
ICANN83 | PF – GNSO: NCSG Wrap-Up Work Session
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ANDREA GLANDON

Hello and welcome to the NCSG Wrap-Up Work Session. My name is Andrea, and I am a 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. If you would like to speak during this session, please raise your hand in Zoom. When called upon, virtual participants will be given permission to unmute in Zoom. On-site participants will use a physical microphone to speak. Please state your name for the record and speak at a reasonable pace. And I will now hand the floor over to Rafik. You may begin.

RAFIK DAMAK

Okay. Thanks, Andrea. This is Rafik Damak speaking. And thanks everyone for making it for our last NCSG meeting in Prague. So just to maybe to explain quickly about this session. First, this is the first time to have a wrap-up session at the end of the meeting because usually in terms of a session in any ICANN meeting, our last one as a group, it's usually on Tuesday when we have like the policy committee or membership session and so on.

So, the purpose here is to have an opportunity at the end to have a recap, a review or retrospective of the week from everyone to share the highlights about what was discussed in the GNSO or the PDP

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working group or any session of interest. And so that's one point. Another is also to think about the next steps or follow-up. So, when we meet here, it's not just for the sake of meeting and talking, but really to see what action item or follow-up we have to work on. And so, this is the opportunity for that.

So, for today in terms of agenda, first we are supposed to have a meeting with the Finance team to discuss about the FY26 Operating Plan and Budget. It's not the most exciting topic, but it's quite important for us because the budget and the operating plan dictate where ICANN will spend its resources and attention, what are the priorities.

On the other hand, it's also for us as a group to see where we should share our input and make our requests. So, something I will ask today if we have a decision with them is to have clarity how we can request some specific funding or resources. So, that's one point. But in general, for us as a group is to really, when we review the budget, is to see if the budget is responding to our need in general in terms of policy making and so on. So, that's for the first agenda item.

The second one, as I shared previously, is to review the week. So recap of the NCSG session and policy discussion and also to have retrospective of the joint session. We had three this time. We got different outcomes from all. So just to be all in the same page and to prepare follow up for some of them. And that's the segue to the

last agenda item is about the next steps and follow ups to have that action item.

So just to maybe trying to not repeat myself, but it's really at the end is to come with a plan what we will do next. We have this ICANN meeting. We have a lot of discussion, a lot of interaction. It's just to have a plan as a group so that what we will try to act on after Prague and then also to prepare for the next meeting. So, that's really the purpose here.

Okay, checking with Andrea, if we are getting the finance team. I mean, they confirm that they will be on time. So, since they are not here yet, let me finish. So since we don't have them yet, we rearrange the schedule, so we will start with the point about reviewing this week.

KATHY KLEIMAN

Rafik, point of order. I've got an AOB at the end. Is that okay?

RAFIK DAMAK

Yeah, AOB. Yeah, that's open for any other business there. Okay. Trying to check my notes just to be sure. Yeah. So, I gave the overview. So, we'll start with a recap. Okay. Maybe just to give some points and then we start the discussion, looking really forward input and comment from everyone and we try to consolidate that.

So again, I explained about the purpose. We'll start here about if you have any general comment about what we had a session for this time, if there is any concern or any suggestion or anything you want to improve in term of the schedule, the planning, but most important in term of the substance of the agenda, if there is anything you would like to, that we will work on. Who want to go first? Manju, I was going to ask you to do so.

MANJU CHEN

Thank you, Rafik. This is Manju. So, I must say I really like the idea that since Seattle, we're breaking up the policy sessions to two, so we can do a prep for all the meetings, and then we do a policy discussion of the Council agenda. I think that's a very good change of how we use policy sessions. I'll definitely want to do that in the future too.

And I guess just as the councilor, one of the councilors of NCSG, just report back how our discussions in our policy sessions were reflected or presented in the Council meeting. We did discuss the DNS abuse issues and our interventions. We mentioned that we are okay with prioritizing this. We also share our concerns of this kind of pressure of the community and especially from some part of the community, how it, in a sense, forced Council to focus on one of the issues instead of others.

But I guess we raised a point that hijacked domains or compromised domains is also an issue in the DNS abuse, and we would like that to be reflected in the future PDPs if we're doing any

PDPs on DNS abuse. We also raised the concerns of the efficiency of implementation. And when it comes to accuracy, I think we didn't have much objections like we did in NCSG, but we did raise the concerns also about the shortening of the period of verifying registration information. Other than that, I'll let other councilors to supplement, but just a quick report back from the Council side and really think we should do the two-part policy session in the future. Thank you.

RAFIK DAMAK

Okay. Thanks, Manju. I think that will be something regular to do it as much as possible to have the two. And we will schedule it in the way to allow you to prepare for the joint session, but also for the public meeting. One point maybe to share it again, the idea also is we will have our Tuesday to have like full day and to sync up and coordinate with NCUC and NPOC to avoid any overlap. So, we'll try to use that also efficiently, but still, we'll have the two-policy committee session for that purpose.

Okay. And if you can also share the policy point, the highlights in the chat, that will be really helpful. Okay. Let's see if there is anyone else in the queue. And again, the question is, do you have any comment about the format, about the session, about the agenda? Any suggestion? Yes, Bruna.

BRUNA SANTOS

Just a short comment. I also enjoyed, appreciate the amount of sessions we had this time. I do think the wrap-up one is a great one, especially for leaving the meeting with everything on check and everyone on the same page about things. Just thinking on the DNS abuse conversation, I think it's also urgent that we have a even more in-depth position on what PDP we would agree and what are the points that we would like to see there. Like some of the things Manju just mentioned, right?

