
ICANN82 | Prep Week – Progress on Work to Improve the Efficacy and Efficiency of ICANN Public Meetings
Wednesday, February 26, 2025 – 10:00 to 11:30 PST

ALP EKEN

Hello and welcome to Progress on Work to Improve the Efficacy and Efficiency of ICANN Public Meetings session. My name is Alp Eken and I am participation manager for this session. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior and the ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy.

During this session, questions or comments will only be read aloud if submitted within the Q&A pod. Interpretation for this session will include English, French and Spanish. If you would like to speak during the session please raise your hand in Zoom. When called upon, participants will be given permission to unmute in Zoom. Please state your name for the record, the language you will speak if speaking a language other than English and speak at a reasonable pace.

I will now hand the floor over to Sally Costerton.

SALLY COSTERTON

Thank you, Alp. And welcome, everybody, to our prep week session. And as Alp said, what we are going to do today is to update you on the progress of what has become known informally as the How We Meet project. And this is really all about-- if we could just go to the next slide, please, yes, would you like to go to-- oh no,

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we'll leave it on that slide actually, let's go to the next slide. So what we're going to do is take you through why we started this work, what scope of the work is, who's been involved, how we are going to collect feedback and the process to take things out to public comment and what to expect in terms of the timeline. So if we could go to the next slide please.

Now as you will know, many of you will know anyway, the current meeting strategy, and just to be clear this covers the three large ICANN meetings every year, it does not cover any other ICANN meeting. So that's what's in the scope of this work, has been developed and adopted over 10 years ago, and the world has changed and become a lot more challenging in different ways.

I'm going to hand over to Mary in a minute who's going to go through this, but I'm just giving this, put some framing in place. We've discussed this extensively as a community over the past-- since we came back from COVID particularly. There have been real challenges around the world that we need to grapple with to make sure that ICANN is continuously able, or able continuously I should say to deliver our big three meetings in a way that works for ICANN's mission and contributes to delivering on ICANN's goals.

So what I'm going to do now, Mary, I think is the best thing to do is if I hand over to you. And I know you're going to take the group through exactly how we got together. So the purpose was to-- just before I hand over to Mary, the purpose of the project was to

recognize that there are challenges that exist in the world to having ICANN meetings that did not exist in 2013 and 2014 when the meeting policy was put together. And those are things that we need to work out how we're going to handle in order for that sustainable delivery of the meetings. And that has been the purpose of this project. So with that Mary, I'd like to hand over to you to take us through it. Thank you very much.

MARY WONG

Thank you, Sally. And as Sally said, welcome everybody to this prep week webinar. And as the name of these sessions suggests, it is to help prepare for the discussions that we expect will be forthcoming at the ICANN82 meeting that will take place in Seattle in a little over a week's time. And as you'll know, and I think it bears repeating, there is going to be a plenary session on the topic of how we meet, where we will hope to have discussions with the wider community in person, as well as virtually about some of the work the group has done.

So the purpose of today's prep webinar is to, as Sally says, give you the background on how we got here so that you have all the necessary background information as you prepare for ICANN82. And as I said, we hope that we will see you at that plenary session and hear from you and engage with you on the feedback.

So as Sally mentioned, the ICANN public meeting strategy is now over 10 years old, and as the previous slide noted, it may be time to reassess how we have implemented this, and see it in light of

various factors there might need to be some changes in how we do ICANN meetings. And those changes include, as Sally mentioned, geopolitical shifts, social conditions, evolving needs of the various community groups, the volume of work that you do, and of course the costs that are associated with events such as this, in particular the significant increase in costs associated with travel and events since the pandemic.

So that is just to frame the work of this group. As Sally mentioned, there have been discussions off and on over the years. This is not new to the community or to anyone in the organization, or the Board that's been looking at this for a while. But after some discussion with the SO/AC leaders there was agreement that it was probably time to put a group together to take a look at how we can continue to put on ICANN meetings that are appropriately resourced, but where those resources really are put towards the best use, meaning that it allows the community to be more efficient or as efficient as you possibly can be, and allow the meetings to be effective, while still meeting the various objectives of why we have these meetings in the first place.

And as you know we currently have three ICANN public meetings a year. The community forum basically kicks off the first one in the calendar year, and that is what the ICANN82 meeting in Seattle will be. That is a six-day meeting that is followed a few months later by a four-day policy forum, and finally towards the end of the calendar

year there is the annual general meeting which is also six days in duration like the community forum.

