

4-Dec-2017

From: **the ICANN Business Constituency (BC)**

To: ICANN Staff

Subject: Response to **ICANN's questionnaire on Community Travel Support**

( <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/community-travel-support-consultation-questionnaire-16oct17-en.pdf> )

**BC Response:**

In earlier days at ICANN, there was extremely limited funding available, thus, the BC initiated its own travel support program, first for its councilors, and then for its officers, and worked to contribute to the justification of the ICANN Community Travel Support Guidelines. Thus, we are very pleased at the progress that has been made over the years to formalize ICANN Community Travel Support, and make it part of core budget.

The BC Outreach Committee has the overall responsibility for overseeing the input to the ICANN processes on activities that advance engagement and outreach. The BC ExCom has overall review responsibility. The BC members have supported consistent and predictable support to the GNSO gTLD Policy Councilors for travel, as well as for elected officers. Our members also support funding to broaden engagement and awareness across all stakeholder groups, and also have supported BC efforts to apply for specific activities that enable both awareness and outreach, and senior executive recruitment.

We also support that there be documented outcomes from Community Travel Support activities, but these may be evaluated differently, stakeholder group by stakeholder group. We support reports from attendees for various initiatives, but note that the Councilors/officers of all groups are already reporting to their communities, and thus, do not need to be asked for duplicative reports. For the BC, specifically, we wish to acknowledge the indepth reporting provided by our Councilors and officers to the BC, and we consider this the most useful approach for these funded attendees.

Nevertheless, as this program is designed to support ICANN generally, while the BC sees opportunities for improvements in various programs that receive ICANN budget support, we overall support ICANN's initiative to seek comments from those most affected – at the constituency level. Our comments are focused, and will not fully address our views on all of ICANN's support to engagement with the community for funded travelers, such as via the NextGen, or Fellowship, or special budget requests. These more detailed comments will be undertaken by the BC Outreach Committee and submitted in other processes.

We regret that our comments are delayed, but ask that these comments be accepted as our initial perspectives and note that our BC Outreach Committee members continue to be highly engaged.

**1. What guidelines does your group have for supported travelers? How do these differ from the ICANN Community Travel Support Guidelines?**

First and foremost, the BC supports that there are standard travel support to the BC Councilors, and three officers as part of the core ICANN budget. However, we have asked often to have an additional officer for each of the Constituencies that have at least four elected officers, with defined responsibilities. We have also supported the re-allocation of funding, if an officer cannot travel to an ICANN meeting, to the designated attendee, selected by the Constituency. ICANN has in the past accepted this re-assignment, but we note that the Guidelines should support this.

Many of the GNSO Constituencies have more than 3 officers, so we ask whether the Guidelines might indicate support for supporting as many as four per gNSO Constituency. This would require an update to the Travel Support Guidelines.

A review of the travel costs indicates that there is not standard application of requirements and for ICANN meetings, as these are well known ahead of time, we suggest a prioritization of confirmation so that lower fares can be achieved for airfare. We are asking for an exception from 6 weeks for other travel but the councilors/officers are known well before the ICANN meeting. Thus, if it could be helpful to achieve lower fares, we could consider a longer time line for approval for funding for such designated attendees, IF that would help to lower costs.

The BC has based our own programs generally on the criteria established by ICANN for the ICANN Community Travel Support Guidelines, in order to ensure that we have accountability for travelers.

For BC supported travel, we do set limits in the amount available, to establish predictability in the allocation of support. In general, we look to CROP Guidelines as a role model.

The BC does not usually develop separate events, but try to identify existing events, where business users will attend in some numbers, and where the BC has no or very limited geographic participation and where BC members are already undertaking significant organizing efforts. Still, the funding that we provide is modeled after CROP, in the event that CROP is not available or not applicable.

We understand that the ICANN Community Travel Support Guidelines are sometimes supporting business class travel or allowing other exceptions. While we try to follow the ICANN guidelines, our own ability to support extraordinary expenses is quite limited and to date, we have not provided such support.

We think that consistency is needed in the information in the Guidelines, and in the application of the Guidelines.

