
ICANN83 | PF – How We Meet Discussion Group
Thursday, June 12, 2025 – 15:30 to 17:00 CEST

ALPEREN EKEN

Hello and welcome to the How We Meet Discussion Group working session. My name is Alp Eken, 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.

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SALLY COSTERTON

Thank you, Alp, and welcome, everybody. I know this is the last session officially of the ICANN Prague meeting, and I'm very conscious that at half past five, there is a cocktail reception. Is it half past five or five? Yes, five. We won't run till half past five. Thank you, Jordan. So we will be very timely in our end time, and I want to thank you all for coming for what, as I say, I know is the last session. Just as a reminder for some of you who may not have been involved in this project, this is a working meeting.

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So we do have observers in the room who are not part of the working group, and we will make sure we allow 10 or 15 minutes at the end of the meeting for any observers to ask questions and make comments. But in terms of format, we will go through the final the summary from the public comment of the recommendations, and Mary will do this, and Mary will ask you those members of the working group to give your views as to are you comfortable with these recommendations, are you comfortable, do you want to add anything with the view that the outcome from this is that the working group will make a final set of recommendations to the CEO.

And they will then go back to the CEO and they will then be assessed by him and determined what he would like to implement or not. And if so, in what way? And then that will be communicated. So that's the process. I will just remind everybody what... we called it How We Meet. It was never supposed to be called How We Meet. It got called that sort of, I don't know, it sort of evolved into that. I suppose we could have called it sort of project table or something. But anyway, it got called How We Meet.

And it is quite a narrowly scoped view of, and it was a very collaborative effort between the community and the organization, designed to assess how the original 2013 public meeting strategy is being implemented, and aiming to identify just very practical options for planning and conducting meetings to enhance effectiveness and efficiency, optimizing cost efficiencies, and

supporting the evolving needs of the community, obviously, recognizing that we have changes around us.

It's intended to be a very high-level review of the implementation and it was never intended to be and is not a comprehensive review of all of the 2014 strategy. So just to take that off the table in case anybody in the room is under any misconceptions about that. So with that, I will hand over to Mary, and we'll start the work. Mary, over to you.

MARY WONG

I think I need to share the microphone with you. Ted, I'm moving your microphone. No, he just gave me side eye. Hello, everybody, I'm Mary Wong from the ICANN Staff assisting with this project. And as Sally said, this project had a very specific scope. And as she said, today we're here with the discussion group and with thanks to everyone who's come in person and online to review the outcome of the public comments that were submitted to the initial report that the group produced. You may have been at a session in Seattle which was more of an open community dialogue.

I mentioned that because that was very helpful to the group in coming up with the options that were presented for public comment. I want to also thank everyone in the community who submitted comments. We received comments from almost all of the supporting organizations and advisory committees as well as the constituent groups including all the constituent groups of the GNSO and one of the RALOs. We also had comments from

individual participants and veterans of the ICANN community. So that was really good.

And what we've prepared today, and I believe we have posted information on the session page, there's also updated documents and information on the wiki page for this discussion group on the community wiki. So you will find links. to the public comment proceeding where you can look at all the submissions that were made and you can look also at the public comment summary report which is mandatory for every public comment that we prepared on behalf of the group and published earlier in June.

So before we plunge into looking at the comments themselves, I do want to emphasize that we may not get through them all today which is all right. We do plan, and I think Alp will take us through this at the end of this meeting, to schedule at least one other meeting for the discussion group, not just to complete any unfinished business from today, but you may wish to take back some of the thinking or some of what you're hearing today back to your community groups.

What we're hoping is that the discussion today will provide enough information in the sense of what you thought of the public comments, the level of support or lack thereof, for certain options, and the staff will take that back and draft a final report that we hope to present to the discussion group to review at that time as well. We'll also build in time obviously to have a final read-through of the final report to make sure that it accurately captures what the

group believes should be put forward as final recommendations, which as Sally said will be submitted to Kurtis, as our CEO, for next steps.

And of course, we'll also publish the final report from the community. So all that to say is that today is not one and done, but hopefully we can get through quite a bit today. And on that note, Alp, if I may ask you to, and this is probably a little bit challenging to see from the back of the room, but hopefully if you've followed this project, what you see in the left column should be more or less familiar we will go through it. And I think the best way to do this, I'll explain what this table is. This was prepared by Staff to assist in this discussion.

In the first column on the left, in running sequence, is all the options that were put forward for public comment. In the second column, it is a really rough and very brief summary overall of much of the feedback that we gleaned from all the comments received. You will also see that we've moving to the third, fourth and fifth columns. In the fourth and fifth columns you will see an indication of how much support there was for that particular option in terms of not just the number of contributors but who they were, which were the SO/AC groups, which were individuals.

And in column three, we've tried to aggregate that to generally gauge was there some support or not for that particular option. And in the final column, that is something that we've tried to track since day one of this project, which is whether any of these ideas or

options would require a change to the 2014 meeting strategy. If so, what that looks like. If not, is that something that we can carry forward to implementation relatively easily? So for those who can't read the table, hopefully at least you know what it's like.