So with that background, the ICANN staff developed a project charter to try to define the scope of this work. That charter was shared and discussed with the SO/AC leaders so that there was clarity amongst all concern as to what this work would entail and what this work would not entail, including how we would do the work. And here's where we get to this slide which is how the group was formed and how the group is composed today. Because any changes that the community might feel warranted to how we do ICANN meetings will need to be put into the usual ICANN planning and budgeting process, we basically worked backwards, for lack of a better term, from the dates where ICANN would begin on the budget and planning process for the next fiscal year.

Typically, this occurs around the August or September time frame. And so since these discussions with the SO/AC leaders took place around the Kigali meeting and into the Istanbul AGM late last year, this was a fairly compressed period of time. It definitely meant that the group would need to be small as the SO/AC leaders acknowledged, and it made sense that the group be comprised of experienced community members who have planned ICANN meetings, who have attended ICANN meetings, perhaps led sessions at ICANN meetings, and who also have experience in other hybrid events and similar conferences and the like.

It did not need to be fully representative in the way that a group normally would be because of the need for the size to be smaller and the group to be nimble. However, obviously the call for participants went out to all the community groups. And as you see from this slide, we do have participants from the community from all seven of our supporting organizations and advisory committees. But it is important to remember that this is not a policy development working group. This is a group of community members who are coming together to work with subject matter experts from the ICANN organization to try to come up with a set of options that can then be presented to the broader community for feedback, for further discussion and so on.

So from the ICANN organization, the staff that participated in this group with these community members you see here on this slide, probably not a surprise. It is mostly staff from the teams that engage with you, the community, the most regarding ICANN meeting planning, as well as staff who provide all the services that we need on the ground to make a meeting successful. So I'm going to pause here to see if there are any questions. I see one in the chat from Alfredo and I'll read the question aloud. Why is the NomCom not listed? Sally, do you want to take that or do you want me to go ahead?

SALLY COSTERTON

That is because it was the decision of the SO/AC leadership group that got together about who would participate. And as Mary said

earlier on, not every single group in ICANN was necessarily represented. That's right, I think. So it wasn't left out.

MARY WONG

Yeah, that's right, Sally. And obviously, the nominating committee is part of the ICANN community. It has a very specific role and it does in and of itself also comprise members from the different SOs and ACs as well. So hopefully that clarifies, Alfredo and everyone.

So let's move on to the next slide, if you please, Alp. And this is quite important in terms of thinking through what the next steps look like in the next few months. So I'll start by saying that that community group that I just spoke about and the ICANN org staff began meeting in January of this year, so less than two months ago. What we had to work off of were several pieces of documentation.

One is obviously the project charter that I mentioned that made it very clear what the scope of the work was, what the deliverables might be, and the timeline that I described as well. And this was something that was discussed between the SO/AC leaders, Sally and myself, and some of our colleagues from the organization.

Secondly, there were some background documents that some of you may already have seen even prior to us beginning this work. And these were documents that came up through discussions that senior staff from the ICANN organization had had, again with the SO/AC leaders, around improving ICANN meetings, and as part of that, the rising cost of ICANN meetings.

So for example, one set of materials, and I want to thank my colleagues here from the organization for doing a very thorough job. I see many of you on the call. They put together actual cost data as well as an analysis of not just what goes into putting on an ICANN meeting, what the various categories of costs were, but also what increased or changed over the years from the time that we first implemented the 2014 meeting strategy through to today, including any changes that we saw from pre-pandemic times to post-pandemic times.

We also had discussions, and there was quite a lot of exchanges over the lessons that we all learned, all of us in the ICANN community, from the seven virtual meetings that we had during the pandemic. And I know many of you on this call were actually part of those discussions as well. So, while the project charter outlined the scope of work for this group, there was a lot of background material and information that we could draw on, and that I think the group found very helpful in the meetings that we started in January.

So, where are we now? As Sally and I both mentioned, we are planning to have a full discussion at ICANN82 at the plenary session, which I believe is scheduled for day three of the Monday of the meeting. At that session, you'll hear about the various options that were discussed by the group. And here I'll say that in order to expedite the work and for efficiency, I'd already mentioned that the group is working under a fairly tight and short timeline. These SO/AC leaders asked that the ICANN staff provide what we initially

called a strawman paper, outlining what a changed ICANN meeting might look like, outlining a number of ideas or options that could be further dissected and discussed. And we did that, and that was part of the background materials that I mentioned earlier as well.