**Description of BC Requirements for funding of an event to do Outreach or Member Recruitment:**

We have a well-defined and documented set of requirements, but we strive to be both flexible, and accountable:

- a) Written request that describes the outreach event and opportunity. The event can be either enhancing awareness of the broader business user community or results in direct recruitment.

- b) Justification needs to include speaking role; or sponsorship of an existing event, with brand recognition/acknowledgement of the BC@ICANN; an opportunity to describe the BC in a speech or other manner – e.g. during a dinner or social event. As noted above, normally, we do try to partner with others, including ICANN, where business users will be attending, or where a specific objective of the BC can be enhanced – e.g. broadening the awareness that business users are engaging in ICANN and describing the why and purpose of such engagement.
- c) We always require a commitment to distribute BC materials, e.g. the BC Fact Sheet; and where applicable, other presentation materials, such as a speech, or brief PP presentation
- d) Other customized options, depending on the event; such as organizing an outreach dinner, e.g.: Afghanistan IGF special dinner; half day pre ICANN session in Johannesburg, South Africa; participation in events that are invitational: Uganda keynote; RIR Internet Summit speaking opportunity in Kenya; Brazilian event/speaking role by BC members.
- e) Submission of a written report in a timely manner is always required. [Note, recently, the Onboarding Pilot Team members [ Marilyn/Lawrence/Omar] proposed that the BC develop templates for each of these items, so that there is more consistency in the expectations of those who are sponsored, and also in the analysis of the results of the specific event. This is before the BC Outreach Committee for consideration and if agreed, development].

**2. What aspect of the current ICANN Community Travel Support Guidelines work well for your group?**

Many aspects are well defined in the Guidelines, and we are appreciative. We also appreciate the integrity and commitment of the Travel Support team, and especially want to commend the extraordinary effort that was recently made to help a proposed BC senior executive traveler, who was denied visa by the host country: UAE. In spite of the challenges, the ICANN travel team made extraordinary efforts to assist the BC’s proposed traveler.

The open nature of the Guidelines is also appreciated. We do have some concerns and suggestions, and these follow.

-what and why are exception for travel options provided, e.g. upgradable fares, or business class? And how are these made more visible to all who are requesting ICANN travel support?

-can the cost of travel to the airport be better factored in? Some who are supported are encountering significant local costs from their homes to the nearest airport. Can the guidelines better describe the options for such costs?

-What are the “standard” requirements for meeting reports from approved travelers? E.g. should every traveler submit a list of the session that they attend, as a template meeting report? At this point, it appears that someone can be approved for travel for one purpose, and there is no clarity of what other events and sessions that they attend. A simple form could be developed, with a list of the sessions attended, or other events participated in.

We note that Councilors/Officers who are supported are already reporting to their communities, so we are not asking that there be additional burdensome reports for these supported travelers.

**3. What specific area of the ICANN Community Travel Support Guidelines affect your group the most?**

Deadlines are a challenge to us at times. It is very challenging to know more than 6 weeks out that a BC member might be invited to speak at a session of benefit to the BC. Of course, 6 weeks is reasonable for travel to ICANN meeting, usually, although if we have to make a change, due to illness or business issues,

we may need an exception for a change in traveler. Of more concern is that ICANN travel support does not allow exceptions, even when no visa is required.

#### CROP:

Unfortunately the six week deadline is a major challenge to the BC; as often events that are relevant to the BC for outreach and member recruitment come up with only a three to four week notice. As there are no exceptions, this limits the ability of the BC to use the CROP Program, for instance. Request: can a possible exception process be possible, if there is no request for visa support, to allow a 4 week deadline. When you factor in a one to two week approval process within the community itself, this already creates a 6-7 week period. We understand that exceptions will require standard requirements, but if visa support is not required, perhaps there can be a standard description of when an exception is allowed.

