

Registries Stakeholder Group Statement

Issue: **Proposed Incremental Changes to the ICANN Meetings Strategy**

Date statement submitted: **31 Jan 2018**

Reference URL: <https://www.icann.org/public-comments/proposed-changes-meetings-strategy-2017-12-14-en>

Background¹

The current ICANN meeting strategy is based on the recommendations by the Meeting Strategy Working Group adopted by the Board in 2014. The proposed changes were developed by ICANN Community leaders.

<i>ICANN meeting strategy</i>	<i>Proposed changes</i>
<i>Community Forum (6 days)</i>	<i>Community Forum (6 days)</i> No change recommended.
<i>Policy Forum (4 days)</i>	<i>Policy Forum (5 days)</i> Additional day dedicated to outreach
<i>Annual General Meeting (7 days)</i>	<i>Annual General Meeting</i> Option 1: make better use of day 7 Option 2: reduce to 6+1 days (six official days + day seven for wrap up & working meetings)

Note: the proposed changes to the AGM address concerns raised by the RySG in its public comment on the 'Proposed Dates for ICANN Public Meetings 2021-2023':

https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/ec8e4c_9e28e88ab8484a3490611157e27a3615.pdf .

Registries Stakeholder Group (RySG) comment:

The Registries Stakeholder Group (RySG) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the proposed incremental changes to the ICANN Meetings Strategy.

The proposed changes to the Annual General Meeting and Policy Forum address concerns shared by the RySG, as was raised in our comment on the 'Proposed Dates for ICANN Public Meetings 2021-2023':

¹ *Background: intended to give a brief context/summary and to highlight what is most relevant for RO's in the subject document.*

“The RySG wants to use this comment opportunity to raise concern about the observed tendency to virtually shorten the meetings, the AGMs in particular, by moving important sessions or decision moments upfront in the schedule and reducing the meetings and events on the last day. ICANN 58 in Hyderabad and the schedule for the upcoming ICANN 60 in Abu Dhabi illustrate this well. While we understand the underlying motivation - the assumption that many participants prefer to avoid traveling back during the weekend - we are concerned that the schedule itself has become an incentive to skip the last day.

As more participants leave early, this behaviour reinforces itself and has a number of side-effects: it becomes increasingly difficult to plan meaningful meetings and sessions on the last day (group meetings as well as private meetings); participants still present feel frustrated about wasting their time and money; it becomes advisable not to arrange travel too long beforehand or to book the more expensive flexible alternatives so that one can still adapt when the meeting schedule is announced. In short, some of the positives of having a clear and long-term meeting strategy are undone.

We therefore prefer a consequent use of all the meeting days that have been announced, including the last day for wrap-up and closing sessions. This comment is not a plea for longer meetings or fuller schedules - on the contrary, we would suggest regular evaluations of the load and length of the different meetings. What we ask for is that the announced meeting dates of the ICANN Public Meetings guarantee constructive use of the participants’ time.”

(Quoted from RySG Comment on the Proposed dates for ICANN Public meetings 2021-2023, 27 Sept 2017, https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/ec8e4c_9e28e88ab8484a3490611157e27a3615.pdf.)

The RySG supports in principle the proposal to extend the Policy Forum with one meeting day in combination with an effective reduction of the Annual General Meeting with one day. The additional day would allow to relax the heavy schedule of the Policy Forum, and help to resolve scheduling conflicts. Therefore ICANN should be cautious about planning new activities on day 5 and leave sufficient time for SOs/ACs/Groups to better organise their activities over the duration of the meeting.

In light of the current budget constraints faced by ICANN and the already heavy cost of the ICANN meetings strategy, this change should be budget-neutral, at least. Option 2 as formulated, seems to confirm an unofficial day 7 for ‘working meetings and wrap-ups’. The RySG is concerned that an extension of the Policy Forum in combination with either of the proposed options for the AGM will result in an increase of costs.

Moreover, changing the official dates for the AGM while keeping an unofficial day seven for meetings that ‘might’ be organised and will be announced closer to the meeting does not change the current situation that is described in our comment on the 2021-2023 meeting dates.

Therefore the RySG wishes to amend option 2 as follows, *‘Reduce the ~~official dates published for the Annual General Meetings to six days. while keeping day seven available for the community to hold internal working meetings and wrap-ups.~~’*

The RySG reiterates that while setting meeting dates well in advance allows participants reasonable time to arrange their travel, publishing the meeting structure and agenda well in advance allows participants to prepare and organise their participation in a more efficient way and asks that efforts continue to publish agendas as early as possible.

The RySG thanks Community leaders and ICANN for taking these comments into consideration and is already looking forward to the comprehensive review of 2014 meetings strategy. Such a review, which we hope will start sooner rather than later, should address the growing complexity of the meetings with long days, heavy schedules with too many sessions, and competing and conflicting meetings.