So taking this set of materials, taking in particular that strawman document, which essentially contained a list of ideas and options that the staff had compiled and had gleaned from the various years of community feedback and discussion, as well as some of the analysis that performed on the cost of ICANN meetings, that was what this community discussion group worked on in the last few weeks with us.

So where we are now at the plenary is that that will be the opportunity for that engagement to have the community here and provide initial feedback and engage with all of us, including members of the ICANN staff who put on these meetings, about some of those options. Whether some of those options sounded feasible, whether some of them sounded more difficult, whether there is a sense that some of them ought to be pursued further or more in depth. That is one opportunity for engagement. And you see here in this funnel diagram that I'm basically going through the timeline here as well.

Following that plenary session, the plan, and this was outlined very early on in the discussions with the SO/AC leaders, as well as in the project charter, that the plan will be to continue to have that broad community engagement through conducting a public comment

proceeding, which I know many on this call are very familiar with. At the end of the public comment proceeding, the discussion group will meet again to take a look at the feedback that was provided and hopefully come up with a final report with a list of final options that can be shared with the Board and the community, ideally around the time of the policy forum in June of this year.

And I'm going to pause here because I've been seeing some comments in the chat, although I apologize, I have not been able to follow them. And I will start by taking Susan Payne's comment in the Q&A part. Her question for those who are listening in is, what do you mean by public comment forum? Is that the public forum in ICANN82, or are we going to run the public comment process on the draft proposals before finalization?

Indeed, Susan, it is the last one. And I apologize if we were not clear on the slide, if I was not clear. It is the regular public comment proceeding that the ICANN organization runs, whether that is for community recommendations or organizational updates and things like that, which means that at minimum, that proceeding will run for 40 days. As you all know, sometimes it runs for longer if the community requires more time. Like I said, this was built into the process from the start because it is critically important that it is not just one group of community members that decide what needs to be done, nor is it ICANN the organization, nor the Board unilaterally decide certain actions should be taken and certain others not be taken. And thank you for that, Susan.

So I'm going to pause as well to ask Sally if you had anything to add and to allow folks on the call to raise their hand and ask questions or type them if they wish.

SALLY COSTERTON

There are some more questions in the chat, Mary. So why don't you just keep answering the questions in the chat as we go? Go on.

MARY WONG

Okay, I'm sorry. I just saw one from Karen in the Q&A pod. And her question is, as this process continues to play out over the summer, what is the status of planning for 2026? Is that on hold pending the outcome of this work or are we moving forward with securing locations for the three meetings that will be announced regardless of the outcome?

I will start and I will invite my colleagues who are closer to the meeting planning process in terms of the preparatory scouting of locations to jump in if they will. This is work that's ongoing. As I said, we do need to have the community weigh in. And to the extent that the community needs more time to think about what makes sense, then that is what we need to allow for. The other thing, Karen and everyone, is that as I said earlier, while the timeline here is more or less conditioned by the ICANN budget and planning process, recall that that process is also forward-looking.

So just because it starts, for example, later this year, I think as we're all very familiar with that process continues for months. There is public comment on the draft budget and on planning and so forth. And ultimately, whatever the plan is and the budget that is adopted by the Board, that is forward-looking for the next year. So in other words, we're not looking at the changes that can, although there are some probably on-the-ground changes that can be implemented very easily and quickly, the kind of things that you're asking about because they're longer term, they are also the kind of things that take more time to decide and to plan out.

And I see that my colleague, Ted, has answered in the chat that, yes, we will continue to move forward with new meeting locations while this process is ongoing. And I'm just going to scroll back up if you allow me. I see a comment from Jeff Neuman. Yes, it will indeed be an official public comment proceeding. We will obviously want to explore all ways of communicating and getting feedback with the community, but the plan definitely is to have the full public comment proceeding. And if you give me a-- I'm sorry.

ALP EKEN

Mary, can I go and read the comments or questions so that you can or Sally can answer them? I think it will be easier for you. So first one is from Anne, and the question is, may we have a link to the Strawman document that Mary is referencing? And I will let Sally answer this question.

SALLY COSTERTON

Yes, this is what you'll see in the public comment process. And you'll see some of this, you'll see this when we go to ICANN82 for the plenary session. So yes, we will share the, as Strawman is not, I mean, it's not a very helpful word, but essentially this is a set of ideas that we have looked at in the work group that may help to address the challenges that Mary referred to and I referred to at the beginning of the call. And here's why these ideas are ideas. Here's how they break down. This is some of the implications, some of the trade-offs. And so you'll see all of that, and we'll share that with the community before we go into, at Seattle, before we go into the plenary session. So everybody will have had a chance to have a look at that before we have the session.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER

Great, Sally, thanks. Just a quick follow-up on that. What would be the time of releasing that Strawman?

