ICANN76 | CF – ccNSO: Strategic and Operations Planning Standing Committee
Sunday, March 12, 2023 – 13:15 to 14:30 CUN

KIMBERLY CARLSON: Hi, and welcome to the Strategic and Operations Planning Committee session at ICANN76. My name is Kim. Bart and I are the remote participation managers for this session. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by ICANN's Expected Standards of Behavior.

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For the benefit of other participants, please state your name for the record and speak at a reasonable pace. You may access all features in Zoom in the Zoom toolbar. And with that, I'll hand the floor over to Andreas and Irina.

ANDREAS MUSIELAK: Okay. Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to Cancún. So it looks that you all have survived the spring break party. So it's good to see you. I would also like to welcome our friend from ICANN Planning, Becky, Alex, and Roberto. I hope I didn't miss somebody. I see

Giovanni in the back. So it puts a little bit pressure on us. [Inaudible] is also here. Oh, sorry. So you're also in the back this time. Four eyes watching on us so we should be very much engaged today to show that we did some progress.

Okay. Let's come to the agenda from today. As you can see on the screen, we have the ICANN Planning presentation. So starting with the Finance Update, the Draft for the FY24 Plans, and also explaining the Economist Function. Then we come to the Q&A session. I know we have prepared with Irina some tough questions already, but you all here in the room are welcome to ask the questions. Then we come into the Review and Improving of Process of Submissions. Irina will give a general review what we did in the past. And then we go to the Jamboard and Bart will lead us to the Jamboard with some questions. So we are all invited to make some sticky notes. And then at the end, we have our Wrap-Up. So we decided to discuss a little bit what will be the timing in 2023. Okay. At this point, I hand over to Becky.

BECKY NASH: Thank you very much, Andreas. Hello, everyone. This is Becky Nash from ICANN Org Planning. We are here to give just a short update, and then open it up for questions and answers. So if we could go to the next slide, that would be great.

As Andres had said, I'm here with two other colleagues. I'm going to kick us off with a quick overview of the draft FY24 Operating Plan and Budget, and the Public Comment Overview. And then my colleague Alex Morshed is going to cover the FY24 budget. And then we will move into a short introduction from Roberto Peña on the Economist

Function at ICANN. And then we'll open it up for questions and answers.

I just would like to highlight on this slide, we have made the slides available. We also are highlighting in the lower part of the slide that there was a Prep Week webinar from the Planning and Finance teams, and the recording and the slides are also available for that session. Next slide, please.

So I'm going to cover the Draft FY24 Plans and the Public Comment Overview. So next slide, please.

For the draft FY24 Operating Plan and Financial Plans, we published the drafts for Public Comment on the 14th of December 2022. We've kept that same timeline for several years now and we do like to hear feedback on the timing overall of the Public Comment proceedings. But for the Public Comment, we have three documents that were presenting the plans. We provided a Highlights document which gives a general summary overview of the Operating Plan and the Budget. Then we have the draft FY24-28 Operating and Financial Plan which is a Five-Year Operating and Financial Plan, and the draft One-Year Operating Plan is in that document as well. Then we have the third document which is the draft FY24 Budget.

So the Public Comment proceeding ended on the 13th of February. We, first of all, want to thank all of the community members who submitted public comments. And specifically, we appreciate the ccNSO SOPC submitting public comments for the draft plans. We are in the process of reviewing all of the comments and preparing our responses, which will be available in the Staff Report which will be published on the 30th of March.

We just like to highlight also, as part of the Public Comment process for any community members that would like to get alerts about public comments, there's a functionality to be able to get informed about the status of public comments.

So if we go to the next slide, this gives an overview of the breakdown of all of the comments received on the draft FY24 Operating Plan and Budget. We have broken this out on the left-hand side by theme. These are categories or groupings of comments with a certain theme such as Document Structure, Financial Management, Functional Activities, Operating Initiatives Plans, and the Operating Plan.

We can see that we received 80 comments. They were submitted by different memos or letters. ICANN Org reads through those and then separates the specific comments by theme, and we are reporting here 80 comments in total. You can see at the top by column, we have the breakout of each submitter or organization or individuals that have submitted comments. On the far right-hand side, you can see that we have the ccNSO Strategic and Operational Planning Committee or SOPC listed there with 33 individual comments. Now, again, we go through and compile those comments. We continually seek input as to whether or not the comments are properly reported back out once the Summary Report is published.

But I just would like to highlight that, again, the ccNSO SOPC prepared a memo with detailed comments, and we do appreciate all of the comments that were received. We can see that most of the comments did center around the functional activities. So we know that the committee here really did review all of the individual functions and the plans that have been set forth for the five-year and the one-year. So if we go to the next slide, please.

