

ICANN | CSG

Commercial Stakeholder Group

February 15, 2017

Göran Marby, President & CEO, ICANN
Dr. Steve Crocker, Chair, ICANN Board of Directors
ICANN Directors
12025 Waterfront Drive, Suite 300
Los Angeles, CA 90094-2536

Dear Mr. Marby, Dr. Crocker and ICANN Directors:

You likely recall that at the ICANN 57 Public Forum, several members of the community expressed concerns about the structuring of ICANN meetings under the new, three-meetings per year approach instituted in 2016. Many of these concerns were echoed in the [ICANN 57 Community survey](#).

In particular, community members expressed frustrations about the over-scheduling of High-Interest Topic (HIT) sessions, many of which conflicted with other meetings addressing constituents' core interests. Members also were confused about how such a lengthy, seven-day meeting could nevertheless pose a plethora of scheduling conflicts, without priority to core issues for the ICANN community.

Community members prefer that leadership in all ACs and SOs be given an opportunity to express support or objection to a proposed HIT. It might be appropriate to develop criteria such as a required level of support and/or absence of multiple objections among AC/SOs at the constituency level before an HIT is added to the agenda.

In addition, for the Hyderabad meeting, a single sponsor group proposed a HIT session on DNS and Content Regulation. Initially, the sponsoring group was allowed to select panelists and designate the moderator, who was also part of the sponsoring organization. Through persistence by other stakeholders, panel participation was broadened considerably. Still, during the HIT session, the sponsoring organization opened with a presentation of their position. In our view, this did not meet the level of broad participation of the ICANN community to warrant a high-interest session.

In sum, we urge that before allowing a HIT session to be added to the schedule, ICANN should do the following: (1) solicit the views of the AC/SO community leadership concerning a proposed HIT; (2) if the topic enjoys the minimum agreed upon level of AC/SO support, ensure that panelists for any HIT session include representatives of any constituencies, SOs, and ACs that have engaged and expressed interest on that issue; (3) seek a balance of viewpoints among HIT panelists; and (4) select a moderator able and willing to present the issue objectively and to call on commenters in a way that presents a balanced discussion during the event. The moderator could be community, Board, or ICANN staff member. Emails

to ICANN groups should be used to quickly confirm panelists and the moderators. The agenda for HIT sessions will benefit from being posted publicly.

Judging by preliminary planning for ICANN 58, we appreciate how the meeting team has reduced the number of HITs scheduled and endeavored to address other concerns expressed by the community (as above). Unfortunately, we still see some of these problems with at least one HIT being planned for ICANN 58, so it is clear that these standards need to be clarified and publicized. This is particularly the case when the organizers come from outside of ICANN.

In the spirit of transparency and accountability, we respectfully ask that the ICANN meeting staff provide a formal written report as soon as possible, which details their efforts to address community feedback provided in both the ICANN 57 Public Forum and follow-up community survey. Such a report would go a long way toward instilling confidence in the community that its feedback was heard and acted upon.

Thank you for your consideration.

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