ICANN79 | CF – ICANN Board Public Meeting
Thursday, March 7, 2024 – 4:15 to 5:30 SJU

TRIPTI SINHA: Welcome to the ICANN Board public meeting at ICANN 79 San Juan Community Forum. So I'm going to now take roll call, and I will start with Chris Chapman. Are you online?

CHRIS CHAPMAN: Present.

TRIPTI SINHA: Thank you, Chris. And I will start on my right, and I ask everyone on stage to please say your name and say that you are present.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Maarten Botterman here. here.

KATRINA SATAKI: Katrina Sataki, present.

CHRIS BUCKRIDGE: Chris Buckridge, present.

EDMON CHUNG: Edmon Chung, present.

ALAN BARRETT:	Alan Barrett, present.
NICOLAS CABALLERO:	Nico Caballero, present.
SARAH DEUTSCH:	Sarah Deutsch, present.
DANKO JEVTOVIC:	Danko Jevtovic, present.
TRIPTI SINHA:	Tripti Sinha, present.
SALLY COSTERTON:	Sally Costerton, present.
WES HARDAKER:	Wes Hardaker, present.
CATHERINE ADEYA:	Catherine Adeya, present.
LEÓN SANCHEZ:	León Sanchez, present.

PATRICIO POBLETE: Patricio Poblete, present.

SAJID RAHMAN: Sajid Rahman, present.

CHRISTIAN KAUFMANN: Christian Kaufmann, present.

BECKY BURR: Becky Burr, present.

HARALD ALVESTRAND: Harald Alvestrand, present.

JAMES GALVIN: James Galvin, present.

TRIPTI SINHA: Thank you, everyone. I'm going to ask the General Counsel and Secretary, John Jeffrey, to confirm that we have a quorum.

JOHN JEFFREY: Yes, we do.

TRIPTI SINHA: Thank you, John. We have two sections to our agenda today. The first one is the consent agenda. We have two items on that. And then we will move on to the main agenda. So before we run the agenda, I'd like to know if anyone would like to remove any items from the consent agenda. All right. I don't see any hands yet.

So the two items are the Root Zone Evolution Review Committee (RZERC) Charter. The Shepherds are Christian Kaufmann and Wes Hardaker. This is on the consent agenda. Wes, could you just give a brief update on this?

WES HARDAKER: I'd be happy to. The Root Zone Evolution Review Committee, which is RZRC, has recently finished a review of its charter. The agenda item is really for the approval of a number of generally minor changes to the charter that came about as a result of the review process.

TRIPTI SINHA: Thank you, Wes. The second one on the consent agenda are revisions to Board Committee Charters. Sarah Deutsch is a Shepherd for this. Sarah?

SARAH DEUTSCH: Yes, thank you, Tripti. So reviewing and updating Board Committee Charters is part of our regular housekeeping activity, and these two are updates to the Board Strategic Planning Committee and the Board Technical Committee Charters.

TRIPTI SINHA: Thank you, Sarah. Both these items are on the consent agenda. So could I have a motion to approve these? Thank you, Sajid. All those in favor, please say aye.

PARTICIPANTS: Aye.

TRIPTI SINHA: I'm assuming there are no abstentions and nays since this is on the consent agenda. Thank you, everyone. This is passed. Let's move on to the main agenda. The main agenda is about the ICANN grant program, its funding of the successful applications within this first cycle of the program. Before we run this agenda, I would like all Board members who may have a conflict to come forward, please. Yes, Jim?

JAMES GALVIN: James Galvin. I just want to state that I have identified that I have a conflict on this area and I have recused myself from all discussions. Thank you.

TRIPTI SINHA: Thank you, Jim. Harald?

HARALD ALVESTRAND: As a representative of the IETF, I have been identified as a potential applicant and have therefore not participated in discussion on this topic.

TRIPTI SINHA: Thank you, Harald.

WES HARDAKER: My name is Wes Hardaker and I have identified that I have a conflict as well and will not be participating in the discussion.

TRIPTI SINHA: Thank you, Wes. Anyone? Edmon?