At this time, I'm going to pass the microphone to my colleague Alex who's going to take us through the FY24 Budget. Thank you.

ALEX MORSHED: Thanks, Becky. So we wanted to provide a quick refresher on the FY24 Budget. So this slide covers the one-year budget for total ICANN. Total ICANN includes the ICANN Operations, which is reflected under the Operating Fund column here, and also other business segments which are funded by other funding sources shown on the slide. So for example, New gTLD Funds includes work on the 2012 round and SubPro implementation cost. The Supplemental Fund for Implementation of Community Recommendations or SFICR includes this point, expense activity for prioritized review recommendations, and Auction Proceeds which is utilized for the Grant Program. These additional funding sources provide ICANN Org the ability to execute on the increasing amount of work and also a draw on the funds based on the nature of that work. Next slide, please.

So this chart shows the funds under management, which includes cash and investments by fund with actual or projected balances as of June 30th for each fiscal year shown. So, just some items to note that in November of 2022, the Board approved a $19 million transfer to the Reserve Fund from the Operating Fund. Then in FY24, we're projecting $10 million to be distributed for the Grant Program from auction proceeds. If there are no other questions, I'll pass it on over to Roberto. Thank you.

ROBERTO PEÑA: Hello, everyone. Next slide, please. Next slide. We wanted to provide a high-level overview of the new Economist Function at ICANN. The Economist contributes to the strategic planning activities and provides analysis on economic trends. The role serves as a subject matter expert and provides advisory support on DNS marketplace analyses and support throughout the organization via research and analysis by utilizing market and macroeconomic data. So next slide, please.

Here, the terms of the Advisory and Programmatic Support, we see it playing out along three different lines. In terms of internal work, and this is your core research and analysis, getting new subscriptions, looking at the latest economic news and trends.

There are instances in which the work may have an external component to it. We would envision this within larger scope projects that may need external support. This may come by way of seeking out vendors, purchasing datasets, and supporting RFPs.

Then the third line, we see a potential partnership along the various functions within ICANN. So, helping to define some of the needs of the respective functional areas and recommending actions, doing this by utilizing macroeconomic and industry data to help inform ICANN's policy-making and the ongoing projects. This will be done by partnering with our internal SMEs and helping to address their specific business cases as needed. Next slide, please.

Here we just have an example of how this collaboration works in practice by looking at the Funding Forecast Assumptions which is a public document, see the link at the very bottom. But it would start in terms of the Economist Contribution would start with evaluating economic trends and industry developments that are likely to have a significant impact on supply- and demand-side conditions. And this could be by looking at global macroeconomic forecasts and commentary by sources such as the IMF and World Bank, Economist Intelligence Unit. It’s also done by working with a third-party consultant and having them conduct interviews with contracted parties to get a sense of what the latest trends are from a market participant standpoint.

Again, this work would then flow to GDS and OCFO, where they would then take some of that feedback, some of those observations, and that would help inform their work related to performance and guidance that’s done on publicly traded industry participants, recent marketplace developments as they observe them, and expected changes within supply- and demand-side conditions, and also looking at historical transaction data. All of this work then results in the Funding Forecast Assumptions, which, as I mentioned before, is a publicly available document which you may be able to access. Next slide, please.

Here’s a just a closer look at the research and analysis component. We see the possibility of doing work with both internal and external sources. Obviously, ICANN has a dedicated research unit, but also OCTO has a lot of research initiatives. So there's a lot of ongoing research within the organization. But then we also know that ICANN as commissioned various studies using third parties, and then we also have internal datasets. So these may be sources of possible research and analysis, and possible data analysis. Looking at external sources, we may be covering things like industry reports, looking at public company financials, academic, think tank, and civil society studies that may be coming out, and then government and international organization studies that may be relevant to the work at ICANN. That concludes my portion. Let me hand it over to the chair.

ANDREAS MUSIELAK: Okay. Any questions from the group? David?

DAVID MCAULEY: Thanks, Andreas. Hi, David McAuley of VeriSign speaking. I'm a member of the committee. I have two questions. Becky, on the 80 public comments, I just want to make sure I understand it correctly. I looked at it and thought that they were 80 line item comments in five overall submissions. Is that right?

BECKY NASH: Thank you very much for your question there. We did receive 80 individual comments but within either large memos or a comment on the Public Comment form. So looking at this slide, then you can see that there were six different submitters, and we did break them down into technically six different categories. We parsed them out or separated them into 80 individual comments.

DAVID MCAULEY: Okay. I thought that that was wrong. Six, not five.