Some of the points we highlighted yesterday in the session, but also it would be important to have a more concrete position on why we don't really understand this urgency and also why we think the urgency could be a problem for the discussion as things are being rushed. And we're already discussing the timeframe of a PDP without actually agreeing on the scope and so on. So, just maybe reminding everyone that it would be nice to have a proper call on that for the coming weeks and so on. Thanks.

RAFIK DAMAK

Okay. Just to be sure, based on your comment and from Manju, we need to prepare for DNS abuse and we need to plan for that. So, I think that's something to work with Tomslin.

TOMSLIN SAMME-NLAR

Now, I'm just going to confirm whether we should have a call or just discuss on the list.

RAFIK DAMAK

I think here it's really, we need some prep work because we have the different people here with different discussion. Sorry. It's really to do the prep work, right? We have different discussion, we have different sessions and so on. So, if we can like really briefing or consolidate, I'm not saying to have some paper, but at least even some bullet points or just clarification and to start with that. So, we can have a call. And you can share in the list so people can read and then we have a call just to make things more easy and hopefully people will prepare beforehand.

ANDREA GLANDON

Rafik, just one. Hi, it's Andrea. Can everybody just speak a little bit closer to the mic? We're having a hard time hearing you. I have some sound back here. So, thank you.

RAFIK DAMAK

Sorry for that. Okay. So, that's maybe something to work on. Yes, Pedro.

PEDRO LANA

Pedro Lana for the record. Just to add to what Bruno just said, maybe not just DNS abuse, but all the other topics that we're going to discuss, it's good to have those frame meetings, especially when we're talking about bilaterals with other groups, such as we had great meetings with SSAC, with the Non-Contracted Party House

this morning, but like we did with the ALAC one. Having something before so we can align our points, we have a unified real position that has actually been discussed between the NCSG would be good. And maybe we can have that even before the meeting starts. So, having an online one, one month before would be great.

RAFIK DAMAK

Pedro, I think you know my position on that. We have really to prepare beforehand. So, we think the planning for Oman will start soon. It starts soon. We will work with Andrea as usual to prepare the list. In fact, we even know we are creating checklist. So, things will be more really, let's say, automated. We know we will have this and this and already start the discussion in particular for the joint meetings. But the most important, even for the joint one, the first question, what are the topics you want to discuss.

So, first part is we need to agree what those topics. The best if we can have a short list. We cannot try to cover all. And when we do that, I want to shorten the time and then we start preparing. So, the prep work has to be done and I want that to be done. So, looking for everyone's involvement in that process, because we can prepare even some slides or something, because it helps us to steer the discussion to share what we want more than trying to do that on the fly. We seem capable, but if we want our message to go, we need to prepare.

So, taking that and how that we will do the preparation for Oman, since also we have also this time the Day Zero with NCPH, even that

we need more discussion because we will have whole day with them. So, it's not just one hour. So, we need to figure out really what kind of discussion we want. Yes, Michaela?

MICHAELA SHAPIRO

Hello, Michaela for the record. No, just jumping on Pedro's point as well. I think particularly in this meeting, and this is also my first policy forum, so maybe this is part of the course, but there have been quite a few documents, reports, briefing papers that have been quite seminal that formed the backbone of a lot of the discussions at this meeting. And I wonder as part of the preparation, it's not only just talking about discussing and aligning on the topics, but it's also aligning on a position on those particular reports.

So, thinking about the NetBeacon white paper on DNS abuse, the SSAC report on network blocking, it sounded like we were caught a little on our back feet in those meetings where we just hadn't had the time to come up with an NCSG position while some of us maybe had the time or other professional interests in the topic and could come in an independent capacity. But I think it would be important to have a joint position on some of these topics. And that way we can also tackle it. So, we divide and conquer because not all of us are available for all those meetings. So, it makes it helpful if one person isn't able to be there that others know what the talking points are. Thanks.

Oh, wait, sorry. And one quick thing on that. Just wondering if it would be helpful to have, I don't want to document overload us, but maybe like one centralized document where we put the hot topics with documents that are relevant for each somewhere. And I don't want to make more work for other people, so if this were to happen, I'm happy to take the lead on it. Yeah. So, I'll stop there.

RAFIK DAMAK

Thanks, Michaela. So, yeah, start discussion here is we, like for DNS abuse, we have a lot of discussion as we need to consolidate in the way we summarize, consolidate just to understand different positions. We know there are different reports. So, that's first step. And to build, yeah, a common position, position paper. The question here is always we need the volunteers to do that. So, I think what I might take here, I see a lot of interest that we need to prepare to build our position so we can start the process and to see who want to do the work. And we can do that. So, we can take that action item.

And the last point I think about centralized list. I'm not sure if that's similar, but with Tomslin earlier, several months ago, we tried to see what are the priority topics. It's maybe something we need to revisit. But I think your point is you want maybe some, not sure, central list with some explanation about what are the topics or maybe just to figure out, to understand what format you are thinking about.

MICHAELA SHAPIRO

No, I was just thinking, I think we've had these lists with just the topics and that's really helpful. But I think sometimes without having just, I'm just thinking like links to the relevant documents. It's not anything overly complicated.

RAFIK DAMAK

I think this we can envision is to have the list and also prepare any relevant background, etc.

PEDRO LANA

Just to add, I don't know if we are going to talk about the short-term policy fellowship at the AOB, but this would be part of the effort. Yeah.