SALLY COSTERTON

I think we probably won't call it a Strawman. And so I don't want to get confused here. We haven't got that finalized yet because it hasn't been finalized by the work group. And we're just in the final stages of doing that now. And as Mary said earlier on, the timeframe for this has been passed. But we'll let you know when we do know, but it will be before the session. So people will have a time. We know that's important. So people have had a chance to,

I mean, not 10 minutes before the session, I'm not being facetious, but in time that everybody will have had a chance to have a look at it before they come to the session. So otherwise, we realize, of course, people need to have a chance to look at that and think about it so that they can contribute to that session effectively.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER

That would be absolutely great because as you know, folks need to also get with their constituencies and whatnot. So as much time as possible would be great. Yeah, we'll publish it.

SALLY COSTERTON

Yes, Alp, please. You go back to chairing the questions. I apologize.

ALP EKEN

No worries. Thank you so much. So a question from Michael, which is, were any of these meetings recorded and could those recordings be made available? I can go ahead and answer that. Yes, all the meetings that this group had were recorded and they were made available on a drive. We will make all of them public on Wiki as soon as possible.

And the next question is, is there anywhere that this feedback has been documented where we can see the feedback as well? I believe Sally and Mary partly answered this question. But Jeff, if you need a further answer, please let us know.

Another question from Avri--

SALLY COSTERTON

Sorry, can I just complete that because I want us to not mix terminology. So the feedback that has been collected is what-- this is a very general term. What we're really saying is this process, if that's why it's presented as a funnel. So what you'll see in the plenary session and what I've just described to Anne, as Alp said, is the product of the feedback. So yes, it will be shared in that sense. But the primary feedback will be the public comment itself. I mean, that's really what. So when we use the word feedback, I would just stress the importance of the public comment. Sorry, Alp, please.

ALP EKEN

Thanks, Sally. We have a question from Avri, which is when are we going to have discussions about whether the ICANN public comment methodology is fit for purpose? I believe Avri, this is a more general question, not related to this work directly, but I will let Sally or Mary respond to this.

MARY WONG

Before we do that, Alp, I think Greg has his hand up to follow up on the previous question, if I'm not mistaken.

GREG SHATAN

Yeah, thanks, Mary. I kind of wanted to address Jeff's question about feedback because I think there's one nuance that's worth noting. I was one of the SO/AC chairs. I was in the initial discussions that reviewed the options from ICANN. And I think from my

perspective, this round of feedback was not substantive. Is this option wrong or right? But more, is this potentially constructive and worthwhile to present to the community?

So I guess I don't want to give the impression that SO/AC chairs have been making judgment calls on the substance of merit of ideas, but more helping put recommendations together and assessing whether they'd be constructive for the community to review. I just want to call out that the feedback in this first stage, I think is different than the feedback in this second stage, right?

Where I think the second stage is, we'd be looking at more things more substantive. We think this idea is a good idea or a bad idea, as opposed to the first stage where it's, here are some ideas that would be, we think may be constructive for the community to discuss.

MARY WONG

Thank you, Greg. And I see Nigel from the United Kingdom. Nigel, if I may, may I follow up on Greg's comment and then turn it over to you.

So I just wanted to address the question of publishing the recordings, but take it to a broader level as well. I think we need to mute someone. Thank you. So transparency and accountability are so important to all the work that we all do, regardless of our roles within this ecosystem. So it's not just publishing the recordings. I also wanted to note that throughout these

discussions and this process, there were community groups who provided feedback even before this group was charted.

And some of that feedback came in written form. And that feedback also formed part of the materials that we shared with the leaders and with the community, again, before this work began. There have been groups that have also continued to discuss this. Thank you all very much. And what I wanted to say is that we haven't lost track of any of those things. There's certainly no intention to not publish all of them.

In this particular case, it just seems like the more discussion and engagement there is and the more feedback there is that is available to all, the better the discussion will be. Because how we do ICANN meetings, what changes we need to make to render the work more efficient and effective is something that affects everyone in this community. So, this is all leading to what Sally said about the public comment period of proceeding as well. But that is also very, very important. But that's not that is not going to be the only kind only time that that feedback will be collected, reviewed and published. I hope that's helpful. Nigel?