Second question on the Economist Function and the research and analysis, is the analysis going to be publicly available? How transparent will this function be? Thank you.

ROBERTO PEÑA: It would depend on the specific instance in the project. As you see, the funded research work related to Funding Forecast Assumptions is public would anticipate some sort of in-house analysis that isn't part of any major project that wouldn't. So not everything would be public, I would imagine.

ROSEMARY SINCLAIR: I'm Rosemary Sinclair from .AU. I'm also interested in the Economist Function. The first question that I have is what problem is this new function solving?

BECKY NASH: Thank you very much for your question there. I just wanted to follow up upon the comments that we've received in your question as well. As part of our annual Operating Plan and Budget, there is what we call a resource document on the Public Comment page which describes all of the assumptions that we contemplate as part of the funding forecast, both for the next fiscal year and for the five-year. It is mentioned at the bottom of this slide, and if you are familiar with our Public Comment page, that document has been readily available for the last—I'm going to say approximately—four years. So this is something that we from the Planning team and specifically the Economist Function, we contribute to the formulation of the Funding Forecast Assumptions of which there is a macroeconomic section, and that is readily available. So technically, the Economist serves as a subject matter expert for other departments or functions that need input on the macroeconomic level. Typically, the output of these types of documents like the Funding Forecast probably would be made available. So it's just the analysis piece that may be internal that then turns into something open and transparent as part of the final deliverable.

GIOVANNI SEPPIA: Just to add another point to the answer to your question. The now old, but nonetheless, the latest CCT Review, the Consumer Trust and Consumer Choice Review, that occurred a few years ago included one recommendation for ICANN to have a function that allows to deal with economic data, economic trends. And having created this function that Roberto holds is a direct result of addressing not specifically only that recommendation, but that recommendation reflected a broader recognition that there was a need within the organization to be able to have the capacity to gather and analyze economic information that then can help inform whether internal work, whether policy development processes, whether analyses like consumer choice in the new gTLD program, for example. Roberto has been, since he's arrived, participating to supporting the internal teams on that program. So it's a relatively broad set of needs that were identified and we're happy to finally have been able to onboard Roberto and that he can help with that. That's been a position that we've been discussing and trying to have embedded and happen in the organization for a while.

ROSEMARY SINCLAIR: I'm very supportive of the function. To me, it's a very good development in terms of making sure that ICANN is externally looking at the market and environment. It's so easy in a technical organization to be internally focused. So I'm very glad that you added the element of consumer choice and competition. That was going to be my next question. What is our definition of market? Because I would not like us to be too narrowly defined on domain names, because I think the market for online presence and choice of online presence is becoming more and more complicated. There are many more choices and many more options. I think that it's very important that that information is brought into our thinking. So the reference on the slide to supply-side and demand-side was a very particular reference that I thought was of great interest.

Becky's earlier answer about the role of the Economist in testing the assumptions that underline our Operating Plans and Budget I think also is a very important contribution. It's too easy year after year after year to believe your own assumptions about how the world is and how the world is just going to be a small increment of what was. So I'd say this is a really significant contribution to our thinking. Thank you.

ANDREAS MUSIELAK: Any more questions? If not, I have a question. It's an in-depth question also about the Economist's role. What is the role? Because you mentioned on the one slide the role of the Economist in supporting RFPs. Do we have an example for that?

ROBERTO PEÑA: Not yet. Not yet, though we have partnered with a third-party consultant for a small de minimis consultant project to observe the DNS marketplace that help contribute to the overall Funding Forecast Assumptions. But we anticipate this is a future potential need. This was part of an initial scoping exercise of the potential needs that may be needed. Not all of this work has been conducted, specifically today.

ANDREAS MUSIELAK: I believe it can support/be supportive because you need to have market data which can influence RFPs. Another question, have you considered how we can collaborate—we as SOPC—with this new Economist role? Any ideas already?

BECKY NASH: Thank you, Andreas. Well, definitely, as we indicated, the supporting document for the funding projections and assumptions each year, we do think that having feedback on the macroeconomic assumptions and also the funding forecasts from this group would be very, very helpful. We'd like to highlight that that report supplements what is presented as part of the funding assumptions in the draft Operating Plan and Budget. We will continue to look for ways to collaborate here input and any ideas that you have would be welcomed. Thank you.

ANDREAS MUSIELAK: Thank you. I hand over to Irina.

IRINA DANELIA: I still have a number of questions. Thank you for telling us about recent developments, but we are really interested about next steps and what we should expect in the nearest future relating the Financial Year ‘24 planning cycle, but also FY25 planning cycle is to start quite soon or even already started. So please let us know what we should expect and where you expect our involvement and participation.