And before I get started into the first option, may I ask members of the discussion group if you had any questions or comments at this time? I guess everybody wants to look at the public comments. Okay, so let's go. So the first one, Option 1.1, we did do the public comments as what we call a targeted proceeding. So these were the questions that were asked, and as we know, some submitters submit on behalf of the group. So we wanted to make it clear that if you were submitting on behalf of the group, you would indicate as such. The first question or option was shortening the community forum by a day.

The current practice is that we have a six-day community forum, typically around March of each calendar year, and so shortening the forum by a day would bring that to five. If you looked at the initial report, there's some detail in there about what that would look like, what that would entail. Potentially, we do not believe this would require a change to the meeting strategy because if you go back and look at the text of the meeting strategy, even though our practice is to have a six-day community forum, the strategy actually says up to a certain number of days.

So you see here the level of support, that we do have a vast majority of commenters supported shortening the forum by a day. There

were some in opposition, and I won't read the summary, but I will ask the group, A, if you think that this is enough support for you to feel comfortable recommending that we go forward with the proposal that the Community Forum be shortened by a day. And I'll note here that we've also said potentially this could be implementable for the Next Community Forum, which is ICANN85. Jonathan.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Just a quick thought, and I didn't get my hand up quick enough before we started getting specific. But in looking at the yes's and no's, does it make sense for us to weight them somehow? Because right now in those counts, the total is giving the same weight to an SO/AC as it does to an individual in the total count. And that seems off somehow to me.

MARY WONG

Thank you for raising the question. I will say from the Staff side, obviously, we do not feel comfortable doing so. We did want to highlight for you where those comments came from, the formal ICANN community structures. So I would suggest that that is a topic that perhaps the rest of the discussion group might want to voice your opinion on if you have one.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Good, I get to be myself again. Let's talk reviews.

MARY WONG

Not at 15.30 on a Thursday, on the last day of a public policy forum. Would this be something that the group wants to think on for a little bit? And I don't mean for the next five minutes or so. It might be something you want to take back to your groups. I don't see this as preventing us from having a discussion. Like I said, we will have other opportunities to meet, and if in the course of discussion with your groups, you come back and you say, well, you know, actually seeing this is what my group thinks, going back to that particular option, I now have a different view.

I think that's perfectly logical and open. So we'll make a note, Jonathan, of that question. We'll put a reminder out to the mailing list and hopefully by the time we have our next call, we will have an answer as to how we want to treat some of these submissions. So for shortening the community forum by a day, going by current practice, that would be five. Potentially doable as early as ICANN85. Are there any comments, thoughts, support, no support?

Yes, comments. No, no, I'm sorry. Yes, I should have said, we're not voting. It's simply a comment from the group, like I said, to help us in preparing a proposed final version of the report for the group to look at our next meeting. Okay. Let's move on. There'll be other opportunities, I just feel a little uncomfortable that this might turn to be a monologue, but thank you, Jonathan.

JONATHAN ZUCK

I can always be counted on, Mary. This has been a very interesting exercise for us, and Sally and Mary, thanks for organizing it and pulling us across the finish line a little bit. But it's sort of, in its original incarnation, it was meant to be a kind of a revisiting of meeting strategy generally, and I think we came out of this thinking that that still needs to take place because we ended up focusing more on the savings aspect of it, I think, than we all thought that we would.

And so then I wonder, as we go through this graph, would other people in this room benefit from knowing what the savings is associated with these items in broad terms to get a sense of worthiness of it as opposed to something we could do, which is sort of the way it's presented here? I wonder if it makes sense to give weight to these things based on, wow, that's a lot of bang for the buck, or that's not really, or something. Is there some way to indicate that in this table to help with people's decision making? Just a thought.

MARY WONG

Well, I invite comments from others. What I'll say from the Staff perspective is, a lot of this is also about efficiencies and improvements that hopefully aid in the efficiencies, it's not just about costs. In that regard, we do have the data and information, and that was published, I think, as part of the initial report. It's also on the Wiki page. Alp, you had a hand up. Is there someone on Zoom?

ALPEREN EKEN

We have Lawrence on Zoom. He has a hand up. Lawrence, please unmute.

LAWRENCE
ROBERTS

OLAWALE- Yes, thank you. So Mary has touched on the question or the rider I wanted to bring up to Jonathan's question in the sense that we have over the time constantly hammered on the fact that this isn't about reducing cost. So it will be nice to have highlighted the efficiencies that will be brought in by these particular decisions. Some of us are still of the opinion that we might be struggling with new challenges by having to reduce the duration of meetings so we might need to have a broader view of, aside from the cost savings, the other advantage for having to go the route.

SALLY COSTERTON

Thank you, Lawrence. That's a very good observation. So we're doing something slightly unusual here, we're trying to have a working meeting with an audience. And I know we do that sometimes at ICANN meetings, but not always. And also, this is a topic, and when we were in Seattle, we just had an open discussion. So I just want to differentiate between those two things.

So what I'm taking here, Lawrence, and also from your comments, Jonathan, as a suggestion, is that as we go to the next stage and we will update this document with, and we will reinsert the financial savings, the efficiency savings, and the trade-offs, all of which went

into the public comment accompanying documents, but now we'll bring it back together again so that it's a complete document.

