



# DOCUMENT PUBLICATION OPERATIONAL POLICY FOR ICANN INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC MEETINGS

*As approved by the ICANN Board on 30 October 2009*

In an effort to build on existing best practices, and to encourage the early sharing of documentation that is primarily intended for public review and discussion, a document publication operational policy has been developed for use across ICANN at the organization's international public meetings.

The intent of the operational policy is to provide a clear framework and guidelines for the consistent publication of work across the organization and so enable wide dialogue throughout the community. It will be reviewed in the light of each meeting in an effort to continuously improve ICANN operations.

## **Document deadline**

The Board has approved a single deadline for international public meetings of 15 working days before the official opening of the meeting.

Working days are defined as weekdays, with a calendar week representing five working days. Public holidays are not treated as exceptions. The first day of the meeting is the one on which the opening ceremony is held.

The document deadline relates to the time at which the documentation is available for public review and download.

## **Executive summaries**

Relevant documents should come with a cover sheet and an executive summary.

The cover sheet provides the most basic details of the document underneath, including title, source, status, publication date and language.

The executive summary is a short, concise summary of the document<sup>1</sup> written in plain language. Jargon and acronyms should be kept to a minimum.

Such a summary should consider its intended audience and, ideally, briefly cover the environment the document exists within; the main details of the document; any conclusions or recommendations that the document comes to; the inclusion of options, where appropriate; and contain a “next steps” section to outline the path forward.

Executive summaries should be translated into the five UN languages.

Examples of an executive summary and cover sheet are supplied in an appendix to this document to serve as a guide.

### **Acronyms and jargon**

All acronyms and jargon should be spelt out or explained in the first instance. Where needed, a definition or link to a glossary for a relevant term or expression can be included.

### **Plain language**

The use of plain language is a condition for effective understanding and participation in ICANN’s work. Staff and community are expected to evaluate whether a document is written in sufficiently plain language before publication.

A community feedback mechanism should be introduced for easy rating of a document in terms of the clarity of its language.

A number of guides to writing in plain language are freely available at the Plain English Campaign website at: <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk>.

### **Meeting agendas**

The document deadline applies to meeting agendas.

Meeting agendas are defined as an overview of all public sessions taking place within the conference venue, both in the days before the official opening ceremony and after the final Board meeting.

That overview should include:

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<sup>1</sup> Best practice guidelines say an executive summary should not exceed two pages or 10 percent of a document’s full pagination (excluding appendices), whichever is longer.

- a breakdown of topics to be discussed
- a list of speakers/panelists split up according to relevant subject
- an explanation of the session's goals and expected outcomes
- hyperlinks to relevant documentation.

A process through which community leaders are able to share and compare meeting agendas and topics a sufficient time ahead of international public meetings would allow for more effective use of attendees' time. ICANN staff will develop specific proposals to make this possible.

## **Translation**

ICANN has an adopted set of translation principles, found at:  
<http://www.icann.org/en/accountability/frameworks-principles/community.htm#e>

Those principles should be considered in the preparation of relevant documentation for ICANN international public meetings. Executive summaries should be translated into the five UN languages prior to a meeting and with sufficient time for review.

In addition, this operational policy will be reviewed alongside those translation principles in an effort to find solutions to ongoing issues including:

- Which documents (or parts of documents) to translate, and into which languages
- The timely publication of translated texts
- Tools for multilingual discourse

Others issues to be considered include the measurable impact and cost effectiveness of translation efforts.

## **Presentations**

Presentations should preferably be provided as far in advance of a meeting as possible.

Presentations should focus on encouraging discussion of a document rather than act as a summary of its content i.e. there should be an implicit assumption that attendees have read the relevant documentation prior to a given session.

A searchable database of presentations would be a useful way to provide background and demonstrate progress of ICANN's work. ICANN staff will develop specific proposals to make this possible.

## **Reporting and Assessment**

A report covering compliance with the document deadline and related operational policy, as well as the efficacy of both in enabling wider community dialogue and discussion, will be prepared by ICANN staff and provided to the Board Public Participation Committee within 45 days of the end of each international public meeting.

That report will help inform the Board Public Participation Committee's monitoring of the document deadline, so that the PPC may then report back to the Board with suggested refinements.

A single control list of documentation to be issued for an international public meeting will be maintained, updated and made available online.

ICANN will work toward the introduction of a uniform naming convention for documents.

# **APPENDIX 1: COVER SHEET EXAMPLE**

**EN**

**TITLE OF DOCUMENT**

SUBHEAD COVERING STATUS

**DATE:** [day] [month] [year]

**TITLE:** [full title of document]

**SOURCE:** [e.g. ICANN Staff]

**STATUS:** [e.g. Draft; Final; Version x]

**ACTION:** [e.g. published for public comment]

**APPENDIX 2:  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
EXAMPLE**

## SAMPLE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive summaries are essential for readers who don't have time to read an entire document, are not interested in reading the entire document, or need to review the important points without reading the entire document.

Therefore, to be effective, executive summaries should describe the context of the document, its purpose, the main points to be reviewed, discussed or analyzed, and a concluding paragraph covering conclusions, conclusions and recommendations, recommendations, or next steps, whichever is appropriate for the audience and document purpose.

The sample shown here will help guide authors in drafting executive summaries.

<p>Start with some <b>background or history</b>. Provide enough context so your readers will be able to understand the purpose of the document</p>	<p>The idea of introducing a document deadline was first considered by the Board's Public Participation Committee (PPC) at its inaugural meeting in December 2008. The issue then became a topic of public conversation at the Mexico City meeting in March 2008, with the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) suggesting a 15-working-day approach in its communiqué. The Board introduced a temporary two-stage document deadline for the Sydney (June 2009) and requested that an operational policy be devised by the PPC in consultation with the community and staff to be introduced in time for the Seoul meeting in October 2009.</p>
<p>Then summarize or condense the <b>main conclusions</b>. In some executive summaries, a bullet list may present your main conclusions most effectively. Others may require a short persuasive argument, or explanation or elaboration.</p>	<p>The document deadline for international public meetings has been set at 15 working days prior to the start of a meeting, and includes meeting agendas.</p> <p>The accompanying document publication operational policy builds on the deadline date and provide guidelines for the community and staff, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the use of plain language</li> <li>• inclusion of cover sheets and executive summaries</li> <li>• minimized use of jargon</li> <li>• translation of documents</li> <li>• provision of meeting agendas and presentations, and</li> <li>• reporting tools for reviewing the efficacy of the policy</li> </ul> <p>The intent of the operational policy is to provide a clear framework and guidelines for the consistent publication of work across the organization and so enable wide dialogue throughout the community.</p>
<p>Then state <b>conclusions, conclusions and recommendations, recommendations, or next steps</b>, whichever is appropriate for your audience and document purpose.</p>	<p>The community and ICANN as an organization would benefit from the provision of relevant documents a set time before a meeting, and from having some consistency in those documents.</p> <p>The use of plain language and, conversely, the minimized use (or clear explanation) of acronyms and jargon would aid wider understanding and so more informed discussion of ICANN's work.</p> <p>The PPC will decide when it feels the operational policy's content has achieved sufficient consensus to put it forward to the Board for review and adoption.</p>