#### Fellowship Program:

Defining categories of affiliation can affect who gets funded: We have had some experiences where fellowships are not easily available as a resource to business users due to lack of clarity in definition of who is a business user. We have decided not to use this feedback process to identify our suggestions for improvements in the Fellowship program, which we over all greatly value. However, we do have concrete suggestions for how the Fellowship and NextGen programs can better benefit onboarding of participants in the ICANN community. These will be provided in the review of the Fellowship Program, after further internal analysis and broader BC discussion.

However, as a very high level and preliminary feedback of both NextGen and the Fellowship Program:

Recommendations: Return to posting the bios of the Fellows and NextGen who receive funding:

- The bios of the applicants who are chosen for funding should be posted online as they once were; that helps the fellow and the groups that come to speak to them regarding where they may be interested in ICANN.

- a well defined description of the various categories should be provided by the relevant constituency/groups, and posted online. The BC volunteers to lead the way with a one to two paragraph description from the BC as criteria to become a member and how to engage with the BC.

- the "evaluators" of the applications need to provide justification statements for why they select the fellows and NextGen. These can be general, initially: XX number of received applications; X number from [category]; Y number selected as a review of geo attendance, by Stakeholder category indicate that [Z] region has not been fully represented. However, such information needs to be published by ICANN.

- ICANN Fellowship Selection Committee: We appreciate that this is a time consuming task. Perhaps it could have at least one sponsored travel support to an ICANN meeting a year, as an example, with a working session on site regarding how to improve the evaluation and selection process and also hear feedback.

- Criteria for who is selected to be on the ICANN Fellowship Selection Committee should be published for public comment, but we offer a preliminary suggestion that it could be helpful to have the same criteria for member selection as the NomCom in terms of representation.

- The BC suggests that each of the communities who may benefit from the Fellowship and Next Gen funding should also recommend the criteria for business fellows who are approved, e.g. for the BC, we suggest that fellow should be a senior executive of the company, with long term commitment with the company, or officially nominated by the company, This helps increase the BC's chances to remain connected with the business entity itself, as our main interest, as BC, is engaging with the company, or with an association that can represent multiple businesses. . Also as a criteria: the company nominating reps for fellowship should be a registered business entity and should not be less than a year old as that

reduces the chances of the company to become a BC member. All documents provided need to be verifiable.

***4. What area might be added to the ICANN Community Travel Support Guidelines to provide additional support to your group?***

We think that ICANN Community Travel Support Guidelines should include well defined descriptions about which category one is within and if it changes, then the application needs to be updated. The Constituencies, and Advisory Committees should draft the definitions that are used.

We think that a better assessment of outcomes from the ICANN supported travel is needed.

For instance, a recent look at travel funding for at least one CCWG identified that some who are designated to receive travel funding have a less than 30% attendance record at the online work of the group. Other CCWGS have excellent attendance by the designated participants. While the information is available on a somewhat obscure Wiki posting, this doesn't really help to inform the fuller community, or the sending organization.

More formal and public publication on a quarterly basis, of attendance in all working calls, and the face to face working sessions will update the authorizing entities. If someone is designated as the formal representative and cannot fulfill the obligations, including engaging with the community they represent, there could be a need for a resignation due to personal reasons, and a new appointment, made from the relevant community.

Circumstances and job changes do happen. SOIs need to be updated on an annual basis, at a minimum, and if not updated, could result in suspension of engagement until the SOI is updated. SOIs also need to be much more factual and detailed, which today, many are not, due to lack of clarity of the need for details.

Travelers funded by ICANN in particular should be required to have up to date and detailed SOIs. Merely stating that one works for XYZ company is not informative. Details in the SOI should be informative about the particular assignment.

All travelers funded by ICANN should be required to submit an SOI, and a template of the kind of information required should be provided to such funded travelers.

Another key issue revolves around visa assistance to funded travellers. We propose that for regions where the rate of visa denials to participants for face to face meetings are at a record high, ICANN consider extraordinary support efforts, and consult with those most affected, so that a more standardized approach can be developed. We also note that recently, ICANN travel was an extraordinary partner to help the BC with an application for a visa for a senior executive from Libya.

**5. How does your group allocate its community travel support slots? How are members prioritized? How are newcomers to ICANN considered?**

First, we support the travel support to the gTLD Policy Councilors and to the BC officers as core budget items, and as noted, we would welcome having a fourth officer per constituency, for funding by core ICANN budget.