BECKY NASH: Thank you very much. We actually included a few slides in the Appendix. We knew that we were a little short on time. So we did include both a timeline for FY24 planning and also for FY25 planning. So there we go on slide 17. The next key milestone will be the publication of the Summary Report. And that is, again, based on all of the different public comments that we've received. We will then present back similar to prior years the individual responses by theme. We do like to receive input on whether or not the comments received back have been appropriately addressing the questions that were submitted to us. Again, there were many types of questions received from the ccNSO SOPC, and in some cases, compliments as well, which we appreciate.

So following that key milestone, then we move into what we call the proposed for adoption steps, which we've highlighted here, expected to take place in the mid April, and then that would be moving towards the steps for adoption where we would expect to have the adoption of the draft FY24 plans by the end of April, early May timeframe. Then we move into what we call the Empowered Community period. And then the plans, should there be no petition raised, would go into effect just prior to the next fiscal year. So that provides the FY24 planning.

Then we have a slide on FY25, which is one more slide. Thank you so much. This slide gives a short overview of the fact that we typically are planning for two years at one time. We just would like to highlight that the FY25 planning—there are two key steps that have been launched. They have been outlined in the Leadership Digest where we have strategic outlook trends identification sessions that we would like to schedule with the SOs and ACs. So that is a request that we would like to ask your community group to participate in a strategic outlook session. This is a forward-looking landscape scan to look at trends, risks, and opportunities for all of ICANN of a horizon of approximately three to five years out. It's a very important step as part of our annual strategic planning step where we want to ensure that any new trends are identified. So that request has gone out, and we will follow up with the policy support staff.

The next key item is the FY25 Planning Prioritization group. We want to again thank the ccNSO for nominating members to that group, and specifically from the ccNSO SOPC, we have made a request for the SO and AC leaders to consider nominating those members by the end of March. This is the community group that prioritizes activities that are eligible to be prioritized because they've been Board adopted and they are ready to be worked on as part of an implementation design phase. We would like to plan out the requirements for that planning step by first hearing input of the level of prioritization from the community group. Again, I do want to thank Irina who was also a member of the Planning Prioritization group. I hope I answered your question there.

IRINA DANELIA: Thank you very much, Becky. You definitely did. Just one clarification with regard to the FY24 Plan, if there will be any changes made in the plan based on the Public Comments, what would be the easy way for us to see these changes?

BECKY NASH: Thank you very much for your question. That is a very good question because what is not listed here but I should make mention of is that once ICANN Org submits the plans to the Board of ICANN to consider them for adoption, we publicly publish those plans so that the entire community can see exactly what the changes have been between the draft Operating Plan and Budget and the proposed for adoption Operating Plan and Budget. I just like to highlight that in the plans, we actually have a schedule which details out line by line the differences.

In some cases, differences may be a text correction, of which I will highlight there was a Public Comment that we received from this group, also highlighting that we had some text corrections. They were not related to activities or resources. Such as that, those types of things will be listed as changes and any other item that may work to change. Thank you.

IRINA DANELIA: Thank you, Becky. One last question, if I may. My understanding is that the previous Five-Year Strategic Plan has been developed quite a time before and it will probably soon be time to start working on the next Five-Year Strategic Plan. Is it something that we should see approaching?

BECKY NASH: Thank you very much for your question there. The current adopted Strategic Plan runs through Fiscal Year '25. The process for developing the next Five-Year Strategic Plan for FY26-30 is approaching soon. We will be sure to share with the community all of the dates and process quite soon during this calendar year to highlight how we will organize a proposed framework. I'll stop there. I see Bart has a question.

BART BOSWINKEL: I have one or two questions. It's not about the specific dates but more the order of magnitude of dates. Can this group expect the strategic planning process to commence the first half year of 2024 or latter part? Just a rough indication to make the work of this committee a little bit lighter and easier to plan ahead.

BECKY NASH: Thank you very much for your question, Bart. We will be sure to advise all of the SOs and ACs on the expected timing. As I indicated, there is preliminary planning that is underway and we will be able to shortly give a view of the timing. But we would expect within this calendar year, you'll have a lot more information.

BART BOSWINKEL: Information in the sense of knowing when it starts or it already started?

BECKY NASH: Well, knowing when it starts. One of the things that we're really looking at is—and that's where the participation in the annual strategic outlook trends identification is so important as well. We really want to highlight what elements of our current framework are working, and we will be seeking lots of community input on that as well.

BART BOSWINKEL: And maybe with respect, and this is more for the SOPC, we've been approached, we had a discussion about it, it was part of this agenda but it's already full. Expect an invite for the trend analysis early April together with the ccNSO Council, members who are not member of the SO, like last year. So we'll keep you posted. That's with respect to the trend.