RAFIK DAMAK

Okay, yes. Oh, yeah. Kathy.

KATHY KLEIMAN

Okay. So, folks, we're seeing a change and Michaela, you're picking up on it. For years, ICANN would issue, ICANN and ICANN folks would issue a bunch of documents at the last minute. I would print them out. I would print out almost a ream of paper to take on the plane with me back when you didn't get Wi-Fi on the planes. Even now, it doesn't work half the time. Then it stopped and we knew what was happening. It was a little more, documents were issued

a few months earlier and then we talk about them. It's gone back to the old days. They're dropping documents just before the meeting. And for everyone who is paid to be here full-time, it's okay because they spend the last week preparing these documents and we don't. We spend the last week doing our work and so we can leave for a week.

So, Michaela, I think your idea is just right. A place to dump ideas, to dump-- I don't think we have to do summaries yet, but to take all the documents that we're seeing coming down at the last minute and saying, hey, this may create-- here's the document, here's the link. I think this is important. We may start hearing about this in the hallways so that we don't get surprised. This is an old tactic coming back. I don't even think they're doing it on purpose, but the NetBeacon paper wasn't that long ago. I think you're right. We need to keep up on it. It's not that much work to open up a document and have a place everyone knows to go to see what the hot topic is. Thanks. Great idea.

MICHAELA SHAPIRO

No, just a small response just to say and to Rafik's comment. I know Tomslin has been doing a lot of work on this to try to centralize already. I don't want to say that you haven't been, so I just wanted to compliment you on that. I think some of this is about just active engagement on the list. And that's also, I take full responsibility too that I've also been quiet on the list at times when I didn't necessarily-- I could have been better about it.

I just started to realize during this meeting that between the really amazing things that come across on Signal and then on WhatsApp and then on email, it just starts to get a bit overwhelming. I've started to try to put things together on my own, but I do think if it's helpful for the community, I think that could be fun to have in one place. So, thank you. And sorry, Michaela for the record.

RAFIK DAMAK

Thanks, Michaela. Yeah, the whole idea discussed is we-- Yeah. We need the preparation, but also if we can centralize, consolidate to make it easier also for reference of everyone and also to share. So yeah, we can discuss and figure out how we can do it. But again, what I mentioned about working with Tomslin is that we did some effort in the beginning is more about prioritization, but something maybe we need to revisit with all the changes happening. So, the whole point is, I really want us to prepare for the next meeting, but not forget that it's not just our goal. It's more like what we are going to work in topics, what we can use in the meeting to discuss, but the work will continue anyway before and after. Yes, Bruna.

BRUNA SANTOS

Bruna for the record. Just to get the record straight, I don't think the timeline for ICANN to issue documents changed. They still issue the documents three weeks ahead of the meetings or maybe more because of Prep Week. So I just want to get this on the record because it's part of Prep Week and we need to have them. We have

a policy report for this one, policy staff helps prepare them. So, that's just to put this on the record.

And the NetBeacon paper is not an ICANN paper, right? We just had a quick meeting with Graeme and Rowena and they explained it to us that the goal of the paper was just to get some ideas going around ahead of this meeting because they felt that there was an urge from community to have concrete suggestions on PDPs and they felt like getting the ideas going. And that's not a I can please do these five PDPs. It's just that here are some ideas you can take maybe as best practices, maybe as PDPs or something like that. I'll just make this disclosure that I'm part of their advisory committee, advisory group. So, that's why I had a little bit of a head notion, idea about this paper, but it wasn't yet to be shared. But again, the idea was just to get the conversation going.

Last point about the document, I think it's great. We had yesterday at the Council session, a quick list of priorities for council. And it's exactly what Rafik was saying, right? Like maybe we can start with that document, have a side one going, add reports that could support the ideas, some of the things we have been thinking about, previous positions, comments and things like that. So maybe let's work with the Council priorities because it's also helpful for us councilors and incoming councilors in that way. So, that's it.

RAFIK DAMAK

Thanks, Bruna. Just to be clear, guys, all you're sharing enthusiastically about all this idea, but I will tell you later on to

work on this. So, we'll try to make some kind of readjustment since we got Xavier right now. We'll maybe pause here and then we will resume later the discussion. So please try to take notes or any other comments or input you want to share because we will resume the discussion on this. Just since we want to discuss maybe the budget and I'm not sure, maybe it will take us just 20 minutes and then we can come back to the topic just to be sure. Any comment before we go? Okay. Xavier.

XAVIER CALVEZ

Thank you, Rafik. Thank you, everyone. Hello. And thank you for the opportunity to come and speak. Rafik was kind to take on the offer that I made to all the SO and ACs to take a few minutes to speak about the FY26 Budget. So, to put things in context, the fiscal year of ICANN, which is the letters FY here, starts in July and finishes in June of the following year. So FY26 is the fiscal year that starts in two weeks from now and that finishes in a year and two weeks from now. And therefore, this is our upcoming year of planning and a budget is adopted as every year for every upcoming year. And the budget for FY26 was adopted by the Board early May.

Many of you know that we produce a draft budget that is submitted for public comment. It's usually submitted for public comment around mid-December, prior to the fiscal year to which it applies. Therefore, the FY26 budget was published for public comment in December 2024, and it was published for public comment for 60 days, which is probably the longest period of public comment we

offer, which is probably partially driven by the fact that there's a lot of information.