We do strongly support further support, and are actively engaging in using ICANN allocated funds in some areas. The BC Outreach committee makes decisions about community travel for purposes of Outreach and Member Recruitment.

We are fairly flexible; first we prioritize use of CROP and our other approved programs, but we are very flexible on other events. A member can propose an event to the Outreach Committee and the request is reviewed very quickly and then referred to the BC ExCom for final agreement. In fact, the balance of sponsorships is pretty well balanced, with newcomers – less than 2 years – receiving support, just as are experienced members who have been invited due to their standing in the broader community.

BC budget can support travel/per diem/hotel, as we did for a speaking role for a speaker in Uganda event – invitation for a CEO/filled by a female speaker; we also sponsored a speaker to a Kenya event/joining a more senior BC speaker already confirmed to speak – two very senior executives speaking; we sponsored a special event in Afghanistan; and a half day event in South Africa, ICANN59, as examples. We also recently supported a special outreach in Brazil, but the financial support was very minimal, due to local support.

We have not traditionally provided financial travel support to the ICANN meetings themselves, although according to the Outreach guidelines, the BC could consider an extraordinary requirement, if there was a special request that was specific to bring in members who could not otherwise attend, and who bring special perspectives, for instance. Some of our smaller members from developing countries are quite challenged to have funding to attend ICANN meetings, and as we do not have funding for this, we could turn to ICANN funding for special support. We would undoubtedly still rely on the CROP Guidelines/ICANN guidelines for how such funding amounts were determined.

The BC also often receives invitations to speak at the IGF, or national or regional level events. We work within the ICANN Guidelines, and try to maximize benefits to the BC in consideration of such opportunities. We usually rely on the ICANN guidelines for categories of funding, should any such sponsorship by the BC be considered.

We have spoken about our recommendations to enhance effectiveness of the Fellowship Program for the business users, and will address this further when the Fellowship Program is further evaluated.

Improvements in ICANN's programs:

A very few BC members have been recruited through the Fellowship Program [approximately 4-7 over the last several years], and some of them are now established contributors in the BC, as well as continuing to contribute to the Fellowship Program. However, in general, we find that business users are not receiving fellowships at the same rate as other groups. This may be due to a misunderstanding that SMEs from developing countries, or trade associations can afford the travel costs to participate in ICANN which is clearly not the case; yet, their voice is incredibly important along that of civil society and NGOs. We will provide detailed suggestions for how the Fellowship and NextGen program can support

the BC in a separate process as these programs are reviewed. In general, we support the Fellowship program, so our comments will be specific to selective improvements.

**6. What, if any, educational and informational activities does your group conduct to inform participants of ICANN community resources?**

The BC newsletter is the role model for all other groups at ICANN, and we are proud that we were the initial pilot, and received the support and encouragement of the ICANN staff to develop what is now a well known tool – e.g. the insert with the updated Board, and organizational representatives.

We also have held outreach events, as referenced earlier,

BC members often speak at other groups, or distribute the BC materials; e.g.

List of some of the events – usually we distribute from 30-50+ brochures

-CSTD Annual Meeting – BC Brochures

-WSIS Forum- BC Brochures

-ICANN 59 special half day event

-IGF-USA 2017

-AfiCTA Summits: 2015, 2016, 2017

-IGF2017: BC is still assessing how to best utilize the IGF2017, but has several members attending and who will be speaking and offer distribution of materials, as well as promoting the BC engagement at ICANN

**-7. What are actionable and measurable expectations your group or leadership has for members who receive travel support? Are there follow-up reporting requirements for members who attend ICANN Public Meetings and/or receive Community Regional Outreach Program (CROP) funding?**

The BC does have a requirement for a written proposal, which is what we base the decision for sponsorship [and how much/what is funded] on. We also require a written report for CROP. Recently, the Onboarding Pilot Mentor/Mentees discussed establishing a template for both proposals, and meeting reports.

