ICANN's 2-year Planning Process
ccNSO SOPC feedback
4 February 2019

Introduction

The ccNSO Strategic and Operational Planning Committee (SOPC) welcomes the opportunity to comment on ICANN's 2-year Planning Process.

The Strategic and Operational Planning group was created at the Cairo ICANN meeting in November 2008. The working group became a Committee in November 2017. The goal of the Committee remains the same in 2018: to coordinate, facilitate, and increase the participation of ccTLD managers in ICANN's strategic, operational, planning and budgetary processes.

According to the revised Charter published on 1 November 2017, the Committee may, as part of its activities, hold a position and/or provide input on the public comments forum. It may then relate to ICANN (or other supporting organizations and advisory WGs) on its behalf. The views expressed, therefore, are not necessarily those of the ccNSO (Council and its membership body) or the ccTLD community at large. Membership of the Committee is open to all ccTLD managers (members and non-members of the ccNSO).

SOP Committee members

- Giovanni Seppia, .eu (Chair)
- Wafa Dahmani, .tn
- Irina Danelia, .ru
- Stephen Deerhake, .as
- Philip Du Bois, .be
- Russell Haworth, .uk
- Roelof Meijer, .nl
- Andreas Musielak, .de
- Abdalla Omari, .ke
- Barrack Otieno, AfTLD
- Barbara Povše, .si
- Pablo Rodriguez, .pr
- Leonid Todorov, APTLD
- Mary Uduma, .ng
- Michael Vassilakis, .gr
- Jordan Carter, .nz
- Sean Copeland, .vi

ICANN First Consultation on a 2-year Planning Process

We would like to commend ICANN and its Finance department for the great progress made over the past five years to share the annual planning with the community and seek our feedback.

We also wish to thank ICANN for the opportunity to comment on a 2-year planning process.

Firstly, we fail to understand the purpose of a possible switch to the 2-year cycle. Is the new process meant to provide more time to the community to review the documents or to incorporate additional steps into the process (e.g. a phase of activity planning as mentioned in the process paper)?

Specific comments:

- Section 1 – Framing the Issue.
  - We understand the challenges that ICANN is facing both to evaluate internal input/decisions and to assess future trends properly while drafting the Plan(s). The ccNSO-SOPC has been participating actively in the process of ICANN Operating and Strategic Plans since over a decade. Therefore, we would like to reiterate the importance for ICANN to produce and/or refine planning guidelines that should be instrumental to the various teams to draft the narrative that should be included under the various headings of the Plans.
  - We have been always supportive of a second phase of consultation for the Operating and Strategic Plans independently from having a 1 or 2-year process. That would enable ICANN staff – mainly the Finance department – to better incorporate the feedback from the various stakeholders and possible, last-minute changes, including updated budget projections.

- Section 2 – Questions to the Community.
  - Q1. We tend to agree that there is still room for improvement within the yearly planning cycle. At the same time, we believe that a very basic step forward could be to ensure language and text consistency throughout the planning cycle, an element that this Committee has been advocating since long time. That will help the community to follow the various plan iterations in a better way and easy the access of the non-English mother tongue to a very complex set of documents.
  - Q2. We think that more time for planning would not increase the transparency of the process. A possible impact on its accessibility to a very much time-starved community will also be limited.
  - Q3. The ccNSO-SOPC has always highlighted the need for ICANN both to prioritise its objectives and activities, and to be able to update them regularly. Should a Strategic Plan objective become obsolete and/or not important any longer during the five-year Strategic Plan cycle, we fail to understand the reasoning to continue with it. That will also empower ICANN staff to align new priorities coming from the community and/or from the developing DNS environment with the Plan at a much faster path than at present.
  - Q4. We believe that policy development and implementation activities should be part of a structured, well-prioritised and budget-sound planning cycle. We would appreciate more clarity around the question "What should be planned by the GNSO and ccNSO?"

as it is quite difficult to provide a comprehensive answer considering all the elements that may affect any planning process.

- o Q5. We remember that ICANN has already discussed what activities should be planned and what should be part of the regular, operational business of the organization. We think that the answer to such question requires ICANN to define the concept of "planning".
- o Q6. We do not deem a "formalized dedicated phase to plan for SO/AC activities" necessary. At the same time, we would appreciate more clarity for the question.

- Process questions
  - o We believe that instead of having a preliminary document with some sort of planning, it would be more valuable for the community to have a high-level document with the top ICANN priorities that would be at the basis of the Operating Plan and Budget. Such document should also provide an overview of the main projects/activities to reach the high-priority goals and objectives as well as an estimate of the resources required to implement them.
  - o Regarding the possible barriers to community engagement in the planning process, the ccNSO-SOPC has already commented on this matter. The main challenges are:
    - The ccTLD community is made of very operational people with limited time;
    - While we acknowledge that ICANN has made considerable progress on the style and content structure of the Plan(s), the fact that ICANN keeps changing these elements, and that the quantity and quality of information varies considerably within the objectives does not help the accessibility of the Plan(s).