And there's a correlation between what... because obviously the people who contributed to the public comment did see those things and did discuss them, and then as a result of that came out to the decisions, the recommendations they made in the public comment. But the whole community hasn't seen that, which is what you're saying, Jonathan, I think.

So I would suggest that we, as the staff, we take it away, put it, if you like, back together so that the working group then reviews the whole product in our final call. And that then becomes the sort of the final report, if that makes sense. And it may or may not affect the final recommendations to your point about the voting structure. But I think that's that that's a really helpful piece of input. So we'll do that and we'll do that for the next call. Thank you.

JODI ANDERSSON

Thanks Mary. Jodi Andersson, .NZ. I'm here as one of the ccNSO people. I think just to clarify what we're here for today, we're sort of going through this table and it feels to me like we are just... that there's a summary of the submissions that have come in, we're looking at them, we're making sure that we're all clear of which submissions have come in, how they've fallen, and that we're happy with this document as a summary of the submissions, because then you're going to go away and do a final report, which

as you say Sally, is bringing everything else back in, and that will enable this group to then look at some recommendations, and then there will be some decisions made on those recommendations and presumably more information about which of those will be implemented and how. Is that right?

So really what I want to get to is that today we're not necessarily looking at this and making decisions about what to recommend. We are just looking at this to make sure that it properly reflects the information we've got so far. Is that what we're doing here today?

SALLY COSTERTON

Yeah, the first part is right, and the second part, I just want to be a bit, but thank you so much for doing that, that's really helpful. So, yes, the purpose for today, which is why we could have had a private room with a private meeting and no observers, but we thought, well, we're at an ICANN meeting, why would we do that, really? But it's a little bit, as I said, a little bit confusing, it's exactly that.

This is really quite a quick session for us to just if you want to look at it that way, to say, look, we're getting back together again because we haven't seen each other for a while, this is what the public comments said, this is where we are now, exactly right, with a view that that we as i say bring back together this which is the result of the public comment, we have a call with you after this with the working group to say, okay, does this make sense, does this

resonate with what you feel, and can we as a group agree on some final recommendations that we the group send back to the CEO?

So the bit that I would change is that the implementation of it will then go to the CEO. But absolutely, the group needs the time to have one call, maybe two calls, and actually on the agenda you can see we thought we may need two more calls to do that so that you aren't being pressurized at all into doing that today.

So I'm sorry if that's a bit repetitive, but I want to thank you for raising it because yes, so today's meeting should be relatively straightforward. It's really more about you're looking at this and going, hey that doesn't make sense, I don't know why it's why was it like that, or this is feedback that i didn't expect to see, more that sort of thing. Does that help? Thank you.

JODI ANDERSSON

Thank you. Yes, that's clear. And I think if that's the case, then that next call or two calls are going to be potentially where the rubber hits the road on this the questions about how we weight things because you've got 16 for, six against what are we going to recommend. Yeah, thank you.

MARY WONG

Thank you, Sally, thank you, Jodi, for that clarification. So if we move on, I'd like to take the next three rows together because they really are I guess operational improvements to my point earlier about efficiencies and even with a reduced duration of community

forum still getting the work done because that is still and always will be the priority. So again, for the benefit of those who have given up on squinting, the first one is about scheduling.

Typically, at the community forum, obviously we have a public forum, the custom is to have it at the end of the meeting. The idea here is to literally use what we call the big room all on the same day, so that you'll have the welcome ceremony which is always at the beginning as a custom, as well as other sessions where there is high attendance, like the executive Q&A session, to move the public forum and the geopolitical forum to that same day. And that's an efficiency as well as a cost question, but also, I would dare say, it is a scheduling assistance question, because then that becomes predictable and each group can schedule as they wish against those things.

And for this one, does not require change to the meeting strategy, is easily implementable. There was substantial, I'd say significant support for this. Similarly for the next one, again no change to the meeting strategy, implementable, strong support.

Again, about scheduling, and it is about scheduling community wrap-ups to the end of the fifth and final day. Lastly for this point, and this is something that may be of interest to those who have not been following the discussions, it is part of the ongoing work that the Board has done with the community to increase as well as improve the interactions between the Board and the community,

particularly to optimize the time that we have at ICANN public meetings to enhance those interactions.

So the suggestion here is to add a new Board community engagement session obviously open to everyone to discuss issues of broad common interest so that the Board is not going from group to group discussing the same issue with each group and then others in the community have to follow along seven different discussions. Fairly strong support there. So I open the floor now to comments from the discussion group. Okay. We are looking at 1.2a, 1.2b, and 1.2c.

So if the discussion group members are comfortable that this summarizes the comments that we received, again, we will prepare the report for your review, the proposed final report, and we will discuss this with a view to hopefully reaching a decision on the next call. But Alp, I believe we have a discussion group member online.

ALPEREN EKEN

Yes, Lawrence, please.