It could be useful to ask for a very minimal listing of the sessions that a funded traveler attends, and we note that just attending fellowship events is not helping to move the fellow into the community, so more should be required in addition to any such meetings.

However, we note that BC members who receive funding as GNSO policy councilors, or officers already do a lot of reporting to the BC membership; e.g. they make informal reports, both briefing the BC members on the bi-monthly calls, and during the ICANN meetings, while we do not ask for a formal report. The BC considers the quite detailed reporting from our Councilors and officers sufficient.

For the ICANN meetings, the CSG, Chair and BC Secretariat collaborate on documenting other collaborative events. This is deemed satisfactory to the BC membership and is quite well documented on the BC private list. We are not supporting asking them for further documents, given their workloads.

**8. Instead of reimbursement for travel-related expenses, would your members prefer to receive a stipend or per diem from the ICANN organization?**

Probably not. Actual costs would often exceed a stipend or per diem.

**9. Are there categories of travel and events that you are not presently able to support?**

We can always do more in developing countries, and we find the collaboration with the GSE team and the regional V.Ps extremely beneficial. One of our members has proposed a business summit at the AGM 2018, with ICANN engagement and participation and support.

Bringing people to ICANN is very challenging. We need to advance that, but also small travel grants to bring business users to the national IGF, where ICANN is speaking, could be a unique opportunity to build more business user [corporations and associations] engagement in ICANN overall.

We could benefit from small travel grants to continue to support attendance from our SMEs from developing countries, but are just considering how that could work. The voice of SMEs/associations from developing countries is particularly important to strengthen the input into the BC, the CSG, and the broader ICANN community.

We could find it very useful to bring BC members to the global IGF, if they were speaking there, and use this as an opportunity to deepen engagement. Discussing this is underway, as we have noted that others from ICANN do receive ICANN funding and organize side events during IGF.

**10. How does your group plan for upcoming events? What is your planning cycle for deciding on whether ICANN community or organization resources might be used?**

The Outreach Committee holds regular calls where we discuss and strategize. We also draft and publish an annual Outreach Strategy that is approved by the BC ExCom and posted to the full BC. We try to be both organized in our planning, and flexible enough to be opportunistic.

For instance, the BC learned very late that there was an event organized by ICANN in St. Lucia, and one of the BC members dialed in. Another event was organized by the ICANN staff in Brazil, and a new member asked for support and engagement to participate and speak, with a remote speaker from the BC ExCom. Other events are planned long in advance, such as the AfICTA Summit. Recently, and with very short notice, an officer and a member of the BC were invited to speak at the African IGF. While BC materials are being distributed, no direct costs to the BC are proposed.

At the upcoming IGF2017, several BC members will attend, and speak, in their individual capacity, but will then provide feedback into the BC's usual meetings. BC materials are being distributed, and a planned interview with attending BC members is under development.

We consider this a work in progress, and welcome the opportunity to comment.

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**These responses were drafted by Marilyn Cade, with edits provided by Gabriela Szlak, Omar Mansoor Ansari, Tola Sogbesan, Jimson Olufuye, Barbara Wanner, and Lawrence OlaWale-Roberts.**



Appendix: The BC Outreach Programme, based on the BC Outreach Strategy: developed by the Outreach Committee/approved by the BC ExCom and posted to the BC annually.

The BC Outreach Programme covers four (4) categories and it is focused on broadening geographic and participatory diversity of the BC in line with ICANN Bylaws and the BC Charter. Item 5 allows for unique opportunities that are approved by the Outreach Committee/approved by the BC ExCom.

The categories are:

1. Community Regional Outreach Pilot Programme (CROP)
2. Leadership recruitment programme - supported via a budget allocation via ICANN and limited to pre qualified executives from business or associations in the region where ICANN is meeting
3. ICANN Support for Outreach in Developing countries - in collaboration with V.Chairs/Region
4. BC Budget Supported activities/Often in partnership with item 3 above [ICANN59 is example – ½ day outreach event with African business/several speakers from ICANN and BC]
5. Unique opportunities that the Outreach Committee supports which are inline with the core mission of the BC