

# Draft Replies to Questions for the community on Staff Accountability ([Dec 2016](#))

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## Question 1

*What are some concrete examples of concerns that the community has with regards to staff accountability? Are the concerns about individual service delivery/individual staff, or about the potential that staff might cause a violation of ICANN policies, processes, or Bylaws?*

A: The WS2 Staff Accountability group is focused on systems and processes that contribute to appropriate forms of staff accountability given how the ICANN system works. If concerns are raised about individual staff members or particular incidents, these are only relevant to the extent they illustrate a systemic or process problem that could be resolved. Any such issues should be dealt with by other processes.

**[No / few / some]** examples of concerns about staff violating existing policies, processes or bylaws have been identified in our work so far. When we seek community input we may find further examples.

The group is, therefore, collecting a set of “issues” related to staff accountability matters. These are being collected in the [Issues analysis table](#). This will not deal with individual service delivery or individual staff, but for any “issue” to survive to a “problem solving” stage it has to be evidenced by specific, concrete examples of the behaviour a) happening and b) being broad enough that it warrants attention and attempted resolution.

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## Question 2

*In the staff accountability group, there have been suggestions that people within the ICANN Organization are afraid to speak to the community. Can you provide more detail to support these suggestions? Is the reluctance to speak based on perceptions of how the ICANN Organization will respond, or how the community will respond?*

A: Some of this is discussed in the [Issues analysis table](#). In some sense both types of reluctance may be reflected in an issue.

(Is it possible for the cases anyone is aware of, appropriately anonymised, to be shared in an appropriate way to illustrate the extent / scale of the concern? If not, we should explain why not / that the scale cannot be established for [[reasons]].)

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### Question 3

*ICANN expects all people within the ICANN Organization to be respectful to the community in interactions. If the community is not treated with respect, that would clearly be an issue about which ICANN should be made aware. What is the expectation for the community in addressing members of the ICANN Organization?*

A: This question is beyond the scope of work assigned to the Staff Accountability group. As such this response has no standing or authority. We would expect members of the community working with members of the ICANN staff to behave professionally and appropriately, consistent at the least with the ICANN expected standards of behaviour for all community participation. We have generally understood this as a Ombuds process and perhaps appropriate for discussion in the Ombuds subgroup.

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### Question 4

*Do you think that there should be areas where people in the ICANN Organization should be directly accountable to the community? What would this look like, and how could it be done in a way that does not interfere with the employer relationship? Are the enhancements of the Reconsideration and IRP Process, where staff action can be challenged directly, sufficient to address the subgroup's concerns. How does one prevent inconsistent feedback to ICANN.org employees?*

A: In the first instance, consistent with the law and with standard practice, ICANN staff should be directly and formally accountable to their managers, and through them to the Chief Executive who is in turn accountable to the ICANN Board.

Enhancements to the IRP and Reconsideration processes that allow staff and organisational actions to be challenged assist with improving ICANN's overall accountability.

We anticipate that our work in looking at issues identified by the community, and ways to solve them, may lead to some other proposed systemic changes, particularly in how concerns related to staff accountability might be raised (e.g. who with, with what expected response from the Organisation, whether some sort of forum is required), and how community feedback might be included in evaluating staff accountability (e.g. surveys of the community, soliciting community views in reviews of senior or outward-facing staff performance on aspects related to accountability).

Consistent with the approach the WG has signalled, successful design, testing and usability of any such changes relies on ICANN's full involvement in designing and developing them. Improvements to HR processes of this nature are never improvements without the organisers and people subject to such processes being fully involved in their design. That is why the WG is seeking an effective, active dialogue with ICANN in doing its work.

We do not see any likelihood of a recommendation that staff should report to the community directly. A recommendation of this scope would be beyond the scope of this accountability subgroup.