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Governmental Advisory Committee Comments Regarding How We Meet: Reviewing the Implementation of the ICANN Public Meetings Strategy

Introduction

The ICANN Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) welcomes this opportunity to provide comments regarding the How We Meet: Reviewing the Implementation of the ICANN Public Meetings Strategy¹. GAC members have reviewed the How We Meet: An Initial Project Report² and herein provide general comments regarding the report that are applicable to GAC members.³

General Comments

ICANN public meeting planning is important to the ICANN organization and the ICANN Community. The GAC acknowledges that the How We Meet project is an ongoing collaborative effort between the ICANN organization and community members to assess how the 2014 ICANN Public Meetings Strategy⁴ is being implemented. The GAC appreciates the specific opportunity

¹ ICANN Public Comment Proceeding:

<https://www.icann.org/en/public-comment/proceeding/how-we-meet-reviewing-the-implementation-of-the-icann-public-meetings-strategy-09-04-2025>

² How We Meet: An Initial Project Report - 31 March 2025:

<https://itp.cdn.icann.org/en/files/policy-development/how-we-meet-discussion-group-initial-report-31-03-2025-en.pdf>

³ This comment was prepared by the Committee's leadership and is made on behalf of the entire GAC. It has been subjected to review of the GAC membership and is intended to complement, but not replace, any other input that may be provided regarding the How We Meet: An Initial Project report by individual GAC members.

⁴ 2014 ICANN Public Meeting Strategy: <https://meetings.icann.org/en/future-meeting-strategy>

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afforded to GAC members and observers to contribute to the review of practical options for planning and conducting ICANN Public Meetings that will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of these hybrid meetings and optimize cost efficiencies while continuing to support the evolving needs of the community.

The GAC firmly supports ICANN's Multistakeholder Model and the ICANN organization's continued commitment to being a globally accessible and exemplar multistakeholder organization. Specifically, the GAC is keen on efficiency and recognizes the importance of face-to-face interaction within the ICANN community. As such, the GAC is supportive of increasing the efficiency of ICANN public meetings, while not moving to a 100% virtual meetings, noting that in-person meetings provide substantial value opportunities to further the ICANN community's work and build cross-community relationships.

The GAC also recommends that the ICANN organization take into consideration the carbon footprint of ICANN public meetings in the overall review of the meeting strategy and optimizing ICANN's work. To that end we should ensure that the hybrid meeting experience is first-rate and uses the best available technology and processes.

In this sense a rotational concept of combining physical meetings with e.g. one virtual meeting every 4 or 5 meetings, or considering shortening the Annual General Meeting (AGM) or Policy Forum by one day respectively could be explored.

Although out of scope for this project, the GAC would be willing to revisit the 2014 meeting strategy and consider adjusting the frequency of ICANN public meetings.

Furthermore, the GAC recommends that any future realized savings and efficiencies should be re-invested in reinforcing openness, inclusion and onboarding for members of the Multistakeholder Model. Specifically, the GAC sees value in strengthening the nexus of meeting locations with meeting objectives and regional participation. The GAC continues to see value in maintaining a regional rotation for meeting locations to facilitate participation from the various ICANN regions.

The GAC appreciates that accessibility and safety of any meeting location remains an important factor in the selection process. Although not directly contributing to cost savings, maintaining a fully virtual meeting as the alternative in contingency planning is considered an acceptable compromise.

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Finally, the GAC also recommends that any proposed efficiencies consider the equality and equity of community groups and regions. The benefits and impacts of the changes should be shared by all. Affected groups and regions should be thoroughly consulted and decisions should consider more than the absolute numbers of community members impacted.

Closing

The GAC appreciates the opportunity to provide input on community discussions on increasing the efficiency of ICANN public meetings. GAC members will continue to follow this project's work and thanks the ICANN organization for the work and discussions conducted to date.

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