LAWRENCE
ROBERTS

OLAWALE- Thank you. With regards the third item around the Board engagement with different aspects of the community, I am a bit surprised at this. Maybe the understanding isn't so clear because like when you started off the discussion, Mary, we said we're introducing a new feature where the Board interacts across community, but then again went back to that statement where it

implies that this will be replacing the constituency and stakeholder groups interaction with the Board.

That's where I believe we need to clearly get community to understand what the intention is because we have different groups come with different requests and have different agendas and different expectations from the Board, and I believe that the interactions with the Board-- this also is a very important feature where community gets to express what their expectations or what their intentions are Board and such.

If we are now collapsing those little structures of engagement into one big forum, it might be nice to understand what nature that will take, will it still be such that the individual groups, the stakeholder groups will still be able to bring their specific request to the Board, or what will be the nature of that? And I think one of the things to clarify will be if we are trading one for the other.

So with this new invention or with this new platform created, does that mean that we no longer have the SGs meeting with the Board on the individual basis, or will this be done separately? And where it means that the new model is going to give way, I mean, it's going to definitely mean that we no longer have smaller meetings with the Board, then what should be or what might be the structure of this new engagement to take into consideration that different community members have different acts on the Board.

MARY WONG

Lawrence, thank you so much for raising that because I should have been very clear because I think this was actually, as you pointed out, a point of some confusion in some of the public comments that we saw. I'm very happy that the answer is that it absolutely will not replace the current modes of frequency of engagement between the Board and the individual community groups. There may be some impact on scheduling, and I see Natalie's hand is up, and she is the mistress of scheduling, not me.

So I'm going to see to it, but I just want to make it very, very clear, this is additional. It's additional to give the Board and the community more opportunities to interact on issues of common interest. Does not replace what is here because, as you also said, Lawrence, there are community groups that might want to have discussions on entirely different topics. So this is additional. And Natalie, would you like to speak to the schedule issue?

NATHALIE PEREGRINE

Thank you very much, Mary, and thank you, Lawrence, for raising that. It does need clarifying you're entirely right. So when we were discussing the potential Board improvements with the Board, they did raise that often, after having sent out the emails to each stakeholder group and constituency and advisory committee, that often the topic coming back was similar, if not the same. Obviously, they're burning topics at every ICANN meeting they are recurring, and that are priority for several community groups.

So they realized very quickly that they were sitting through at the individual SO/AC stakeholder group meetings, the battle with the Board, they were sitting through the same intros, the same background of certain given topics. And so therefore, well, hold on a minute, if three or more community groups are talking about the same topic, wouldn't it be a lot more interesting, first for the Board, and obviously also for the community groups, to actually sit in one same session with the Board and those concerned community groups and discuss that topic together.

So not only would the individual community groups get the Board input, but it also gets the insight from the other community groups. And then the Board obviously insisted very strongly that this would in no way replace the bilaterals with the community groups, but maybe it could shorten ever so slightly the discussions as a lot of the bilaterals had their length, the duration of the meeting, taken by these same discussions on the same topics.

So that would be something that would be piloted, that would be tested, but it means that the main hot topics of concern would be discussed as a group, could be then carried on, deepened discussions during the bilaterals of the Board, would in no way take away any exchange time from the community with the Board. I hope that's helpful Lawrence, and thank you so much for raising it.

MARY WONG

Thank you, Nathalie. So this may be something that when we get to the open mic portion, other members of the community might

wish to weigh in as well since this will be something that we haven't quite done before at an ICANN meeting. I'm going to propose that we reserve time if we have today, if not, we do this on our next call to discuss the next two rows, 1.3, 1.4, because these were questions in the public comment proceeding where we asked commenters if they wish to provide specific suggestions, additional feedback, ideas for how we could operationalize some of these options.

So, if that's the case, then I'm going to move on to 2.1, and I'm going to take 2.1a and 2.1b together because they are related and they are about meeting locations and lesson learned from the last point. I will emphasize now before we get into it that the meeting rotation requirement will stay. Nothing in these options, nothing what we're going to suggest or discuss changes the requirement to rotate ICANN meeting locations across ICANN's five global regions. It's more about how we do it and where we do it. So I just hope that's clear.

And that is in the notes because in that case that does not change the meeting strategy, it is implementable, it may not be implementable for a year or two because as you know, most of the meeting locations for the next few meetings have already been selected. But nevertheless 2.1a is about prioritizing meeting locations that offer economical options for travel, for venue rental, and accommodation.

What this could mean, again, is not about changing the rotation requirement, but it might mean returning to the same venue, when

we go back to a particular region, that we go back to the same venue in that region that we've used before. And relatedly, 2.1b, is there support for this idea, for returning to previous meeting locations in that region where this is feasible within the rotation requirement? Feasible meaning we know that it's economical, we know that there's plenty of flight options, there's lots of hotel availability, all price points, so on and so forth.

Quite significant support for prioritizing the meeting locations and interestingly, returning to previous locations where feasible in that region. Everybody who submitted a public comment thought this was a good idea. So again, comments, thoughts from discussion group members, please. Jodi.