So, that's one of the documents that Kathy prints in the plane and for the plane ride. It used to be a 250-page document, so that's a heavy printout to bring in the plane, and that's an illustration of a lot of information brought to your attention, and it's not easy. On top of that, it's information that many of you do not deal with on a very regular basis, so it is not easy and we completely understand it. I'll make a comment on why so much information.

Over the years, we have tried to provide more and more information for the purpose of transparency with the understanding that overloading people with information is not transparency. And also, making it as clear as possible for the broadest possible understanding is an objective, and it's a constant challenge, but that we're aware of, that we try to make attempts to simplify. So, for example, this budget contains a summary that is about 15 pages of the 250 pages, so it's attempting to provide a summary of that fuller information for an easier consumption.

We've received feedback from a few of your colleagues as well that a one-or-two-pager would be also helpful, so we're going to try to do that. It's not very difficult, just a bit more summarization work to do, but we are constantly trying to pay attention to that aspect of simplicity and short information for everyone to be able to consider, knowing that which is completely natural. We have

people who will say, I want a one-page summary, but I also want to be able to look at that detail, and that's fine, that's okay. We just need to have various tools that allow everyone to see as little as they want and as much as they would like at the same time.

So, that information was produced in a draft form for public comment mid-December. The public comment finished late February. We received a lot of comments and a lot of valid comments. Generally speaking, a lot of comments that support and welcome the information presented. And the Board considered the final draft, the final budget early May. I'm going back to the timeline to explain why we actually had changes between the draft published for public comment and the Board-adopted plan.

Why is because the time frame between the drafting of the plan and the adoption of the plan covers a bit more than six or seven months. A lot can happen in six or seven months, and it's fine. We have witnessed during that period of time a little bit of a change in trends for our funding sources. We have seen continuing trends of slightly higher registrations of the new gTLDs. They're 13 years new, so at some point they're going to become older gTLDs, but right now they're still new gTLDs. And also, slightly less decrease of the domain name registrations in the legacy TLDs. All that is driving our funding to be a bit higher this fiscal year 2025 than it was planned for in 2025. And we also think that our funding in 2026 will be also a bit higher than what we had planned for.

With that knowledge, and because it was sufficiently significant to warrant being reflected, we have therefore changed the funding assumption that is included in the final adopted Board plan versus the draft. Similarly, there's a few expense items that we have also adjusted to be able to "true up" to the most recent view and understanding and assumption the numbers of '26. As a result of all that, I'll summarize.

We had planned for funding that was going to be decreasing year-on-year from 2025 to 2026. We had planned for a FY26 funding of \$142 million for the organization, and we changed that back to \$150 million, so an increase of \$8 million. And correlatively, expenses have also been adjusted from \$142 million to \$150 million as well. So, it's still a balanced budget, but with a little bit higher funding and a little bit higher expenses than we had originally planned. I'll come to you, Kathy, in just one second.

The reason that I'm coming to you to talk about it is because when we have developed that new version of the plan, we organized webinars to inform the community about it. We posted a blog to inform the community about it. But of course, the time frame within which those changes have occurred is relatively short prior to the Board adoption. What we also do is we publish ahead of the Board adoption the new budget that will be submitted to the Board. That happened in the week prior to the Board adopting. All that happened in a very short time frame.

And of course, as a result, you all know this better than me, it's easy or not to be aware of it with a webinar, with a blog. And not everyone is checking every day what's happened on ICANN's website, as I'm sure you would attest. So, inevitably, it's logical, it's natural, and it's not our intention, but there's been quite a few community members who were not aware of those changes. For example, the ccNSO reached out to us and said, we didn't understand that there were changes, we were not aware of it. And we reacted by having a meeting with them and explained the changes and explained the process.

Out of this experience, we all agreed when we discussed with the ccNSO that if it would occur again that there are visible changes to a document, any document, but in this case, planning documents, where there would be changes after a public comment period has occurred of a document that's significant, we would develop a specific process to communicate about the changes. Because what we've done was with a genuine intention to be transparent. But of course, it's difficult to reach out to everyone, particularly in a short timeframe like this, and on a topic that may not be on everybody's radar screen at every minute of the day.

Thanks to that interaction, we are in the process of developing a proposed process of information of the community when there are changes to the planning documents after public comment, so that there's the most broad possible transparency about what those changes are. In this case, these changes are helpful. It's a bit more resources for ICANN, and therefore a bit more resources in support

of the mission. It's all welcome. There's no issue with making those changes. There's no issue with communicating those changes. We simply need to do it in the most efficient manner. Kathy.

KATHY KLEIMAN

Yeah, thank you for explaining that. I think the changes will make a difference. People will understand. But my question is, how are you spending the \$8 million and how much of it is coming directly to the Non-Commercial Stakeholder Group?

XAVIER CALVEZ

I'll come right away to your question. Just showing for you here something just so that you have something in mind. This diagram shows ICANN's funding over several years. Five years. The very right column is next year's projections. That was \$142 million. It's now \$150 million, as I just mentioned. The next column on the left is the current year expectation, which is finishing in two weeks from now. It's also \$150 million. We're probably a little bit north of that. And I just wanted you to have a quick visibility that our funding has basically been stable for the past five years, or over that five-year period. Just a fact for you guys to know, very stable.

Next slide. We'll go to expenses so that I can address Kathy's question. Here also an expense trend. This is nearly 10 years. It's about 10 years of view. I won't go into details. There's been the pre-pandemic period, very stable level of expenses. The pandemic period during which our expenses went down because we all didn't

travel. And travel is a significant expense for ICANN. Resumption of travel in '23 expenses have increased. And also, the new gTLD program preparation has been launching in those years. So, those are the factors of expenses on the trend line.

