

## Summary Report of Public Comment Proceeding

### Revised Community Travel Support Guidelines

**Publication Date:** 15 June 2020

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#### Public Comment Proceeding

**Open Date:** 13 February 2020

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#### Section I: General Overview and Next Steps

This Public Comment proceeding sought input on the revised Community Travel Support Guidelines (Guidelines). The revised Guidelines reflect feedback from supported travelers and observations of ICANN Travel Support since October 2018, including this Public Comment proceeding. All edits are captured in the published edited version of the Guidelines [[PDE, 691 KB](#)].

The revised Guidelines [[PDE, 516 KB](#)] will take effect on 1 July 2020. However, the publication of the revised Guidelines does not reverse the existing travel guidance in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. ICANN org will update its travel guidance as global public health conditions permit. Please refer to the [ICANN Community Travel Support webpage](#) for more information.

#### Section II: Contributors

*A total of four submissions have been published. The contributors are listed below in alphabetical order with initials noted. To the extent that quotations are used in Section IV, such citations will reference the initials of the contributor.*

**Organizations and Groups:**

Name	Submitted by	Initials
At-Large Advisory Committee	ICANN At-Large Staff	ALAC
Business Constituency	Steve DelBianco	BC
Non-Commercial Stakeholder Group	Rafik Dammak	NCSG
Registrar Stakeholder Group	Zoe Bonython	RrSG

#### Section III: Summary of Submissions

*General Disclaimer: This section intends to summarize broadly and comprehensively the submissions to this Public Comment proceeding but does not address every specific position stated by each contributor. The preparer recommends that readers interested in specific aspects of any of the summarized submissions, or the full context of others, refer directly to the specific contributions.*

The four submissions contained 22 recommendations in 11 areas:

- Reimbursement
- Visas
- Insurance
- Ground Transportation
- Forced Overnight Delay
- Lodging
- Trip Cancellations
- Travel Assistance and Support
- Immunizations and Medication
- Meals
- Per Diems

#### **Section IV: Analysis of Submissions**

*General Disclaimer: This section intends to provide an analysis and evaluation of the submissions along with explanations regarding the basis for any recommendations provided within the analysis.*

ICANN org appreciates all community feedback about the revised Community Travel Support Guidelines. ICANN org reviewed and carefully considered the 22 recommendations. In this section, each recommendation from an [ICANN community group] is followed by a *response from ICANN org*.

#### **Reimbursement**

[ALAC] There should be some provision for reimbursement above the \$25 for those participants who are charged higher fees, upon submission of proof of charges. We request that ICANN investigate these services (TransferWise, Zelle, Paypal, Western Union, etc) and implement a solution that will reduce the cost to both ICANN and cash recipients.

*ICANN org researched numerous service providers and analyzed the various costs and transaction fees, the location and security of their retail outlets, as well as the reporting capabilities of each provider. Based on this detailed analysis, ICANN org decided to utilize Western Union to facilitate the reimbursement of community members.*

[RrSG] The RrSG believes a clearer timeline for reimbursement is needed to avoid lengthy delays (where some travellers had to wait for more than 100 days after submission of receipts in the past).

*ICANN Travel Support is currently reviewing the expense report submission process for potential improvements. After these changes have been made and initial community feedback has been captured, the Guidelines will be adjusted accordingly.*

#### **Visas**

[ALAC] The \$200 limit on visa reimbursement was not reasonable. We continue to think so. Visa reimbursement fees should be the actual costs of the visa and not some arbitrary figure that ICANN has determined should cover the cost.

*The \$200 limit is based on the cost of the visa itself. Any extraordinary expenses to acquire a visa would be considered per the "Special Circumstances" section of the Guidelines.*

[NCSG] In the 1st line of the 2nd paragraph of the Travel Visas section, we suggest an edit: "ICANN Travel Support assists supported travelers whenever possible, but it cannot apply for any visa on the supported traveler's behalf" instead of "ICANN Travel Support assists supported travelers whenever

possible, but it cannot apply to any visa on the supported traveler's behalf".

