

Proposal for an In-Person SOAC Chairs Roundtable in Early January 2024

Proposed Location:

- ICANN's office in Washington, DC

Proposed Dates:

- 9 –11 January 2024 (2.5 days – 8 January arrival/11 January afternoon departure)

Proposed Community Attendees:

- All seven SOAC Chairs and (if desired by each Chair) one Vice-Chair from each SOAC
- ICANN will provide travel funding and hotel accommodations

Proposed Board and Org Attendees:

- Board Chair and Vice-Chair, Sally Costerton, David Olive (other Org Executives to be invited depending on the agenda), Policy Development Support team leaders

BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES:

Outside the relatively brief 2-hour meetings that are traditionally held the day before a hybrid ICANN Public Meeting, the SOAC Chairs have met in person with the ICANN Board leadership and senior ICANN org management once. This in-person meeting took place over two days in January 2020 in Los Angeles. Although those present at the 2020 two-day meeting agreed that such periodic in-person gatherings outside the pressures and immediate priorities of an ICANN Public Meeting will be valuable, the onset of the pandemic in March 2020 did not allow for any further discussion of a second such in-person event.

Having now concluded four hybrid ICANN Public Meetings since their resumption (The Hague in June 2022, Kuala Lumpur in September 2022, Cancun in March 2023 and Washington DC in June 2023), ICANN org would like to propose that we hold a second in-person SOAC Chairs Roundtable in January 2024, at ICANN's office in Washington DC.

There are several important cross-cutting topics that we believe may benefit from in-person discussion in a setting that will allow for more in-depth deliberations than at an ICANN meeting venue or through the regular Virtual Roundtables. These topics include:

- Continuation of the 2020 discussion about the roles and responsibilities of the SOAC Chairs as a collective governance body
 - Building on the initial discussion in January 2020 and in view of recent cross-community work efforts and new mechanisms)
- Exchanging views about strategic goals and priorities for the next Five-Year Strategic Plan
 - Building in part on the Board-community bilateral sessions to be held at ICANN78 in October 2023
- Presentation and initial feedback on uniform Program Management Tools for each SO and AC
 - Following on a FY23 CEO goal, the Policy Development Support staff have developed an initial version of such a tool, based on what is currently in use by the GNSO and adapted to each SO's and AC's needs and work methods

- Collaborative discussion on shared policy priorities and issues that may benefit from policy development or other targeted community work (e.g. next steps on DNS abuse)
- Review and discussion on how to coordinate and manage planned or anticipated additional non-policy work facing the community in the short and medium term
 - For example, updates from the relevant org functions on the Pilot Holistic Review, Continuous Improvement Pilot planning, NomCom rebalancing, retiring Review and other community-developed non-policy recommendations, upcoming Reviews, and completion of Work Stream 2 recommendations intended for the community

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

ICANN org hopes that holding a second in-person SOAC Chairs Roundtable outside an ICANN Public Meeting will allow the SOAC Chairs, org senior staff and Board leadership to engage in deeper discussions over shared policy and governance concerns. These discussions can in turn inform each SOAC group's as well as the community's planning and management of its workload, in light of a mutual understanding over what are shared priorities and what are not, and how to work with ICANN org to ensure that staff and resources are allocated appropriately across the community.

A second such in-person Roundtable can also include a review of the shared understandings and action items from the January 2020 meeting. This can facilitate coordination and improved communication across the SOAC groups and with ICANN org's Executive Team and the Board.