Next slide. We'll get to Kathy's question. So, this diagram is trying to explain what changed between the draft budget and the final budget. And that is Kathy's question. I'll start simply by explaining something from what was assumed in the draft budget. So, in the draft budget, when we developed it, many assumptions went into that, of course. But one of the assumptions was that our funding would decrease from FY25 to FY26. And we are not seeing any more of this trend to occur.

So, when we saw that trend or when we believe that trend existed when we developed the budget towards the end of last year, we also made the assumption that we needed to continue decreasing our costs from FY25, which have already started in FY24. And I apologize for the complexity. You should expect to hear numbers from me. FY24 to FY25, we decreased our costs by approximately \$12 million, by approximately 8%. We were also planning to reduce further our costs from FY25 to FY26, because we expected our funding to be lower in FY26 than in FY25. That trend has changed a little bit and is now not decreasing, but remaining stable at the \$150 million range.

The reason why I'm explaining this is because we had therefore planned to continue reducing our costs in FY26. We have now

changed that assumption, not because we don't want in principle to continue reducing our costs, but reducing our costs would be at the cost of being able to carry out the mission as we are today. I'll give you an illustration, and I know it's going to sound a bit technical, and it's not going to go directly in the direction that Kathy was asking about.

But for example, last year we had planned to continue rationalizing our activities and potentially not replacing potential departures of employees who would decide to leave the organization and try to find ways to not replace them. So, in order to reduce our costs, we had also planned for lower costs of meetings than we are also seeing or being projected at the moment. Part of our challenge when planning, which is completely natural and not an issue, is that, for example, we didn't know where we were going to be having our ICANN meetings at the time we planned. Now we know.

And that's been also an element that has led to adjustments, is because we are actually going to go to locations where the cost of the meetings is going to be a bit higher than what we were originally thinking would be the case. Oman and Mumbai are, on average, a bit higher cost for an ICANN meeting, whether due to travel costs. That's simply considering the distribution of our participants going to Oman or going to Mumbai is, on average, a bit more expensive than going to other places. And the local costs may be also sometimes higher. In this case, our meetings costs are higher by about a million and a half than what we thought they

would be. And we're acknowledging that and we're adjusting that. That's a very typical factual change that we have reflected.

We have also adjusted our headcount projections to the current headcount. So, it looks like it's an increase, but we had assumed a continuous decrease of our headcount in the draft plan. We're now maintaining the current headcount assumption in our draft plans. And I want to flag for you from a headcount standpoint, headcount changes every day. There are people coming every day. When I say every day, I shouldn't say it like that. On an ongoing basis, people departing the organization on an ongoing basis, like in any organization across the world. So, projections are not accurate to the position, to the person, but we try to make assumptions of trends of growth or stability or decrease.

So, those are the main drivers for the adjustment to the plan that we made. And to be fair to Kathy's question, the level of detail of the adjustments that we've made is not allowing us to say, well, this specific SO is going to get a little bit more of this or a little bit less of that. You can see, for example, ICANN meetings is an activity that "benefits" everyone who participates. So, I don't have a very specific answer there's going to be this much dollars specifically on the NCSG. Please, Kathy.

RAFIK DAMAK

Okay. Thanks, Xavier, for this explanation. So, my point here is not necessarily about the changes, but to think ahead in particular for the next fiscal year and the budget process. It's challenging for us

as NCSG to follow and to participate effectively. And so, that's why one thing we are trying to do is to reactivate our financial committee because we want to have people that will be tasked to work on this. So, we are preparing. And so, this is something maybe we need to help here, like more interaction with the finance team to help us to understand. Because not necessarily we need to review the whole budget, but we will focus on some of the area of interest for us.

So, maybe we need some support, something we can start the dialogue on this, if possible, because I understand different parts of the committee have different needs. I mean, we are not like the ccNSO. For us, probably our focus is it will be about the policy and also how to ensure our participation in ICANN. So, maybe those areas of interest. So, this is something if we can follow up and work on that.

Other more practical matter, we know that the additional budget request process disappeared a few years ago, but we would like to know what is now the venue if we have any request in terms of budget for an activity or anything we believe it's worthy to work on. And so, that's we want really that clarification to get the specific about in terms of process. What I understood but want to be sure here is that we can use the budget process when we have discussion to do so, like maybe during our comment and so on, but we would like more clarification. So, those are the two points. It's how to help us to engage in this process and to start the dialogue. And the other more practical, if we think there is something we

need funding or a project or any area is how we can do that during the process.

XAVIER CALVEZ

Thank you. I'll start by the second question and come back to the first afterwards. So, Rafik is referring to a process that used to exist that we created a long time ago of enabling a separate process at adjacent to the planning process for community organizations to make specific requests of funding for specific activities, usually new activities in a little bit pilot fashion, a little bit trial fashion. This process was popular, then became less popular and so a few years ago, we "merged" it in the existing ongoing planning process.

So, the answer to Rafik's question is simply that if you have a request for an activity that you would like to see being carried out that has a cost and therefore a need for funding, the place to formulate it and submit it is the public comment process that we make available on the basis of the draft plans. That's the one that has been happening about mid-December for about 60 days. And that offers a draft plan. If you submit during that public comment period, the description of an activity with a purpose, an outcome, and an estimated cost as a request, we can then consider it there, take it into account, make a decision on incorporating it or not potentially, and then communicate that back to you prior to the end of the process where the Board will consider the change.