NIGEL HICKSON

Yes, thank you. Good evening. I'll be very brief because I think my computer is going to reboot. But just for transparency, I'm on this group as a GAC representative. And indeed, we've been contributing as everyone in good faith, and ideas and discussions, etc. We're not representative of our community groups, we are

feeding back, of course, and getting ideas and suggestions. But we don't want to, in any way imply that these are the consistent positions of our community groups. But it's been very, very positive indeed. And I hope the document will show the spirit in which it's been created. And I think I'll be disappearing in a minute, but I'll join again. Thank you.

MARY WONG

Thank you very much, Nigel. And thank you, Greg, as well. Alp, I don't know if there's other questions in the chat. I'm seeing Avri's latest question about whether the project charter that I referred to and the names of the members in the group, including Nigel, who just identified himself, are available. I'm going to just answer that question. And Alp, you can let me know if there are others that I missed.

So to Avri's question, as Alp mentioned, we will be putting documents and information on the wiki. And certainly, those documents and that information will be available as well. Alp, over to you.

ALP EKEN

Thanks, Mary. There was a previous question from Avri, which was about the public comments. When are we going to have discussions about whether the ICANN public methodology is fit for purpose?

As I noted, I believe this was a more general question, but Avri, you are welcome to make it clear for us. And we don't have any other questions, but I just wanted to note that the documents were made available, and they are actually public. They are on a drive. Currently, ICANN is going through a change in wiki, but we are going to make all of these available on wiki before the ICANN meeting. This includes the charter, the initial options that were provided, which we called strawman, and all the relevant presentations and cost data, and also, of course, group members and meeting recordings. And over to you, Mary, to continue the presentation, if you like.

MARY WONG

Thank you, Alp, and I'm seeing more discussion in the chat. So thank you, everybody, for the questions and engagement. I did want to follow up on one of Avri's questions, and I did want to make it very clear that the intention was not to keep the proceedings up to now confidential or secret in any way. I would say that from the staff perspective, we left it up to the group members, how they wish to share information, how they wish to solicit information.

So there was never any plan or intention, either on our part, or I believe definitely not on the members or the SO/AC leaders' part, as Greg just said, to keep any information from the community. That said, we do want to leverage these sessions like today's, as well as the plenary session and other discussions that we probably will have to continue the engagement.

And in that regard, actually, Michael, I was going to take your question in the chat, but you've got your hand raised. So please go ahead.

MICHAEL PALAGE

Yeah, Michael Palage, for the record. Will we have the time to engage? Because as you know, in the earlier session today, I had raised the question to Dan about the number of closed sessions. So would this be an appropriate fora to perhaps do this if we have extra time or not?

MARY WONG

Thanks, Michael, for the question. And yes, I do recall from the earlier webinar. So we really do not have more than, I think, one other slide in the presentation. And so we probably do have time to have some further discussion. What I would just like to make clear, again, is that from our perspective as the ICANN staff here, all we wanted to do was to bring everybody in the community who hasn't tracked this work or hasn't tracked it closely up to speed, I guess, as they say, on what the work is, what's been done, who's been doing it, and open the opportunities for engagement.

So if there is time, and I believe there will be, Michael, I think that that will be very welcome for you and other members of the community who may wish to make some comments to begin to do so. And that will be something that the group can certainly take

into consideration when we come to look at all of the feedback. I hope that's helpful. And I see, Avri, you've got your hand up.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you, Avri speaking. Going back to my question about the one that was too general, about whether the ICANN public comment is fit for purpose, I definitely want to question whether it is fit for purpose for this purpose. Here you have something that is being done with best intentions. Everybody is not trying to keep anything secret. It just happens to be. And at the last minute, it will be presented.

And then there'll be one of those regularly short comment periods that more and more people are finding difficult to handle, especially when you have to consult with constituency stakeholder groups and what have you. So, I'll repeat my question, but in the narrow, more confined space of, for this purpose, do we really think that a regular short ICANN public comment period during days when everybody is hurried and such is really fit for purpose? Thank you.

MARY WONG

Thank you for that clarification, Avri. I apologize if we mistook your question.

AVRI DORIA

No, it wasn't. No, I asked it wide. I just narrowed it. Thank you.