One more final question, if I may. Just for clarification again for this group. Can you go to the slide of the overview for this year? Slide 17, I believe. Yeah, there we are, 17. Please correct me if I'm wrong. So by the 30th of March, you will produce something like a review. If I understood you correctly, you more or less hinted up that you would like feedback on that review from the community. And if that's correct, how do you envision this? Would it be before you recommend or you submitted to the BFC, etc., make it public? Or will it be done after it's been made public? And if so, what about the timing? Because if you look at your schedule, it is very tight.

BECKY NASH: Thank you very much for your question. Just to be more precise, we will actually publish on the Public Comment page the responses to the public comment on the 30th of March. Our response drafting is all underway right now, and we will be actually publishing it. What I was recommending then was in the past we've received feedback often from members of the community groups just about the responses, meaning if there was something that you felt was well responded to or you had more follow ups, we just usually ask that we get an e-mail, a follow-up, if necessary. It's really just to highlight that we would like to collaborate and hear feedback. And if it's not immediately because those are our responses, it's as we collaborate as we go into the next fiscal year cycle as well. So it's the ongoing collaboration that we value.

BART BOSWINKEL: Just to be very clear, it is not an additional step in the feedback processes. It's more or less what you've always done with this group by ICANN77. So in June, you explain how you treated the responses or the questions and comments from the SOPC, and provide feedback and check in that might be a basis for the SOPC to look forward of what they want to change for next year, for example, what we've done in the comparison, what has been implemented in this year's plan from the comments from last year, something like that. That is not an additional step.

BECKY NASH: Correct. Thank you so much.

ANDREAS MUSIELAK: I see no more questions. So thank you, Becky, Alex, and Roberto for sharing all the information, to introducing also the role of the Economist. And at this point, I hand over to Irina to the next agenda point. Kim, can you share our presentation? Yes. Next slide I think. Irina?

IRINA DANELIA: Thank you very much. We are now moving to the second part of this meeting, which is kind of a workshop, agenda item number three. We want to discuss with you what do you feel about the process of preparing public comments this year, and what we maybe should take into consideration and make differently next year? With that, can I move to the next slide?

First, we would like to ask you two questions regarding your overall feeling about the SOPC submission that we prepared this year. How do you like our submission? Is it in comparing to previous years? We do it every year? Well, what about this one? Is it better? Is it worse? Is it the same? So we have a polling question. Please do not hesitate to make your choice. You see it in the Zoom Room. The poll is on.

BART BOSWINKEL: This is open probably for everybody, not just SOPC members. Yeah, everybody. So if you want to respond to the question in the Zoom Room, go ahead.

ANDREAS MUSIELAK: So everyone who is in the Zoom, please answer the question.

IRINA DANELIA: Well, we see now the results. 73% consider it better. 27% consider it the same. Well, at least nobody considers that it's worse. Thank you very much for that.

With that, I want to ask you the second question. There was mention there. There were six submissions during Public Comment this year from other individuals or other stakeholder groups or organizations. If you had a chance to look at them, how would you rate SOPC submission in comparison with the submission of other groups?

BART BOSWINKEL: If you haven't read it, then you don't know. That's it. So you can submit an answer.

IRINA DANELIA: The reception also. Wow. Again, quite great result. So 53% believe that it is better, 13% believe it is the same, 27% don't know, and again, 7% have no opinion, which should be interpreted like you just did not read other submissions, which is absolutely okay. Well, thank you for that. Let's move further. Next slide, please.

To start the discussion, still do you believe we did a better job or at least the same job as previous year? We still are looking for potential improvements and changes for the future. So I would like to remind you how we did this year and what was new this year.

As before, we had three teams inside SOPC. Each of the teams had a leader and each of the team had its individual task to focus on a certain part of these planning documents. When composing the teams, we tried to take into account the time zones and to adjust as possible within one team people from similar time zones. It was not always possible, but we attempt at least.

In preparation to the Public Comment cycle, we attempt to prioritize the Operating Initiatives, assuming that there will be 15 of them, like in FY23 and before. So we did this exercise prioritizing these initiatives and trying to focus on those who are mostly relevant to ccNSO managers. We have chosen, as far as I remember, nine of them. But finally, we ended up reviewing all the 11 Operating Initiatives, mostly because the number was reduced in this year.