So, that's the venue to do that. That's the time frame. And hopefully, it's a time frame that's relatively significant of about two

months to be able to formulate this type of request. Of course, you can work ahead of that time if you would like on the request. You don't have to wait for that period of time. But this is the time to submit it formally. And because it is a formal submission, then it's a formal consideration. It's visible to the rest of the community, which is part of benefit of doing that in that public comment process. It's visible to the rest of the community. We go very strictly, very thoroughly, comment by comment to make sure we address every single one of them. And it's visible to the Board. The Board Finance Committee pays particular attention to checking the comments that have been submitted during the public comment process. So, that's the answer to the second question.

Your first point, we absolutely very much welcome any form of focus that you would like to be able to put on the planning process or the budgeting process. And we want to be able to support it. Every of the community organizations are different from each other. The ccNSO that I was mentioning earlier has had a very longstanding specific committee on it, which has been consistently providing comments every year. The GNSO had a group a few years ago that started, worked for a few years, then stopped. I'm trying to resurrect it with them.

But I absolutely want to, this is the opportunity of these types of conversations to do exactly that, is I would absolutely love that we can work together to find the best way that suits your community to pay attention to this.

I completely understand that it's challenging both in terms of bandwidth and also in terms of content and therefore that we should absolutely focus in any given group on the interest of that group. And if we know that a little bit and can develop that scope of interest for your organization, we can then also tailor the content that we produce and the mode of interaction to suit your organization. And we're absolutely willing and desirable to be able to do that. So, I very much welcome the opportunity. I can only congratulate you in your interest and we absolutely want to support you in being successful in that endeavor.

It doesn't have to be huge. It can be very narrow. It can be very shallow in terms of the level of depth in which we go. It's just what suits your organization. I simply want to say sometimes you don't know what you don't know. So, we will want to offer visibility at a high level on a little bit everything and then you can pick and choose what you look at in the depth within which you want to look at.

I'll give you an example of something very narrow and very deep that I answered to a community member that I met in the hallway yesterday. He wanted to understand travel funding across the entire organization. Well, I sent him the file. It's page 23 and 24 of that file, and I sent him the link and he can now look at it. That may be of interest to your organization as well or any other topic on a more specific type of activity, new gTLD program or DNS abuse, etc. So just throwing ideas but that's absolutely something we want to

support. We leave it always at the initiative of any organization. You're offering up the idea. Very happy to help.

KATHY KLEIMAN

I just wanted to say thank you. And to my question, thank you for addressing it and it sounds like it takes a little bit of the pressure off the meetings. I know we were talking about cutting a meeting. Just so everyone knows, we used to have four meetings a year. That was a long time ago. Now we have three meetings a year. The idea of going down to two meetings a year and doing one virtually, hopefully it takes a little of the pressure off of that. So, thank you and thank you for being with us today and laying all this out.

TAPANI TARVAINEN

Just a quick one, a little detail. You mentioned that there's a big difference in the costs on the meetings depending on the location. I'd be a bit curious to see how big the range is. And also noting that ICANN86 has not been announced yet. So how did you budget for that?

XAVIER CALVEZ

Thank you. So very quickly, I would say up to the immediate coming out of the pandemic, the largest meetings were cost of about \$4.5 million. With the exception of Singapore, which was a \$5 million-meeting a while back. But Singapore is a relatively expensive location for an ICANN meeting and was a little bit isolated. Now our range, I have somewhere a schedule that shows

the meetings costs across various locations. Now the range of meetings cost is about between \$4.5 million at the low end to five and \$5 million at the high end. I should say \$6 million dollars at the high end because the Mumbai meeting may be reaching that.

So, the costs have been evolving in logically inflation, etc., but post-pandemic, there's an extremely high demand across the world across any organization, company to have interactions in meeting settings. So, the demand on venues is very high. The venues do not lack clients. They tell us, no, we're busy. Come back next year. It's difficult. There's demand for meetings and a lot more demands than there is offer on the market. So, that's what drives the higher costs that we are seeing at the moment. So, the range is, to be fair, is going to be from \$4.5 million to \$6 million for the highest. The policy meetings like this one, which has a bit less content or less sessions are on the cheaper end usually. The AGM, which is the October-November meetings, is on the higher end. That's the new normal, it seems.

RAFIK DAMAK

Thanks, Xavier. We are looking forward to more of the interaction. We are trying to plan for this. We know it's important, but previously, it's just when the budget came and we tried to figure out how to respond, but that's why we said we reactivated the financial committee. We tried to get the volunteers to focus on this. So, we'll continue maybe after Prague to see how we can operationalize this. And knowing about the timeline, I hope we will

be prepared in much better shape for the next fiscal year, and yeah, think about what we can request as funding and so on. So, thanks again for joining us today, and looking forward for more interaction and dialogue.

XAVIER CALVEZ

Thank you. I have made a note to reach out to you so that we can take the next steps on that. So, thank you very much for the opportunity to come. Thank you.

RAFIK DAMAK

Yes, okay. So now we, I believe, just to time check, we have 30 minutes left. So, we can cover, we can resume. That was the third agenda item, and I think it's connected to the fourth agenda item. So, we were discussing about comment, your comment, your suggestion about the session we had, the joint meetings, how we can improve, how maybe we can prepare for the next meeting. So, I hope that you have several suggestions. We'll take that into account. Because I can tell you just after this Prague meeting, Andrea and I will already start the planning for Oman. So, the better you can give us your suggestion, that will be helpful.