MARY WONG

All right. Thank you, Avri. And I think my answer on behalf of the staff is that, and I don't mean to sound facetious, it really is up to the community. I think when we went into this process, like I said, we built in the public comment proceeding because that is the well-understood common way where we ensure that not just folks keeping track of any particular piece of work knows what's going on, but that the public will have a channel and a forum to provide input on whatever it is that's going on for public comment. So, that is by no means intended to be the only channel. There can be others that if the community believes will be useful to supplement or to add to it. I would say that we're very open to all of that.

And I see your comment, your question in the chat, Jordan, and I'm looking at Owen, your comment as well. And I'll just read part of it, whether ICANN will actually listen to and incorporate public comments into the proposal. This needs to be community driven, not ICANN driven. And I am sorry, Owen, if you and others feel that this process is something that was created by ICANN and that's being pushed by ICANN without the community.

I will say that from my colleague's perspective, that we have tried really hard to bring up a piece of work that we think is important for the reasons that Sally and I outlined at the beginning to the community, and to try to provide some guidance as to how that work might be able to get done in a relatively short time frame without dictating, if you like, that it must be done or there has to be

done this way, or that the outcome has to be this way. So I'm sorry that if some community members feel that way, but I hope that you understand where we're coming from. That was certainly not the intent, that is not the intention.

And so if I may link what you just said, Owen, to what Avri noted as well. If there are additional ways, and channels, and things that we can use or that we can do to have a broad community conversation, then I think it would be very, very helpful if you could let us know whether it's today, whether it's at the plenary session, whether it's through emails. I think you all know how to get us. We really do feel that this is an important piece of work that has to be ultimately community driven in the sense that if there are going to be changes, whether that is to multiple different things that we've talked about over the years, that it cannot be and it must not be something that the organization or the Board unilaterally drives and imposes.

I did not mean to make a speech. I'm sorry. Alp, do we have any other questions or comments? I don't see anything else in the Q&A pod for now.

ALP EKEN

Yes, we have a comment from Anne. It says, so maybe take these comments back to the discussion group that is working on this process. And I can say that we intend to do so. Thank you so much. And I also see Michael's hand.

MICHAEL PALAGE

Thanks, Michael Palage, for the record. And Sally, this question goes to you. I know that you previously have been a very big advocate of metrics and being able to track ICANN's ROI on outreach and who they invest in bringing to MEPL and then how those people continue to contribute after their initial engagement. I think ICANN has done a lot of good work. All meeting participants now need to go basically through the single sign-on solution that ICANN provides. So ICANN has a lot more data on metrics.

Would ICANN be able to provide a better profile of who is attending? Previously, ICANN used to break down the participants into different sectors, like registries, registrars, contracting parties, and they stopped doing that. I believe Nick Tommaso's response was, since that was self-provided, it was deemed non-reliable by ICANN. So I think it would be really important. ICANN has the ability to provide better metrics of seeing who's showing up at the meetings. Could you share any thoughts on that as a further metric to drive analysis of how effective the meetings are currently before we make any changes?

MARY WONG

Thank you for your question, Michael. I think we may have lost Sally for the moment, and I'm certainly not Sally, but I will try to provide a response to your question. So there's a couple of things here. As you said, I think we are getting better at not just collecting the data, but in analyzing and reporting on the data. There is some

concern, was and is, some concern about processing of personal data, as you and others well know.

So some of the data, obviously, we cannot process it without the data subject's consent. But as you noted, we now have people going through a single sign-on to sign up for ICANN meetings. We have to acknowledge privacy policies in terms of service when signing up for working groups and then membership in groups and the like.

As you probably also know, the ICANN organization has started looking at a single platform, or rather, I suppose I should say, we're looking at a platform or a way to relate all that information that we've collected to make sure that there's a standard way of collecting them and of analyzing them, and also to find a way to report out in a way that is accurate as well as is consistent and useful to the community. So while we now have a few reports out there, the meeting By the Numbers is one that comes immediately to mind, since we're talking about ICANN public meetings.

We do plan to be able to provide the community with more robust, consistent, and accurate reports. As you also noted, Michael, some of that information being self-provided, we do have to be careful that that is not something that is relied upon for accuracy, because there is no way that the ICANN organization can validate or verify any of that. Ultimately, I think this is broader than just the ICANN public meetings. I mean, as you well know, as others know, there

is a difference between attending a meeting and participating in the multi-stakeholder work of the community.

So all of this, and I'll stop talking, is to say that we are building a system where we can indeed track that kind of participation metrics and data. And Michael, did you want to follow up?

