal only empowering the community to remove board members the requirements for RR are not enough – other punitive measures/solutions should be considered.
- Another noted importance that RR process not be capable of use in a frivolous or vexatious way.

Appendix: Index of comments received

This appendix indexes the Public Comment Summary so that individual comments on a particular topic can be found quickly.

Topic	Commenter	Ref	Notes/extract
Clarify RR/IPR distinctions	LAB	222	
Consider addressing RR in WS2	JPNIC	211	
Ombudsman to do preliminary review	auDA	198	
	AFNIC	203	

	IA	204	
	BC	208	
	USCC	216	
	INTA	217	
	USCIB	209	
	IPC	212	
	CDT	215	
	DotMusic		http://forum.icann.org/lists/comments-ccwg-accountability-draft-proposal-04may15/pdfzpy1fnCZN9.pdf
ICANN Legal not involved in preliminary review	auDA	198	
	IA	204	
	BC	208	
	USCC	216	
	USCIB	209	
	CDT	215	
Policy issues direct to BGC	BC	208	
Board mbrs not review actions they were involved in	DCA-T	202	
	DotMusic		See URL above
Rebuttal right	DCA-T	202	
	IPC	212	
	DotMusic		See URL above
Conflict of Interest Audit	AFNIC	203	
Full Board vote required	BC	208	
Reliance on "Relevant" vs. "Material" Info (keep "material")	IA	204	
	BC	208	
	GG	213	
	USCC	216	
... Use "relevant"	DotMusic		See URL above
Material info change following board/staff action	INTA	217	
Definition of material harm	USCIB	209	
Review of external panel decisions	ALAC	221	
Clarify distinctions	CRG	200	

board/staff actions			
Policy participation for standing	BC	208	
	IA	204	
	USCIB	209	
	GG	213	
	USCC	216	
Is RR a precondition for filing IRP?	CRG	200	
Expanded filing deadline	CENTR	219	
	IPC	212	
Narrowed decision timeline	CENTR	219	
Timelines flexibility for extraordinary circumstances	ALAC	221	
Timelines are sufficient	NIRA	220	
Transcript/recording board discussions	DCA-T	202	
	IPC	212	
Better DIDP	CDT	215	
	IPC	212	
	DotMusic		See URL above
Full documentation BGC dismissals	BC	208	
Other solutions needed for RR results than board member(s) removal	JH	207	
Avoid frivolous/vexatious RRs	.nz	218	
Legal fees burden unfair to ICANN board	NIRA	220	
Internet number resources have and should retain separate dispute mechanisms	RIR Community		http://forum.icann.org/lists/comments-ccwg-accountability-draft-proposal-04may15/pdfWAmYiASmx0.pdf (posted June 12)