

How We Meet: Reviewing the Implementation of the ICANN Public Meetings Strategy

Category: Operations
Requester: ICANN org, Other
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Instructions:

Thank you for participating in this Public Comment proceeding. To streamline the feedback process, we are using a guided submission form that presents specific questions related to key options outlined in the "How We Meet" project report. The goal of this form is to gather targeted input on practical options for improving ICANN Public Meetings, including meeting structure, rotation models, hybrid capabilities, and cost-efficiency.

Please review each question carefully and provide your responses in the designated fields. You may respond to as many or as few questions as you wish, based on your expertise and interest. Your feedback will be reviewed by the "How We Meet" Discussion Group and incorporated into the next phase of analysis to refine recommendations for discussion at ICANN83 in June 2025. Clear, concise answers are encouraged to ensure your input can be effectively considered.

TOPIC #1 FOR COMMUNITY FEEDBACK:

Shorten the Community Forum by one day (i.e., reduce its duration to a five-day meeting).

RATIONALE:

Optimizing meeting room usage based on actual demand and adjusting the meeting schedule accordingly, to realize efficiency gains and enhance opportunities for Board-community interactions.

QUESTIONS:

1.1. Do you or the group you represent support shortening the Community Forum by a day?

Yes

No

Please explain your answer

The APRALO community expressed a greater preference for retaining the current 6-day Community Forum format, citing the need for maintaining inclusivity, session depth, and particularly in order to support newcomer participation, although there was also (albeit) lesser support for a 5-day format, primarily in support of reducing fatigue and to contribute to the overall cost saving intention.

1.2.a. Do you or the group you represent support moving the Public Forum and Geopolitical Forum earlier in the meeting, to the same day as the Welcome Ceremony and Executive Q&A session, to limit the need for the main ballroom to a single day? Yes/No/Other open-ended response

Yes

No

Please explain your answer

The APRALO community expresses greater support for the proposal to move the Public Forum and Geopolitical Forum to an earlier stage of the meeting. This is seen as beneficial provided the agenda for that day remains balanced and avoids being overloaded, as some community members raised concerns about constraining time and the impact on the quality of engagement.

1.2.b. Do you or the group you represent support scheduling any community wrap-up sessions that may be needed in the final block at the end of the fifth and last day?

Yes

No

Please explain your answer

The APRALO community supports scheduling community wrap-up sessions at the end of the final day. These sessions are viewed as important for summarizing discussions and supporting newcomers. A few community members raised minor concerns regarding conflicts in scheduling, however, the overall sentiment towards Q.1.2.b was positive.

1.2.c Do you or the group you represent support adding a new Board-community engagement session open to everyone, to discuss issues of broad common interest, to limit the need for the Board to discuss the same topics in isolation with individual groups?

Yes

No

Please explain your answer

The APRALO community supports the addition of a new and open Board-community engagement session. This is seen as a constructive step to encourage inclusive dialogue and reduce siloed discussions.

1.3. Do you or the group you represent have any suggestions for how a reduced 5-day Community Forum can also accommodate improved Board-

community interactions while maintaining an adequate number of intra-community work sessions?

Yes

No

Please explain your answer

APRALO community supports improving Board-community interaction, even if the Community Forum were to be reduced to within a 5-day format. Suggestions such as scheduling a dedicated session on Day 2 and enabling broader hybrid engagement received wide endorsement.

1.4 Do you or the group you represent have other suggestions or feedback relating to this topic?

The APRALO community places an importance on structured feedback and continuous improvement mechanisms and, *inter alia*, suggests the introduction of anonymous post-meeting surveys and more engaging session designs to strengthen the ICANN meeting experience.

TOPIC #2 FOR COMMUNITY FEEDBACK:

Within the meeting rotation requirement, prioritize meeting locations that offer economical travel, venue, and accommodation options; where feasible, return to previous locations for predictability and to allow for multi-year planning.

RATIONALE:

By carefully selecting locations in advance that offer economical options for all in-person attendees, significant savings can be achieved while maintaining regional inclusivity. Early identification of specific locations, especially on a multi-year basis, will facilitate predictability in advance planning for all attendees, reduce logistical uncertainties, and lower costs associated with identifying and preparing new venues.

QUESTIONS:

2.1.a. Do you or the group you represent support prioritizing meeting locations that offer economical travel, venue and accommodation options while respecting the need to rotate ICANN Public Meetings across the various geographic regions, and on the understanding that this could mean returning to the same venue within a specific geographic region?

Yes

No

Please explain your answer

The APRALO community supports prioritizing cost-effective and accessible ICANN meeting locations. This includes returning to previous venues within a region but always ensuring effective geographic rotation between the ICANN regions.

2.1.b. Do you or the group you represent support returning to previous locations where this is feasible and within the geographical rotation requirement?

Yes

No

Please explain your answer

The APRALO community supports the option of returning to previous locations and venues within a regions, to reap the benefits of logistical predictability and cost savings, but in doing so, it is important to maintain effective geographic rotation between the regions. prioritize countries with either a liberal visa policy or with a simplified, non-cumbersome visa application process and to create opportunities for newcomers from the region to attend and participate in the meetings.