*ICANN org agrees with this recommendation and will modify the Guidelines.*

[NCSG] In the Special Circumstances section, we recommend that the document states that the supported traveller must inquire whether reimbursements will be made and receive approval from the ICANN Travel Support team for obtaining visas under these special circumstances prior to embarking on the visa application process.

*ICANN org agrees with this recommendation and will modify the Guidelines.*

[NCSG] We recommend that the ease of visa applications be factored into the selection of future destinations. For example, ICANN could ask the host country to reduce the time and conditions for obtaining a visa for participants.

*ICANN org already asks hosts to provide a "letter of invitation and assist attendees with visa and immigration issues" as outlined [here](#).*

[ALAC] If a traveler is required to stay overnight because of travel routing than [sic] Consistency Travel should ensure that that the supported traveler is reimbursed for the cost of the transit visa if such a visa is required to get to the hotel booked by the airline.

*Through the booking process, the designated Travel Management Company and ICANN Travel Support review itineraries to minimize travel disruptions, such as a required transit visa for supported travelers, as much as possible.*

[ALAC] At-Large would advise ICANN not only to encourage host Governments to expedite visa applications but also that if they cannot do that then these countries should inform ICANN at the outset so that participants can make the choice as to whether the time and expense spent on the application process would be worth the effort.

*Working with the relevant Governmental Advisory Committee member, local host, and the ICANN org Government Engagement and Global Stakeholder Engagement teams, ICANN Travel Support strives for a streamlined visa application process. Granting a visa is solely the decision of a government.*

[BC] In order to tackle the exceptional cases, we urge ICANN to connect with GAC to seek advice on improvement on visa issuance to travelers from their respective countries.

*Working with the relevant Governmental Advisory Committee member, local host, and the ICANN org Government Engagement and Global Stakeholder Engagement teams, ICANN Travel Support strives for a streamlined visa application process. Granting a visa is solely the decision of a government.*

## **Insurance**

[ALAC] At-Large feels strongly that ICANN org should reimburse travel insurance expenses (including medical) for all travelers who are not already insured. Some suggestions to help to resolve this issue could include seeking a quote from ICANN's current health insurance provider for a group plan based on what they already cover for ICANN staff. This plan could also cover medical expenses for supported travelers to the three ICANN meetings, any Intersessional meetings, mediation meetings or other ICANN designated face to face meetings.

*This recommendation is already addressed by the Guidelines: "ICANN will reimburse travel insurance expenses only if it is required to apply for a visa. To be reimbursed, the supported traveler must provide proof that the insurance is required."*

[NCSG] In the Medical Care While Travelling section where it states that supported travellers are responsible for their medical care and expenses incurred while traveling, we suggest that this includes a recommendation that ICANN-supported travellers acquire travel insurance.

*ICANN org will modify the Guidelines to provide clarity on this matter.*

### **Ground Transportation**

[ALAC] If an active At-Large participant/leader is a supported ICANN Traveller, then he/she should be supported for the whole journey, not just the part that is from a "major commercial airport". If travel is expected from a participant's home to the "major commercial airport", and has luggage and work equipment to bring to the ICANN meeting, then ICANN should be prepared to pay reasonable costs of travel from home to the "major commercial airport" nearest to the supported traveler's home - especially when they live in rural areas or small cities that are not near to these large international airports. If necessary, Constituency Travel should pay for the supported traveler to take a domestic flight to that airport or to take a train to arrive there.

*This recommendation is already addressed in the Guidelines: "Per diems and stipends are intended to cover any transportation expense, including rideshare (Uber, Lyft, Grab, Ola, etc.), taxis, and public transportation to travel between the airport, hotel, and supported traveler's main domicile (home)."*

### **Forced Overnight Delay**

[ALAC] There should be some process in place whereby ICANN Travel Support can deal or even assist with [forced overnight delays]. Any costs incurred by the supported traveler during a forced overnight stay should also be reimbursed by Constituency Travel upon the delivery of a receipt. These costs include any costs for visas on arrival.

*This recommendation is already addressed in the Guidelines: "Should a flight delay require a forced overnight stay, supported travelers should first attempt to secure complimentary lodging and any other allowances directly from the airline. If unsuccessful, the supported traveler should contact ICANN Travel Support to confirm the next course of action."*

### **Lodging**

[ALAC] While ICANN does make provision for early check-in when the person's approved flight is arriving before 8 am, the same consideration should be given to late check-out. It should be given when a person's flight is scheduled after 8:00 pm.