MICHAEL PALAGE

Yeah, if I could. As far as PII, previously, if you look at the reports that Nick Tomasso and the group put out, specifically the last one being Montreal, where they did the breakdown, the aggregation that was provided then, I am aware of no PII concern regarding the aggregation of said data. The other thing I think that would be helpful is Rod Beckstrom, when he was CEO, one of the things he did as part of his CEO report was he gave a detailed breakdown of the number of paid travelers that attended the ICANN meetings.

I know Xavier provides forecasting for how many budgeted slots are potentially made available. But again, I think looking back historically, that was a really good metric that Beckstrom did to show how many people showing up in an ICANN meeting were there on ICANN or were being funded or supported by ICANN. And I think that, again, is historically important, particularly because I remember a time when ICANN had no money to pay for anybody to attend an ICANN meeting.

MARY WONG

Can we mute the line? Thank you very much. I see my colleague Josh has put his hand up to help me out there. So I'll just comment, Michael, that indeed, we agree that a lot of the data is helpful. Like I said, there are concerns and risks, particularly if it is data that could be construed as personal data, for which it may not be clear that either the data subject had provided consent, or at least that there was a clear way that we could continue to use that data, although today is not the forum to discuss this. But thank you for highlighting that, because I think, Josh, you're going to provide far more and better details than I did in my generic answer. Please go ahead, Josh.

JOSH BAULCH

No worries. Thank you, Mary. So, Michael, thank you. My name is Josh Baulch. I'm actually the one who publishes and works on the By the Numbers Report. And also many of the reports that Nick Tomasso put out and worked with the team on developing those reports.

You know, what I can say is, there is a lot of data that is available. I think there are some challenges with the data. For example, like the registration data, a lot of the information is entered in by the users. And so it's not really necessarily verified data. So when you start talking about membership of the communities, what we have readily available for us is just information that everybody has said, Oh, I'm a part of the GAC, or I'm a part of this, but it's not necessarily validated data, that they're members or non-members, we are

working through that. And that's where the CES has become really important for us and working with policies and the other the policy team and other groups within the organization that that is definitely coming more to fruition here.

The other aspect that I think creates a little bit of a challenge, and I think this is where the community can potentially provide us some guidance. You know, when we go and talk through metrics related to who's attending the ICANN meeting, we know who is on site at a meeting, but we don't know who is attending which sessions or that type of thing. And that's something we've really struggled with, is this information that ICANN should know to be able to further analyze because we would be able to provide information back to say, like the GNSO on who are the people that are actually participating and joining those sessions.

But that would also require ICANN to scan people that might be entering in those session rooms and stuff. And so, there's definitely, and I think that that's kind of partly where some of the privacy questions start coming in. But in the end as a data person, the data can be really valuable for us in providing information back to the community on participation and those types of things.

So I think that there are some struggles of exactly what information should be provided back out. But there is definitely a lot of information and we do spend a lot of time combing over it and working through it. So I hope this is helpful.

MICHAEL PALAGE

Yeah. Thanks, Josh. That was helpful. And thank you for being a face behind those reports, which I actually do read. The one question I was having is I think in reading some of those reports, there are actually, I believe, are head counts that shows for some of the sessions. Is that just ICANN staff popping in and perhaps doing a quick head count? Exactly.

JOSH BAULCH

Yeah, that's exactly. Basically about 30 minutes into the session, there's somebody that comes in and just counts the amount of heads that are in a room. Exactly that.

MICHAEL PALAGE

Excellent. And then just another follow up question. When ICANN does the badge scanning, when you walk into the facility on each day, is that done on an individual basis or is that just like how is that tracked?

JOSH BAULCH

So it is tracked on an individual basis. So, for example, like if I come in. And we really instituted that from a contact tracing perspective so that when we did have an incident, that we could send it out to the people that we knew were physically on site because our registration also combines in the virtual aspect of attendees, too. And so for us, we really needed to narrow down who was actually there versus not or if somebody who came in on day one but wasn't

there on day four to help narrow down. But that is exactly what that is. It's just to allow us to be able to contact the people that were there for that particular day.

MICHAEL PALAGE

Thanks. Keep up the good work.

JOSH BAULCH

Thank you.

MARY WONG

Indeed, Michael. And thank you so much, Josh, for providing that information. I feel relieved that at least I wasn't too far away from what we're doing. I see, Cheryl, your hand is up. We're going to go to you. And then conscious of time, I think we want to get back to the topic at hand, although this sounds like a very interesting discussion that we could certainly continue at another time. But please, Cheryl.