What I can share, there are some points that we're already working on. So, it's not just related to the ICANN meeting itself, but we will have our readout in a few weeks just after this. I will send you email to ask for who can speak, and we will try also to get some guests. Another suggestion also I got during this meeting is we will try to

have a session or a meeting with the Fellows on NextGen. We'll try to arrange that.

Usually our interaction, either it's informal or we join them in their newcomer session, but we'll try to have our own meeting with them. So, we'll try to figure out how we'll do that. So just to share with you this what we are planning for, at least starting from Oman. Okay, seeing that, let's see if there is any comment, input, suggestion, idea, recommendation, complaint too. If you have any concern, you can do that. Yes, Kathy.

KATHY KLEIMAN

Rafik, I was wondering if you could tell us about the new fellowship program, not the ICANN Fellows' program, but I understand that there's a fellowship program that we're doing in conjunction with PIR, and I didn't know about it. Thank you.

RAFIK DAMAK

Thanks, Kathy. I think that was going to be as AOB from Pedro, but yeah, Pedro can share more about the fellowship.

PEDRO LANA

So after, I think, two weeks after this meeting, we will be launching how the selection process will be, like the call for applications for the short-term NCSG policy fellowship. And the objective of having this fellowship is having someone who is actually receiving some resources from NCSG to assist on activities that will be pointed out

as priorities or things that we really need the help from the community, from the leadership. For example, listing what are our policy priorities for the next year, helping with research in some writing of public comments, help in planning. But it's really important to note that this person will be assisting. It's not that she or he will be leading the efforts. It's important that we, the volunteers, still are active and still are doing the most important parts of our activities. And I don't know if there's anything else I should add. I think, should I explain the selective process or no need for that?

RAFIK DAMAK

I think the most important, just to give the background and the purpose. So, I cannot get credit for this because it was something going on even before I started as a chair. So, I just picked up and Pedro was leading this since the beginning, working on the proposal and so on. But as you shared, the ideas we got-- I also we need to explain the most important background that we have that relation with PIR for many years, supporting us, but also there is a change in what they want us, they want to support us. So, it's more, they want really to support us on something really related to policy, so they can support our activity, our involvement in policy matters.

So, the kind of change even in term of project, and this is the first, we work it with Agis Francis from the PIR to shape, to understand what they think that should be not saying the outline, but the framework of what they will support us. And the idea here is we

start with this policy follow, we'll do the research and helping us in turn to summarize position and so on, we will see how it works. But based on that, we'll also see the next steps if we want to get funding, it's up to us if we want to get funding from PIR, what projects we want to support.

I can say that there is some changes. There is no so much about supporting like travel or event per se, but it's more like what they think, it's more substance like about our involvement and how we can participate it effectively. So, it's also put more we have to be accountable in how we are spending those money, so it's a lot of learning for us. So just to point, we will share also with the policy committee, so they will have an idea what's coming. And we have to start the process as soon as possible because we have time window like eight months and we will report how things are going and we will see if this initiative helping us or not and based on that we will wait for the next steps. Yes, Pedro.

PEDRO LANA

An important part of this project right now is that's a pilot project and it would be really interesting and really helpful to have all the leadership involved because it has a broad scope right now and we are going to test to see what's working, what's really useful, what's not, so the next projects if we decided it would be good to have similar projects in the future, we can narrow it down to those things that were really working out with the fellowship.

RAFIK DAMAK

Just any question or comment on this? We're planning to discuss about it later, but yeah. We will share more details. We have been working on this but we will share more details and it's coming soon. Yeah. Do we want to add something or? Okay. Back to the agenda. Yeah. Are you happy everything, no concern? Just to say in term of planning that I'm trying to do here and I was working with others like building a skeleton of the session we have and also to make it easier, because I'm not going to last for too long here. Maybe October 2026 that will be end of my term and I would like really to prepare for the next chair in particular. We make it quite easier and smooth to schedule at least to plan for the ICANN meeting so try to have that skeleton checklist.

But the most important is really to see if that what we have is it responding to our needs, you think it's too much, it's too little, how we can improve our joint meetings. And the point about joint meetings that arises this time is not just thinking about the next ICANN meeting but maybe we'll have intersessional with them and some of the topics so we need to prepare for that. Again, anything maybe we are missing here or we need to work on, other than about the preparation but anything else? Yes, Kathy.

KATHY KLEIMAN

Sure. First you're never allowed to leave Rafik, you need to be chair forever. On a different note, we're in AOB now, can I share something? It has to do with something we've been working on for

a long time the last few years is applicant support, and I wanted to make sure everyone had visited, there's a little booth, new gTLD booth, please visit it. First they're giving out like a cool little swag little gift thing, plastic thing but it has three—I wanted to ask everybody to bring these home, bring multiple copies home if you want—three really important things, I want to read you the title.

Again, this is the New gTLD Program Next Round. Harness the power of the internet with the generic top-level domains. We asked them to create an overview of the new gTLD program that's very readable that we could give to people in our communities, they did it. Assistance for new gTLD candidates for groups coming in that don't have all the expertise to write an application but want a new gTLD or at least want to think about it. This outlines the Applicant Support Program. It's the first time we're seeing it for the general public.

And then remember that thing called non-financial support where ICANN was going to make it cheaper for anybody who's accepted to the Applicant Support Program to pay less for their application but we said that wasn't enough. We said once you're in the program, you have to write the application and you're going to need technical support, business support, legal support. We were all over, our councilors were all over those three words and here it is. And this makes me so happy. Becoming a pro bono professional service provider or mentor. ICANN's going to create navigators

between the people who are providing legal advice and technical advice and operational advice. This is the navigators.