JODI ANDERSSON

Thank you. Jodi, .NZ ccNSO. I just wanted to make a point that was made in our submission. It could be captured up there, but it's not clear, it's the point about intra-region accessibility, intra-region equity. The Asia Pacific region is a huge region, there are people at one end of it who if they have to fly to the other end of it, it's like going to another region or worse.

So I just want to make sure that that is captured in there. It talks about the regional diversity, it talks about accessibility, but I just want to make sure that that point is captured, and I'll make sure I bring that up again when we discuss the report. But I'm looking forward to that being captured in the report. Thank you.

SALLY COSTERTON

That's absolutely very, very good point, and that applies also because the APAC region in ICANN is huge, it's even bigger than the sort of traditionally understood APAC region, if you should put it that way. And it's stretching, you've got Istanbul is in the APAC region for example, you've got New Zealand in the APAC region. So it's just reminds not everybody might know that, but that's how we define the meeting rotation is driven by the as it was in the original policy, it's driven by the ICANN's choice of the way it defines regions.

So it's particularly challenging in the APAC region. But one could say the same actually about Africa. A lot of our African colleagues, I'm sure, would share the view that I know it's very difficult often to fly north-south in Africa, and quite often our African colleagues have to fly into Paris or into Europe and come back in. And sometimes it's difficult, it's even harder to fly east-west.

So you're absolutely right, and I think this is something that we need to capture as we go into, and the way I think, and we'll talk about it in the meeting next when we meet, and I'm looking at Ted here, when we think about where we go back to, I think we can address that at an implementation level by recognizing that we should have multiple preferred venues inside a region.

That is the way we deal with it so that we're thinking about that problem very specifically so that as we look for future venues, we're quite intentionally. So we're not redefining the ICANN regions, not

going to go there, but we are absolutely making sure that we're thinking about the practicalities, looking at the flight connections, looking at the visa issues almost as you say as though it was another region. And as I say, I think that supplies in the LAC region as well. Absolutely, thank you for the feedback. We'll make note of the fact that we need to spell that out in terms of the implementation recommendations. Thank you.

JODI ANDERSSON

Thank you, Sally. And just one extra point in deciding what those different going back to locations are within the region, talking to the people within that region who have the issues, the visa issues in Africa, the sort of trying to get place issues like the Pacific Island countries, it'd be great to be able to actually talk to those people in terms of choosing those locations. Thank you.

SALLY COSTERTON

There's another hand here. Is this working?

MARY WONG

So it seems to be a topic of interest, but I'll ask the observers who are not members of the discussion group to hold your comments until we get to the open mic, but we will not forget about you. So after that warm-up. Sorry.

SALLY COSTERTON

Are you in the room? I don't think-- He's in the discussion room. I do apologize. Of course he should.

MOLEHE WESI

Okay. No, thank you. Molehe Wesi for the record, also from the ccNSO. I think what would assist Mary and Sally is, because I'm bouncing between three reports now, the one with the comments, but without the last column, the ccNSO cancelled submission, and trying to recollect what we discussed as we move along. And noting what is summarized in that column there, I think it's the second column, it would be great and conducive to maybe the follow-up meetings to bring up the themes, especially what we just discussed now around accessibility and all of those.

Because I can tell you, while of course it's somewhere in between the lines, the visa issues, there's an issue of affordability that really came through our own group that we have to also consider that. So if we can also look at that and just bring it to the fore so that when we have the discussion, it's covered. Thanks.

SALLY COSTERTON

Thank you very much for your comment. And my apologies, I couldn't agree with you more. I think this is very like Jodi's point. As we go through to the recommendations that are literally recommendations for the implementation of whatever the idea is, we need to go back into, this is a very good suggestion I think, that we should take the opportunity where we need to, and this is a

good example where we do, of looking at the detail of the public comments and talking to you about what you're aware it is an SO/AC submissive submission what in this little bit, what Jonathan was referring to at the beginning, what happened in those discussions and what do you feel the priority themes were that came out so that we then can agree those that there's a shared focus on therefore what do we do differently.

Because that's what needs to go into the implementation recommendations is a sense of priorities and how do we make sure that while we support this idea, that's what the public comment agreement looks like, but we do it with these things in mind, like Jodie said, like we need to make sure we're talking to the people that are actually affected by the venues we might go back to. And the same in terms of affordability coming from the relevant stakeholder groups. So I just want to thank you for that, because I think that's a nuance that we probably haven't captured yet, but we should do.

MARY WONG

Thank you very much, and I couldn't agree more and I think that is also the value of having cross-community participants in the group so to the extent that when we provide the final report as Sally was saying, if there are specific themes that the group wishes to emphasize, if there's specific points or specific points of caution that the group believes should also be highlighted in the report, we should definitely include those. So please do let us know. If you

see something, say something. And after that warm up, we get to the fun stuff.

I'm going to skip over the next role as well because that's more about additional suggestions and feedback, and so we're going to move to 3.1. And the suggestion here was to establish a policy to automatically move an ICANN public meeting to an online format should there be unforeseen circumstances that requires us to move a meeting that was planned from one location to somewhere else. And you see here that there was strong support from the commenters, 20 comments were in support.