2.2. Do you or the group you represent have other suggestions or feedback

relating to this topic?

The APRALO community supports incorporating environmental sustainability into ICANN meeting planning. The community suggests integrating climate impact assessments, considering carbon footprints, and offering viable travel alternatives as some of the measures to begin with.

TOPIC #3 FOR COMMUNITY FEEDBACK:

Establish a policy to automatically shift an ICANN Public Meeting to an online format, should unforeseen circumstances arise that necessitate moving a meeting from a planned venue.

RATIONALE:

Such a policy would significantly mitigate the challenges associated with relocating a meeting venue at short notice.

QUESTIONS:

3.1. Do you or your group support this proposed policy?

Yes

No

Please explain your answer

The APRALO community supports establishing a clear policy to automatically shift an ICANN Public Meeting to an online format in cases of unavoidable emergencies. Such a policy is seen as a preparedness measure for ICANN, but must possess objective criteria which are transparently communicated to ensure continuity, build trust and protect participants during local, regional and/or global disruptions.

3.2. Do you or the group you represent have other suggestions or feedback

relating to this topic?

The APRALO community emphasizes the need for operational preparedness in any policy for automatically shifting an ICANN Public Meeting to an online format and suggests conducting online-readiness drills, improving bandwidth support to access relevant meeting IT infrastructure, and communicating roles and timelines clearly.

TOPIC #4 FOR COMMUNITY FEEDBACK:

Convert one ICANN Public Meeting to a virtual-only (i.e., online) format.

RATIONALE:

Conducting an online-only Public Meeting contributes to financial and environmental sustainability while leveraging lessons learned from the seven ICANN virtual meetings during the pandemic, to optimize online tools and formats for meeting efficiency. Additionally, if some meetings are organized online rather than in-person, these meetings can be scheduled to accommodate specific time zones, which would otherwise be impractical for in-person meetings due to various constraints outlined in the 2014 meeting location selection criteria.

QUESTIONS:

4.1. Do you or the group you represent support the option to convert one ICANN Public Meeting per year to an online format?

Yes

No

Please explain your answer

The APRALO community does not support converting one ICANN Public Meeting per year to an online-only format. The community believes face-to-face interactions are important for effective collaboration and for inclusive policy development. Further the face-to-face meetings help to build trust within the multistakeholder community. The community is, however, open to a conditional pilot.

4.2.a Do you or the group you represent support conducting an online-only meeting once every few meetings (e.g., every fourth/fifth/sixth ICANN Public Meeting)?

Yes

No

Please explain your answer

The APRALO community neither supports nor opposes conducting an online-only meeting once every few meetings. While APRALO is open to experimenting with an online format for cost efficiency and broader access, concerns of reduced quality of interactions due to different time zones, the normal work life of participants, etc., will have to be addressed. If ICANN plans to pilot such a meeting, it will need detailed planning involving the ICANN community.

4.2.b. Do you or the group you represent support starting with a pilot of a fourth ICANN Public Meeting in a calendar year, but holding this fourth meeting online?

Yes

No

Please explain your answer

The APRALO community neither supports nor opposes starting a pilot of a fourth ICANN meeting online in a calendar year. However, the community is of the opinion that any addition of a piloted fourth meeting to a calendar year, even if it is an online meeting, needs to be well thought out and justified with clear purpose and objectives, backed by strong planning, scalable and cost-effective and take into consideration the additional burden it will create for the volunteer community.

4.2.c. Do you or the group you represent support exploring a mixed-model where all the sessions are held online but attendees have the option of gathering in one physical location to maximize networking and relationship-building opportunities?

Yes

No

Please explain your answer

The APRALO Community neither supports nor opposes exploring a mixed meeting model. While a hybrid-hub model can be a solution for community members, who may face visa restrictions or visa application obstacles, to meet at a convenient point, the challenges, such as time zone differences and the possible impact of doubling up of disparate resources (funding and staff), will persist between the different hubs and online. Should ICANN plan to pilot with such a format, there is a need to ensure equity and cohesion are balanced to ensure fairness, consistency and better logistics.

4.3. Do you or the group you represent have other suggestions or feedback relating to this topic?

The APRALO Community supports ICANN in evolving a financially sustainable, inclusive and environmentally mindful meeting format. For that, the economic feasibility of setting up hybrid hubs, adopting innovative sponsorship models, and implementing structured feedback mechanisms must be explored by ICANN.

OTHER TOPICS

5. Do you or the group you represent have additional feedback and suggestions on how ICANN Public Meetings can remain financially sustainable without shifting costs to participants?

In order to ensure financial sustainability of ICANN Public Meetings without shifting the cost to participants, the APRALO Community suggests that ICANN incorporate cost-conscious solutions that enhance inclusive engagement, such as improving sponsorship models, fostering partnerships for financial burden sharing, ensuring transparency in budget planning, and building long-term planning and infrastructure to improve hybrid participation.

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