Of course, we're the navigators too but that's why as navigators for our community, you need these three pieces of paper so go get them. And this is our work. This is our work now coming to fruition and ICANN is doing what we asked them to do many times and they're doing it because we together really worked on that. So, congratulations guys.

RAFIK DAMAK

Thanks Kathy. Okay. We were not really in the AOB, but I guess it's more wrapping up the wrap-up session. Taking into account we have 20 minutes. I think again maybe we got most of the comment but still people can share later on maybe in the mailing list and we can discuss more. So, I think just maybe also for next steps we get most like some of today like about the preparation, some briefing but also we have with the joint session and the last one maybe with Xavier.

So, what we'll do here, we can maybe in AOB or it's open discussion but just to take an opportunity. I said we want to have in future the session with the NextGen and Fellows, but since I see some of them with us today and I hope we didn't bore them and they didn't get tired of my voice, just to give them opportunity to, if they want to introduce themselves and share their thoughts. Sophia, I'm looking at you.

SOPHIEATAWONGA LONGWE Hi. I'm Sophia and I'm part of the NextGen cohort and I'm based in Berlin, Germany. I'm working in civil society, so with Wikimedia Germany. I'm really interested in joining the NCSG. So very happy to be here for the first time.

JOSE RENATO LARANJEIRA DE PEREIRA Hello, everyone. My name is José Renato, also NextGen, doing a PhD in Bonn but also have some background in civil societies in Brazil. Yeah, for me it was great to be here. I could see how the dynamic works, still understanding better the agenda like what are you guys focusing on. So, it was very good to be in the wrap-up to see like what are the next steps. But yeah, looking forward to following you guys more in the future and maybe already living here and going to get into the mail list. Yeah, thank you very much.

LAILA LORENZON Hi, everyone. I'm Laila, also from NextGen, from Brazil but currently based in Paris. Just finished a master's in digital humanities. And yeah, I just want to check on what they said, it's very interesting to be here, see how it works and practice after doing a lot of modules online about how ICANN works. So, it's very nice to see it working. And yeah, just looking forward to see how I can be more engaged and help out. Thanks.

MASSIOUDATH BANKOLE

Good morning. I'm Massioudath Bankole. I am a student in cyber security at ECE Paris and I'm in NextGen. I'm proud of the experience that I got here, so I just want to thank the organization. Thank you.

RAFIK DAMAK

Thank you for joining us and speaking. So maybe just since introduction and so on, but also good opportunity since we have just had our election and we got some of our councilors leaving like Manju and Tomslin, that will be the case in Oman. We're going to miss you guys. But also, we get our new incoming councilor, at least we have Tapani with us. I think Ben is with us I believe in the Zoom. But yeah, just to introduce us, to introduce our incoming councilor and also to thank-- This is the first time, don't worry we will do some farewell in Oman. Anyway, just it's open and yeah, good. Anything else?

PEDRO LANA

Yes. Just a brief point about the SSAC meeting we had. It was a really good interaction and we talked about having some follow-ups with them. So, it would be nice to have them like in the next two weeks, three weeks just to keep the conversation going because I thought that particularity was very productive one.

RAFIK DAMAK

Don't worry, Pedro, homework is coming. So, that's why I insisted earlier about next steps and action items, we will have to follow up

because it's just not-- Like SSAC, first time really to meet with them and we need to take their offer, they want more discussion and we need to prepare if we will have some intersessional call with them. Yes, Bruna.

BRUNA SANTOS

Bruna for the record again. Just a reminder about the session that Farzaneh and Michaela are organizing this afternoon at 15:30, Human Rights Impact Assessments, Navigating Disclosure of Domain Name Registrant Data. Otherwise, Farzaneh would be sad if we didn't remind you guys about it. But it's been great work by the two of them and super, with a huge onboarding from community and buy-in from many groups within ICANN. So, let's be there and show up for the great work that's been doing.

RAFIK DAMAK

Yeah, thanks Bruna for reminding me about that. Yes.

JOSE RENATO LARANJEIRA DE PEREIRA

Mentioning just one thing. So, as you guys realize I'm a newcomer and so far I cannot see any specific initiative on issues related to environmental impacts, indigenous population. So, in case you guys know of something or want to think about something in these issues, in these topics, I'd be very happy to discuss that. I don't know if there's room for it, but if there is, I would love to.

TAPANI TARVAINEN

Just on the environmental impact, there was started by NCSG some years back, Green ICANN initiative, which is not exactly active, but if you guys feel like working on that, you will be most welcome. There is a greenican.org domain, which actually incidentally I hold at the moment, but that's a side effect. Anyway, and also I trust you will apply to join NCSG formally, like today. It doesn't cost anything.

RAFIK DAMAK

Yes. If you join, you cannot leave anymore. Okay, yeah, so we have 15 minutes left, but I don't want to keep you from other priority, like having lunch. So, it was good to have this session. It's open. I hope we'll do better next time. Thanks again for joining, for making this, particularly this ICANN meeting, all the session, we had a lot of participation. I also want to mention that it's not just we had our own session or joint session, but we have also some of our representatives joining PDP working group, or also some plenary session.

I think like currently Farzaneh is in a session organized by the At-Large about DNS abuse. Michaela was representing us in the session from the Contract Party House about DNS abuse. So, there are a lot of things going on, and I want to thank everyone for doing their best for this week. So, I think that's it. Thank you, and see you soon.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]