It will not require a change to the meeting strategy, but we did receive some comments about making it clearer what this means in terms of what sort of circumstances, how much in advance and so forth. So comments or thoughts from discussion group members please. Okay, moving right along. Again, 3.2 is about additional feedback, and it's a good thing we're moving along because then we have lots of time for additional comments and questions, including from observers and guests.

So, 4.1, this is about holding perhaps at least one of the current three meetings per year as a fully virtual meeting or fully online meeting instead of what it is now, which is a hybrid meeting. In addition to 4.1, there's a few other rows beneath it that present more specific options about what such an online format could look like, maybe piloting it, maybe doing it in rotation, we'll get there. But in terms of the general question, we see that there was not

support from a broad part of the community for basically converting one of the three meetings a year to an online format. Seven were in support, 15 were not.

So it doesn't seem like there was enthusiasm there. The note that Staff put in that last column is that this could actually require changing the meeting strategy on top of it because as devised and when devised, the thought was not just three meetings per year, but the presumption and the basis was that they would be conducted in at least a hybrid format. So any comments on this? I guess that seems pretty clear. So going into some of the more specific suggestions that were discussed amongst the discussion group about potentially doing some things online, the first was about maybe trying the online only format, not once every three meetings, but maybe once every few meetings.

Could be once every four meetings or once every six meetings, which would mean you know one meeting out of six, meaning one meeting every two years would be virtual. And we wanted to highlight this one in particular because unlike some of the other options, this one was fairly even in the split of support. And noting of course what Jonathan said earlier that this may or may not change depending on whether this was supported by the formal structures or otherwise, but we did want to call this out to the discussion group that while there was a shade of non-support, we're really looking at 10 in support and 11.

And again, a note that this might change the meeting's strategy. Any comments or thoughts or observations? Okay, then the next two, again in similar vein, it is about maybe ways that we could try an online format. One is a pilot, and don't panic, it involves adding one meeting per year to the ICANN calendar, so four meetings, but keeping the three hybrid meetings, adding the fourth one as a wholly online meeting as a pilot. Not a lot of support, but again, we wanted to highlight it because it was an option presented for public comment.

The other is about a mixed model where when you have an online meeting, bearing in mind that one of the intangible values of a hybrid meeting, particularly if you're attending in person, is the networking, the relationship building, and the ability to overcome differences and reach consensus could the sessions be held online, but that meeting attendees and community participants who wish to do so could gather in one location to attend a meeting and to network as described.

Again, this might require change to the strategy, and not a whole lot of support for it. So any thoughts or observations at this time are welcome. All right, are we having fun yet? We will then move-- Oh, I think that was it, because the others were all about the additional comments and suggestions, which we can go back into. We do have quite a lot of time before the cocktails begin.

SALLY COSTERTON

It's not essential to stay in this room until the cocktails start.

MARY WONG

Exactly. So if I may, and Alp is going to be very annoyed with me for changing his agenda, I'm wondering and I'm asking members of the discussion group, we could do as planned, which is to go back to those rows that we skipped because those were about the additional suggestions that some commenters suggested for operationalizing some of these ideas, or we could reserve that for our call to be scheduled, and move into perhaps the open mic segment.

Seeing no objection but some enthusiastic head nodding. We will then open the microphone for, I think the scheduled time was 15 minutes, to anyone who wishes to. We have a handheld microphone, and I think we have very helpful colleagues who will speak, but I first see Philippe at the table. Oh, I'm sorry, Sebastien, my apologies. Please go ahead, Sebastien.

SEBASTIEN BACHOLLET

Thank you very much. Sébastien Bachollet. There are some colleagues in this room who were a member of the Meeting Strategy Working Group, Anna, Eduardo, Sally, and Chris, and therefore they can of course disagree with me as I was sharing this group, but it's a long time ago. I think there are interesting things that you brought up here, but for example, something that was suggested is to have a... I don't see where the Board meet in one

part of if you push everything at the beginning of the meeting or to have a large room, how the meeting in front of the Board or with the Board or just the Board meeting will be taking place.

The other thing, one of the proposals was, I don't think that it was never put in place, was to have, in the morning, a time to have discussions for every group on a single topic, and in the afternoon, the possibility to have exchange amongst other. I will take just one example. The discussion going on here about the reviews could have been a very good example to have, in the morning, a discussion for each group subgroups, and in the afternoon, full groups discussion, full community discussion. The other is that the meeting where longer, I will say, or was the same side of previous meetings before the strategy came in place.

And one of the ideas was to split the meeting in two, and it's exactly what it's done. Therefore, there is no need for people to stay. Of course, everybody wants to stay all along of the meeting to be sure not to forget something or don't get the information on everything, but the fact that it was split, I don't know how if you start on the meeting, how you will keep the split of the thing. And if you go back to the Report of the meeting strategy, and I guess you can do the same thing today with all the meeting going on and the parallel session, the number, if you shorten from one day, you have a 238 session, I don't know how it is today, but therefore you will have to shrink or to this point, a lot of people a lot of groups that they will not be able to get their meeting.