*This recommendation is already addressed in the Guidelines: "Late check-out is not authorized regardless of flight departure time. However, supported travelers may arrange late check-out directly with the hotel (subject to availability). Any additional expenses are the responsibility of the supported traveler."*

[ALAC] It would be very helpful if ICANN could figure out a way to help supported travelers in these situations: Many of our travelers incur expenses as hotel policy is to require a credit card for incidentals and put through a charge of about "\$50 USD or the equivalent" a night to cover any incidental costs to the hotel.

*This recommendation is already addressed in the Guidelines: “In most hotels, a deposit or debit/credit card is required at the time of check-in to cover incidental expenses. ICANN org will not provide any guarantee or supplement the inability of a supported traveler to provide a deposit or debit/credit card.”*

[BC] On hotel room sharing: This possibility should be expressly and adequately communicated by ICANN org in communications with funded travelers so they understand that this is an option and opt for it soon enough in the process so that the room can be freed up for another qualified participant.

*ICANN Travel Support encourages all supported travelers to become familiar with the Guidelines, including the new “Supported Traveler Hotel Room Sharing” provision. Moreover, ICANN org encourages community groups to have a documented, open, and transparent process for selecting supported travelers.*

### **Cancellations**

[NCSG] The Trip Cancellations section outlines the conditions under which ICANN-booked trips can be cancelled and these include immediate risk to health, life, property, or environment. NCSG recommends that these conditions be expanded slightly to include the death of a close family member.

*ICANN org agrees with this recommendation and will modify the Guidelines.*

[NCSG] The Cancellations and Substitutions section states that ICANN will cancel its support of a traveller who misses two consecutive days of an event once it has started. However, we recommend that an exception be made for cases where this is due to no fault of the traveller, e.g. if the late arrival is due to delayed or cancelled flights. This section should more clearly outline what the traveller is expected to do in such circumstances.

*ICANN org will modify the Guidelines to provide clarity on this matter.*

### **Travel Assistance and Support**

[ALAC] At-Large is also concerned about the lack of information that is given to travelers regarding hidden expenses that travelers may not realize because they have not had time to read the “fine print” or has NOT been expressly explained to the traveler. If travelers are not explicitly told about any additional costs that are expected of them, then ICANN is beholden to pay for these due to their not passing on the relevant information to the travelers.

*This recommendation is already addressed in the Guidelines: “Travel support by ICANN is not intended to cover all travel costs. There are inherent discretionary travel costs that a supported traveler may incur that are not eligible for reimbursement and are not within the scope of these Guidelines.”*

### **Immunizations and Medications**

[NCSG] We recommend that the Immunization and Medications section should advise that supported travellers check any mandatory immunizations and additional travel health documents (such as Yellow Fever Cards or Immunization Records) that would be required to enable entry to the country. There should be clarity about ICANN’s responsibilities if a traveller is denied entry into a country based on not having mandatory immunizations or the travel health documents.

*ICANN org agrees with this recommendation and will modify the Guidelines.*

## **Meals**

[NCSG] We recommend that there should be exceptions made in cases where the traveller is unable to eat the provided meals due to religious or cultural reasons.

*Much like airlines ask for notice about dietary preferences, ICANN Travel Support encourages supported travelers to notify hotels of any cultural, personal, or religious dietary preferences to identify appropriate meal alternatives.*

## **Per Diems**

[BC] There have been instances where delays exist in the payment of per diems and refunds on certain costs (e.g. visa) to travelers. In this respect, we urge ICANN to set a timeline of at least three days before every meeting to pay per diems and not more than one week for the payment of refunds to travelers.

*ICANN Travel Support encourages supported travelers to refer to the Per Diem Checklist to ensure timely payment per the wire transfer distribution schedule established by ICANN org. Moreover, ICANN Travel Support is currently reviewing the expense report submission process for potential improvements. After these changes have been made and initial community feedback has been captured, the Guidelines will be adjusted accordingly.*