We also did a check of financial, maybe not going to too deeply, but still we made a thorough check of the budgets. We did an effort to compare this year with the previous year. Again, things that we attempt to develop like a standard form kind of questionnaire that could possibly be helpful to ensure consistency and to make the process of reading and making notes and compiling comments a little bit easier to every member of SOPC. As usual, we had a quite a strict timeline to have enough time to compile and review the entire document. So that's what happened this year. With that, let me turn it over to Bart for the interactive exercise.

BART BOSWINKEL: Thanks, Irina. The good thing about this is it depends a bit on the quality and how you assess the submission this year. I think, in general, everybody on this room appreciated the quality of it. So this becomes a little bit moot in a way, but there is room for improvement, clearly. So we're just doing a quick, I would say, exercise called Pro-Con-and-Fixes.

So start with what went well, list this just for next year. Then we list the things that did not go so well, areas for improvement. But yeah, that's always easy, but what is probably the most interesting part and hope we'll get there is what are fixes for the things that did not go well, and if we can list them, and then in incorporate them in the process for next year. I think that way, there's a nice way of improving it. But again, as I said, it is less contentious than if everybody would raise it this year's submission lower than last year, then you had to do something else. So that's good.

So we have until 2:30, don't we? Yeah. As I said, we at least need to do three things and then we can compile it for the next meeting. So what went well, what did not went well, and then come up with fixes. So I'll give you two minutes to come up with basic ideas, what went well for you, and then we'll add them quickly with sticky notes. You don't have to do it. Joke will take the sticky notes in the Jamboard. This way you interact. So we'll give you two minutes to come up here. There's a change of plan. I give you two minutes to come up with pros starting now. Do it in your own, use your laptop or whatever you want to use. Everybody's invited to do so what you think went well. Even if you're an outsider, we invite you to participate as well.

You can see 30 seconds to go. Time is up. Who may I give the floor to start the adding? Stephen?

STEPHEN DEERHAKE: Thank you, Bart. I think trying to get teams put together so that they were in the same or adjacent time zones was an improvement. I think it was suggested by [inaudible] because he ended up in some far away from everybody else in his group, which allowed a wee bit of reorganization, if my memory recalls. So I think that was a significant improvement in terms of the productivity of the workgroups. Thank you.

BART BOSWINKEL: Thank you. Anybody else?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: In addition to that, I also think that the fact that people were paired into different groups to look at specifics also worked very well because he helped you to focus on the things that you were working on.

BART BOSWINKEL: Thank you. Who else? Andreas?

ANDREAS MUSIELAK: I have a few pros. I think we're not only trying to compose by geographical, we also tried to have experienced members of the SOPC mix with newbies. So that was at least we tried. So that helped people to get into the whole process. I think that was something which I like very much. Then it's probably not fully about the FY24 ICANN budget, but it's about the IANA budget. In that case, we collaborated with the Technical Working Group. I like this approach, too, using other expertise to comment on specific technical terms. So, collaboration with other working groups.

BART BOSWINKEL: Maybe we could call that area for improvement. It's because you didn't do it this time, but it's clearly out on the horizon for something to strive for.

ANDREAS MUSIELAK: Okay. That's my comment.

BART BOSWINKEL: Anything else?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: [Inaudible] speaking. I think focusing on ccTLD/ccNSO-related operational plan is good. It focused on that, it upgrades contribution to the value of SOPC comment.

BART BOSWINKEL: So make it ccTLD-focused.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes.

PABLO RODRIGUEZ: This is Pablo Rodriguez from the Registry .PR. In addition to what has been mentioned, the setup of the working groups and the time zones and so on, I also like to commend the work that was done by the team leaders in preparing work ahead of time and facilitating the work that those respective members of each particular team had to work with. So it definitely made a big difference. Thank you.

BART BOSWINKEL: Anybody else? Any other pros that really went well in your opinion? You should have an opinion.

SEAN COPELAND: I'll just say, Bart, that I thought having done this twice that the communication that was able to be done with the subgroups was much better to just go around with the way it was organized, and I appreciate that very much.

BART BOSWINKEL: The communication between the teams, yes, among the team members. David?

DAVID MCAULEY: I agree with all the comments, but I specifically want to put a plus one to what Pablo and Sean just said. The communications and the organization, it was very clear, very structured, very easy to follow. Thanks.

BART BOSWINKEL: Anybody else? Irina?

IRINA DANELIA: We got an input from each and every SOPC member, which is absolutely great. Those sometimes team leaders were a little bit nervous waiting for submissions. But still, we got down within the dedicated defined timeframe. So, thanks to everyone.

BART BOSWINKEL: Any additional pros this year? No? Can we go to the—people can wear their black hat now—what did not go well? Again, you have two minutes to come up with whatever you thought needs improvement, what did not go well, etc.