And the fact that we are going in the reverse order with this meeting, for example, they are already day zero events for a few groups, therefore from four days, we are going to five days, in fact. Because when we discuss at that time was really to take into account everything happening except the meeting of the Board itself, but to take everything happening before or after. And therefore, that's some of the feedback I wanted to give to you about this report. I have other things, but it will be too long right now and others need to talk. Thank you very much.

SALLY COSTERTON

Thank you, Sebastien. Yes, I was on that group, and Chris can talk to himself, but I remember exactly the suggestion that we had. And the first that policy suggested, and we went back, those of you who haven't been involved in the work, we included the detail of the recommendations of the 2013-14 strategy. And in the reviews, it's in the document set for the public comment, because it's very important.

Sometimes at ICANN, certainly in my experience, I have a habit of forgetting that we solved a problem three or four or five or six or ten years ago, and then we forgot that we fixed it, and then we come back and try and fix it. A new group of people, lots of people are nodding their heads. And this idea that you're sharing of the idea of... you talked about two things I remember very well being in the original proposal that went to the Board or that's in the

proposal, that's in the plan. The first one was this idea of splitting the day, and this was particularly at the community forum.

The original idea was that this summer meeting would be much shorter, it would take out all the formal public meetings in order that the community would spend a lot more time together on shared topics. And I think some of that has absolutely happened. We don't have a public forum, so that that has held through the pandemic and out the other side. But I think it's a very interesting reflection you make, and some of this you can see. The discussion group also talked about this when we were working together, what's the trade-off today in giving up that time on the schedule? Because we know this very well, Sebastien, this means non-conflicted time, as we call it, on the schedule.

And that means that we have less time in those summer meetings, those northern hemisphere summer meetings, I should say, for policy work. And that's an ongoing debate about what's the right balance between community engagement with each other and individual community groups being able to move the ball forward on policy work, because that of course is the purpose of the policy forum. But I think that you could see that in the public comment, I don't think there was a demand for radical change, but I think to see that as a good thing.

I think there has been a lot of support for the not changing the dynamic of the AGM, the community forum, and the policy forum, which was set up as a result of that strategy. The question about

the Board engagement is related to that like Mary was saying, does it make sense to have at least try and reinstate, I would say, perhaps, Sebastien, a session in the meeting where we can all get together with the community and the Board and discuss single topics. So I think that is sort of reflected in the spirit of that.

But if anybody in the room is interested in looking at all the documents that went into this and you can't find them or you can't find what you want, please let us know, and we'll give you a copy of the full set because we very much took into consideration what problem were we trying to solve in 2012 and 2013 and has that changed or has it actually stayed the same?

And what we can see from the public comment is a lot of this is, it works. We're not getting radical requests to break things and smash them up and start again. And I think that's a testament to a lot of the work we're sort of standing on the shoulders of previous colleagues. So if we go back to the queue, Mary, who's next in the queue?

MARY WONG

So currently in the queue, we have Philippe, Owen, who appears to be in two places at once, in Zoom and here, but thank you for raising your hand in Zoom. And then we have Chris Despain. And I want to say that we have my colleague here, Christian, unmistakable because of his height, and therefore also known as

the official queue closer at the ICANN public forum, but today, he's playing another role.

If anyone in the audience would like to make a comment, thank you. So maybe we'll go to Philippe and Owen, Chris, and then this lady. Thank you. Can we start with the existing queue, please? Philippe. Can you just hold on one second?

PHILIPPE FOUQUART

Thank you, Mary. Philippe Fouquart, I'm with the ISPCP. I have two comments, and both go back to the session that we had this morning with the NCPH, which debated some while this topic. The first comment is on the work method, and goes back to Jonathan's comment earlier during the session. There's been multiple individual inputs to the SGC's inputs to this piece of work. I think moving forward, it would be fair, I don't have a solution for that, but for the for the group to sort of weigh the various inputs certainly those the inputs that we had within the groups could have been made in directly, and we would have had a different result.

So I think it'd be fair to sort of balance various inputs. The second one is a bit more substantial, but during our discussion, the issue of conflicts as it relates to meeting duration was, yes, exactly, was a big issue. I don't really know how you solve this, but maybe at some point some, I don't know if simulation is the right word, but people had some difficulty trying to get their head around what it would look like, maybe Nathalie is gonna help hate me for this, but have some sort of you know notion of how a reduced meeting

would look like if certain assumptions are made such as the duration of the day for instance. So just food for thought.

SALLY COSTERTON

No, it's very relevant. The question about reflecting back on the public comment results, I think we agreed that we will take that to the work group, to the discussion group in this immediate next discussion and decide how best to address that. And it's also about the qualitative input, so there's both the weighting, but also the thematics that we were talking about over here in this group here with Mary and Jodi. The idea you suggest, actually, we did do that for the discussion group. So it does exist and that we did some modeling because you're absolutely right.

It's one of these things that seems so easy and obvious and logical until you start trying to do it, but you put your finger on it. Actually, it's very difficult because it's both without wishing to be facetious. It is both about literally the laws of physics. Fundamentally, you can't be in two places at once. Although, of course, the way we deal with that often is that people are in one meeting while they're physically, and they're following another meeting on the screen. We kind of can, but we kind of don't want to do that. Well, definitely, well, no, I can't.