EDMON CHUNG: Out of an abundance of caution for any perceived conflict of interest, given that DotAsia is involved in many projects with partners around the world on Internet governance and related initiatives that may potentially apply for the grants, I have been recusing myself from the discussions leading up to this resolution.

TRIPTI SINHA: Thank you, Edmon. The shepherd for this item is Maarten Botterman. Maarten, I will turn it over to you.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Thank you, Tripti. Thank you all. We now stand ready to launch the first grant round for the new applications, for the new grant program. And the aim is to start with a limited amount of about 10 million maximum and to do so with the view to also see how well the applicant guidebook that has been published already on the 8th of January will function. So please allow me to read the whereas as well as the resolved here.

Whereas the 2012 new gTLD program application guidebook specified that auctions operated by an ICANN authorized provider could be used as a last resort to resolve string contention among applicants who applied for the same or similar string, the applicant guidebook required that any proceeds from auctions will be reserved and earmarked until the uses of funds are determined. Funds must be used in a manner that directly supports ICANN's mission and core values and also allow ICANN to maintain its non-profit status.

Whereas, to date, 16 auctions of last resort have taken place within the 2012 round of the new gTLD program and the current amount of auction proceeds is approximately 225 million.

Whereas, in 2016, a Cross-Community Working Group on new gTLD Auction Proceeds, so-called CCWG AP, was formally chartered to develop proposals for a mechanism to distribute the proceeds, taking into account a set of guiding principles set by the Board, hereafter the Board principles.

And whereas the cross-community Working Group on Auction Proceeds submitted its final report to its chartering organizations in March 2020 and by 1st of September 2020 received confirmation of adoption or support from all seven supporting organizations and advisory committees. And the CCWG AP submitted the final report to the ICANN Board on the 14th of September 2020.

And whereas on 12 June 2022, the Board resolved to adopt all recommendations within the CCWG AP final report and directed ICANN's president and CEO, or her designees, to take all actions to implement an ICANN grant program, to fund the expenses incurred to develop and manage the ICANN program with the auction proceeds, and to make any administrative cost spent in a reasonable manner to preserve most of the available funds for the purpose of the grants itself.

And whereas the implementation of the ICANN grant program has progressed and ICANN Org is now ready to launch the application window of the first grant cycle, the applicant guide is published on 8 September 2024—you can find it online—documenting the application and evaluation process for the first cycle of the ICANN grant program, and it has subsequently been translated into all UN languages.

Whereas ICANN Org has offered regular updates on the grant program implementation to the Board and to the community.

And whereas the opening of the application window for the first grant cycle is scheduled for the 25th of March of 2024.

And whereas ICANN Org confirms that it is operationally ready to follow the processes defined within the application guide for the evaluation and assessment of applications within the first cycle. The ICANN Board looks forward to receiving a slate of recommended applications totaling not more than US dollars, 10 million in the aggregate, to be achieved through the design processes as described in the documentation that will accompany the proposed slate.

And whereas the ICANN Board has requested the chartering organizations to the CCWG AP to consider revising the language of the CCWG AP's recommendation 7 regarding access to ICANN's accountability mechanisms for challenges to decisions on individual applications within the grant program. And in addition, the Board initiated a fundamental bylaw amendment to specify the process for the ICANN community through the CCWG processes to propose limitations on access to ICANN's accountability mechanisms that are very important to us.

The Board notes that achieving an update to the CCWG AP's recommendation 7, as well as the successful completion of the bylaws process are dependencies to the Board’s further action on any slate of successful applications that are identified through the first application cycle of the ICANN grant program.

And whereas the ICANN Board caucus on the grant program recommended that the grant program be furthered in this, and the ICANN Board finance committee considered the financial applications of committing these funds towards projects approved through the first application cycle.

The resolved is the Board approves the allocation of up to $10 million from the auction proceeds generated in the 2012 round of the new gTLD program to be used to fund projects approved through the first application cycle that will be included in the final slate of successful applications to be, presented for Board approval. So thank you. Back to you.