One minute to go. Fifteen seconds. Thank you. Who may I give the floor to be the first one to wear the black hat and really go out or what did not go well? Stephen?

STEPHEN DEERHAKE: Thank you, Bart. I don't see a fix for it. But the tight timeframe come in as it did at year end and over a year end made it difficult, at least for me to give it as much consideration as I really should have, it was due to travel and some family things that came up. But I don't see a fix to it.

BART BOSWINKEL: Timelines?

STEPHEN DEERHAKE: Yeah. It's just the way it is, I think.

BART BOSWINKEL: But it's one of those unalterable, you have to live with it.

STEPHEN DEERHAKE: Yes. It doesn't go well. It can't be fixed.

BART BOSWINKEL: Anybody else? David?

DAVID MCAULEY: Thank you, Bart. This is not so much a statement of something that went unwell, but rather a suggestion for the future. Because I think this went very well from a very strong base that Giovanni put in place. But for the future—so I was given one discrete part with Nicholas, what are your comments here, which is fine. The time that Stephen commented on was pressing, so that's what I did. I didn't go back through the whole document necessarily.

But what would be nice, I think, to give us a context, is if the ccNSO Council, if they have thoughts on any particular area that's of more importance than others—I don't know that they will, it may be flat line, I don't know—but it would be good I think before this whole exercise starts if the Council takes a look and gives it 10 minutes to say, "Do we want to give any instructions to the SOPC as to where to focus most or what's an irritant? What's something that we want to build on?" that kind of thing. It would give us a context that might be a little bit more helpful.

BART BOSWINKEL: Effectively, as a con is lack of—

DAVID MCAULEY: It's not a lack. It would be nice to have Council's thoughts, if they have them. As I said, maybe it's not an issue saying as we're about to launch into this, "Hey, we have questions or we have concerns in these areas, these functional activities or these Operating Initiatives or whatever."

BART BOSWINKEL: May I translate it this way, David, because it touches a little bit on what Andreas was saying. To date, you act a little bit in isolation.

DAVID MCAULEY: Yeah. I felt that there was a little bit of isolation, which is fine. I understand. That's necessary, I think, but just based on the massiveness of the document and the number of people working on it.

BART BOSWINKEL: Because there are ways to dealing with it. But as a contra point as downside is, to date, you felt you're in isolation, and there is, for example, for Council cooperation with working groups that are ways moving out. But then at least you've got a base to look at it. Thanks. Anybody else on a negative, a con? Yes, go ahead.

ROSEMARY SINCLAIR: I might just say that as a newbie team leader, it took me a little while to get the rhythm of the whole process. I was extremely grateful to Irina and Andreas for gentle nudges at the right time and templates that I could use. I was deeply grateful to the people in my team for responding very quickly to my e-mails. I think we got there in the end but there was a lot of support during the process.

Also Stephen's comments, it was really quite the wrong time of year. And I understand that that is just immutable. That is just the way it is. It's a circumstance where the learnings from the first time make the second time much easier. Thank you.

BART BOSWINKEL: If you look at it, the strict timelines is something else then because it was that time of the year. Because if you think about it, the community is expected to provide comments during probably the most global seasonal holiday there is due to whatever timing restrictions that might be. You can't change it but it's acceptable. Anybody else? Irina?

IRINA DANELIA: I want to build upon David's point regarding the context. We actually even had in our very preliminary plan of activities but we missed that step. But it would definitely be good to ask not only Council but also the broad ccTLD community if they have any specific concerns and areas we should dig a little bit deeper. I would suggest to do that next year.

My second point is that I am personally still looking for improvements and still looking for a better balance between strategic level and minor details, our ability not to go into minor things but still keep the certain strategic level.

BART BOSWINKEL: Anybody else on that list? So what did not go well, what you see as areas of improvement? I don't see any hands up. Okay. Now, we touched upon it a little bit during the discussion, but I think that frame is missing. Maybe, Joke, if you could use another color and spread these six cons around because I think that is important, is about ways to address these barriers, if at all, these barriers downside, what did not go well, contra designs. So I'll give you again two minutes. I think that way, Andreas and Irina, you'll have some material to improve the process for next year. Again, Kim, can you put out the timer again for two minutes? For how to improve the areas that you think and that you listed as did not go well or areas for improvement, if at all, if that's possible.

30 seconds to go. Thank you. So who may I give the floor with a suggestion how to counter some of these cons? Andreas, go ahead.

ANDREAS MUSIELAK: Regarding the strict timelines, I agree with all of you that the end of the year is really bad timing, not even regarding vacations, but also the workload is almost double at the end of the year. But what I like really is that we can address our questions, the clarification questions. I think we should use this period of time to really ask our clarification questions right before we start the whole process. I think we should use this period of time more intensive than before.