CHERYL LANGDON-ORR

Thank you, Mary. I'm glad that we can continue discussions which are relevant to how we meet, which is, of course, the important overarching topic of today's engagement. Just following on from the data-driven information, and Josh and a few others who've worked with me long enough will know I'm rather keen on data myself, but the privacy concern aspect is constantly pushed back every time we've tried to do better data collection with more fine-

tuning for more valuable data to be utilized, which, of course, then means we can show what the investment in these important meetings is bringing to the policy or any other table, because we will know who's actually engaged in the work at hand.

It strikes me that as we are now, however, poised, we could suggest that those who are being supported to attend these meetings. In other words, are there on ICANN's dime, do waive some of the rights to their not being scanned any time they go in or out of a working meeting, and then at least we can get a sample of data which may begin to show some useful trends. Thank you.

MARY WONG

Thank you very much for that, Cheryl, and indeed, as you said, it is related to the topic of how you meet more broadly. So, thank you for that suggestion, and thank you all for that engagement. I did want to note that there was also a question from Raymond in the chat, which is similarly a suggestion as to a possible option to consider. So, I do want to add that to the list of items that we're hearing, but also encourage everyone to share that as these discussions continue, informally with the group members or with Sally and myself during the plenary and with whatever other engagement channels seems appropriate in addition to the public comment forum that we plan to have. And I'm noting Avri's response to Jordan in the chat on that.

So we do have one final slide, but I believe we've actually talked about it, but we should probably show it because visually, I think

that anchors some of the things that we've been saying about the importance of the engagement that we're having or starting to have, as well as what that timeline looks like. So, I don't propose to read this or to repeat it, but in the time that we have left, I do want to ask if anyone else would like to comment or ask a question. I'm giving everyone a minute or two to think about that.

Just to follow up further on your suggestion, Cheryl, and just also linking this more broadly, taking this basically up a notch from the specific work here, but this work relates to, as you're all saying looking at the depth and the extent and the duration of stakeholder engagement or participation, which is also why we do these ICANN meetings.

I just want to link it really broadly to the five-year strategic plan, including and particularly the one that was recently published for public comment and that is about to be finalized, where a lot of what we've touched on today, from engaging with newer participants to improving how policy work is done, including at the ICANN meetings, that's all something that was included in these plans. And so, this, I think the reason I mentioned this also is to highlight that this is not the kind of one-and-done type of thing. There likely will be, as I mentioned earlier, some very specific, targeted, potentially relatively easy-to-do things that we can do in the immediate short term.

Some of the ideas that the community may wish to explore are much more likely to be longer-term issues, whether to determine

how to do something or to actually get that into implementation. So, I realize I didn't say that before. I thought I should before we close, but I also see, Sebastien, that you've got your hand up. So, please go ahead.

SEBASTIEN BACHOLLET

Thank you very much, Sebastien Bachollet. Importantly, I am driving and I was late to the meeting. But I used to be the chair of the meeting strategy a long time ago, who came up with this three-type of meeting. I just wanted to be sure that when Josh talked about there are people who were here for the first day and not for the fourth day. It's exactly what was, it's on purpose. It may be possible for people to participate to one part of the meeting, and therefore, it's not a bad thing that there are people participating in the first day and not of the rest of the meeting, or the reverse, or whatever they want to pick up. It's why it's important how we organize the timing of the meeting, because it's still relevant for people not to travel for eight days, but just for four days if they wish so. Thank you very much.

MARY WONG

Thank you, Sebastien. Thank you for that comment. And I guess what I should also add here is that if we can go back to how we started this session and looking at how this project first originated. Sally and I had mentioned what we had called a straw man document, which really turned out to be a list of ideas for discussion. And we're hopeful that we can have that engagement

with the full community. Those are the kinds of ideas that came through years of community engagement and feedback. And as I said, there were groups that were able or felt that they wanted to give feedback ahead of time. And as I also said, all this will be part of the materials and the information that will be looked at. But this continues to be an ongoing process.

I do take from some of the comments I'm seeing in the chat that we could probably have done a better job, if I might say, at keeping the community informed of the work and of what was going on. And so we will take that as a lesson learned. So thank you all very much for that feedback. Thank you all for the comments and suggestions you've already made. And the group and I and my colleagues will look forward to continuing this discussion and engagement with everyone, starting with the plenary session at ICANN82. Thank you again.

Thank you to my colleagues. And Alp, I believe we can close the call and stop the recording.

ALP EKEN

Can we please stop the recording?

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]