TRIPTI SINHA: Yes, thank you, Maarten. Is there any discussion on this topic? Yes, Danko.

DANKO JEVTOVIC: So thank you, Tripti. First, I'd like to thank Maarten and the ICANN grant program caucus, but this proposal was also discussed, as said here, in the Board finance committee, because the role of the committee is to oversee ICANN's funds. And we discussed the financial implications of funding of this program, and obviously the auction proceeds fund is something that ICANN Board and finance committee oversaw the investment policy, and we approved this first tranche of allocation of $10 million, having in mind all this.

And just as a side note, all of the proposed resolutions to the Board are carried by different committees. In this case, this was formally carried through by the finance committee, but we thought it was much better to discuss it from the caucus point of view, because this resolution has wider implications, and all of them have been discussed in the caucus. So thank you.

TRIPTI SINHA: Thank you, Danko, for your comment. Any other comments or questions? All right. I just have one comment. I'd like to thank all my colleagues who have worked very diligently on this with a lot of care and thought, and I'm very pleased that we are where we are today. So thank you, everyone. Do we have a motion? Thank you, Maarten. A second, please? Thank you, Danko. All those in favor, please say aye.

PARTICIPANTS: Aye.

TRIPTI SINHA: Any nays? Any abstentions?

EDMON CHUNG: Yes, I'm abstaining for the reasons that I have mentioned previously already, but I did want to nevertheless state that I am supportive of and I'm glad to see the action taken to continue to proceed with the implementation of the grants program in parallel with the fundamental bylaws amendment process that had been initiated separately as well.

TRIPTI SINHA: Thank you, Edmon. So this motion passes with a vote of the voting directors of the Board. Thank you very much, everyone. Let's move on to the next portion of the meeting, which is to thank you to the local hosts of our ICANN meeting. The Board wishes to extend its thanks to Pedro Pierluisi, Governor of Puerto Rico, and Miguel Romero, Mayor of San Juan, and their teams, for their great support. The Board also extends its thanks to .PR, ICANN 79 local host, and Puerto Rico Tourism Company, for their great support.

The Board wishes to thank the following sponsors, Data Provider, CleanDNS Inc., DNS Research Federation, Verisign, CORE Association, Public Interest Registry, CentralNIC Group PLC, MarkMonitor, Intis Telecom Inc., ICANN Wiki, Vercara, Actalis Spa, Aruba PEC Spa, and Wedos Internet SA.

Thank you to our interpreters, staff, event, and hotel teams of the ICANN 79 meeting. The Board expresses its deepest appreciation to the scribes, interpreters, and audiovisual team, technical teams, and the entire ICANN staff for their efforts in facilitating the smooth operation of the meeting. The Board would also like to thank the management and staff of the Puerto Rico Convention Center for providing a wonderful facility to hold this meeting. Before I move on to the next item, if we could show our appreciation with a round of applause, please.

Thank you. I would like to now move on to recognizing David Olive. The Board has this additional item. While formal recognition is normally reserved for departing Board members and CEOs, we would like to recognize our esteemed and dear colleague, David Olive, who has announced his retirement from the organization. David joined ICANN to lead the policy development support team in February of 2010. In addition to that role, during his tenure at ICANN, he has been a Board-appointed officer of the organization and has served as the managing director of ICANN's Istanbul office and the managing director of ICANN's Washington, D.C., office.

David, we are eternally grateful for all your contributions. Your impact on the ICANN community over the last 14 years has been extraordinary. You will truly be missed. Please join us in recognizing David for his immeasurable service to ICANN. We wish you a happy and well-deserved retirement.

Board colleagues, do we have any other business? All right. Do I have a motion to adjourn this meeting?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Motion to adjourn.

TRIPTI SINHA: Motion to adjourn. Second. Sarah seconds. All those in favor, please say aye.

PARTICIPANTS: Aye. Anyone abstaining? Or any nays? All right. Hearing none, this part of the meeting is now formally closed. I would like to now introduce Pierre Dandjinou, Vice President, Stakeholder Engagement Africa, to tell us a little bit about ICANN 80. Pierre?

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]