BART BOSWINKEL: So that's really just before the holiday season starts and kicks in. So make it one or two weeks more intensive before the holiday season breaks everybody on a page, maybe one or two intensive calls. That might be helpful to reduce the timelines overall at the end, to do more work at the start. That's a way of dealing with the … Okay. Thanks. Next one, Sean. Go ahead.

SEAN COPELAND: In terms of the Council inputting this, we would probably have to put this as a fixed item in the November Council meeting based on what we think or what our historical knowledge is of the budgeting process, just on the carryover. And that may allow Council—again, if it's a fixed item, to have something ready for when you kick off the two-week intense period.

BART BOSWINKEL: This goes back. Do you want to limit it to Council? As Andrea said, the IANA budget, say in the comments, really improved because of the direct communication with members of the Tech Working Group. Should we try to align earlier with some other working groups that we know may have an interest?

ANDREAS MUSIELAK: I agree with Bart. We tried this year or last year. But I think there is room for improvement, of course. So we did very well with the Technical Working Group. But with other working groups, it was difficult to intervene because of the strict timeline. So otherwise, we would not stay in our timeline. So that is probably room for improvement there. I agree.

ROSEMARY SINCLAIR: I was just wondering whether if we're looking for context comments rather than specific comments on the document, is there any possibility of actually holding a short session in the October ICANN meeting and using this format, rather than having expected people to refer to documents to actually—what are the top three things? What would you not like to see removed?—this kind of on-the-spot format, where people just bring their experience and dive into the process, could that be a way of getting the comments?

BART BOSWINKEL: It's something to explore using, say, the AGM, the session. Either the SOPC itself or broader community to explore areas of concern or what is important, etc. I don't have an opinion about it, officially. Go ahead, Andreas.

ANDREAS MUSIELAK: Okay. I would add to Rosemary's comment that to maintain the strategic level, I would also use the last ICANN meeting in the year, the

AGM, to discuss the strategic level. Because we know the budget maintains almost stable, which means we can already discuss what would be the strategic points we want to evaluate in the FY25 budget or so on. That would be my suggestion for next year.

BART BOSWINKEL: One way of dealing with it is extending the timeline up front. So start preparation earlier. Okay. Thanks. Anybody else? A Go ahead, [inaudible].

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Thanks, Bart. Regarding continuity of this committee, I suggest having a kind of review check on October ICANN meeting that last year our submission was what. This is not only for the new member but for the existing member to refresh the memory. And then time is strict so that the October/November framework that we revisited last year submission and check what was our comment. I think that is good. Thank you.

BART BOSWINKEL: If we're using the AGM as a kind of refresher for everybody. And also for your point about being a newbie team lead is to understand, have more educational session almost. Okay. Anybody else? Yeah, go ahead.

ROSEMARY SINCLAIR: Just on the newbie point, I could just, if you like, write a bit of a diary of my experience, and then we could turn that into a guide for other newbie team leaders.

BART BOSWINKEL: Very nice. I think you have enough material to improve the process by now, although it was already very good, as you could see from the responses to the question. So I'll hand it back to you.

ANDREAS MUSIELAK: Okay. Coming to the last agenda point, which is basically Other Topics/Wrap-Up, Irina and I, we discussed what could be the next steps this year. First, as Bart also mentioned, and Becky, so we have the summary on the 30th of March, even if there is not a real period to make comments on that, we would like to share or inform via the secretariat about this summary, and have a look into that if there will be some finding somehow, even if the timeframe is very short. Kim, you can you can skip to the presentation from Becky. I think it was slide number 17. Our idea is to inform the SOPC members about the Summary Report. And if there would be some findings, then we would probably also invite for a meeting, but we do not expect any findings. But nevertheless, that would be one of the next meetings.

Then looking ahead. So we have the ICANN meeting in Washington. If you have some agenda points already now, please share with us. So we discussed—Bart, Irina, and I—that, as Bart mentioned, we have enough material now to prepare the process for next year's review of the FY25 budget. So we would use the material from today to prepare the Washington meeting. Then also that changed a little bit. We also said we would like to start in September, early October, the process for next year, which means also timelines and things, etc.

Okay. Any other points or suggestion for agenda points for Washington? Okay. Then some final words so we can all be proud what we achieved in the last period? So you could see from the poll that basically we improved very well. So you can be all proud, including the support from the secretariat and also from the Planning team, the data we received. So I think we can be very convinced that we will do a very good job also for the next year FY25. Thank you all.

BART BOSWINKEL: Before you go, you will receive an e-mail shortly about the trend exercise.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]