That starts to go, you start to go mad. But that has always been a challenge, and Sebastien will tell you that we tackled that question in great depth in the 2013, and it's a difficult one. And ultimately, it comes down to trade-offs and choices, this is my personal view.

And that is a little bit about this work group was not specifically focused on the question of how to... which the original one was of how do we tackle everything including schedule conflicts. And that might be something we have to come back to as a community as a later date, but what I would say is that as we started to explore the idea of what would it look like if we took a day out, which Lawrence was talking about, what are the trade-offs, and you can see that in those models.

So I know if you're interested in doing that, I'm sure the group will share that and you can have a look at them we can discuss them in in your group, but it was certainly part of the work product that we shared with the group to sort of think about what might that look like and what happens if you take... what does that mean you could bring the public forum and that was in the questions. One of the outcomes of that is that you.. one option is to shut off the last day so you bring the public forum further up into the week for example, and that's a good example of what would happen if you did that. Thank you for the question now. We were going to Owen next, weren't we?

OWEN SMIGELKI

Thanks, Sally. Owen Smigelski, I'm from the domain name registrar Namecheap, I'm also Chair of the Registrar Stakeholder Group, but I'm speaking just to my own personal capacity. So just echoing what Jonathan and Philippe, said i think we do need to have some better understanding of what's going on with the weighing of these

contributors because when it says 15 versus 3, if the three happen to be ones that come to ICANN meetings and have been coming for 20 years and it's essential to their business versus somebody who attends remotely and does it as a hobby or something along those lines, I think that's very important at least for registrars and registries, we rely upon these meetings literally for our business operations.

And so running up against these things where we may not be heard or that it can be a significant concern for us you know. It's like one of the things was talked about was removing a day from the meeting, which I guess that would be the Seattle meeting that we had earlier this year, that was the one that was being targeted for that. By the first day of that ICANN meeting, I'd been to meetings in three days in Seattle, two of them actually through ICANN, so minus one and minus two. I don't know how we could have fit those meetings in otherwise with a reduced day. There's a lot of stuff going on with the unconflicted sessions.

As I'm Chair now, I get to participate in those strategic meeting planning things, I don't know how ICANN Staff can do that, but reducing a day there is going to make it a lot more complicated. And there's already sessions that the registrars and registries, I don't want to speak on behalf of the registries, but I know we try and organize sessions with other groups, and it's really difficult to have those when there's less time for that.

And I guess the lasting point here is the public forum, I think it's really important to have that at the end of the meeting. I can't tell you the number of times I've heard at a public forum where people are talking about what's happened that week, and there's a really good recap but people give their thoughts and people give their impressions and people build upon that. Having that at the very beginning, I think just what's the point having one then at that point because you really miss a lot of the stuff that's going on at the meeting. Thanks.

SALLY COSTERTON

Thank you very much. That's very much to take your comments on board. Thank you, Owen. Where are we going next? Chris, please.

CHRIS DISSPAIN

Thank you, Sally and Mary. Hi everyone, it's Chris DISSPAIN. A couple of things, I wanted to endorse what Jonathan said at the beginning and what I just said about the numbers, you do need to be a little bit careful. There's one up there where it says 10/11, but of that, one side is 10, the other side is 11, and the 10 is made up of five individuals, and then the 11 is actually made up of a bunch of SOs and ACs. And so I do think it's important to recognize that nuance and not just look at the straight numbers.

I want to echo what Sebastien said about this meeting, and you've said it too, Sally, these meetings, the middle meetings, were always intended to be that gathering together, and we haven't been

spectacularly successful at that. We've been spectacularly successful at making it a policy meeting and a smaller meeting, but not at gathering people together. And as an example of that, I can count at least four, if not five, sessions on DNS abuse at this meeting in separate rooms. And we could very easily have had one session on DNS abuse. We may have had to have two, but we didn't need five or six.

The GACs had one or two, ALACs had one, CPH has had, and so on. So, a little bit more planning would make this meeting more true to what it is I think we intended it to be, which was the ability of this community to get together as one and to talk. And I wasn't going to say anything else other than that, but just on the public forum, some of you will remember that there used to be two, one at the beginning and one at the end. So actually, there's a lot of merit in having public forum at the beginning, and it sets the week up, it gives the Board and the rest of the community a clear understanding of what's running.

You might think you know, but you don't necessarily know. We might think we know, but we don't necessarily know. And actually, if you're going to have this session, and I can't remember what it was called now where this kind of like end of session with the Board where there's a sort of I remember it was in one of the suggestions. Whilst that isn't necessarily going to be a public forum, it would have the event of summing up the week. One of the significant

savings, it seems to me, is that big room, and it costs a huge amount of money.

And it is completely not fit for purpose for so many of the things that happen in it. It's very fit for purpose for the opening ceremony and for all of that nonsense, but it isn't fit for purpose, for example, for the Registry Stakeholder Group to meet with the Board. There's like a room for a million people and seven people in the room, not seven, but. So I would encourage people to think a little bit about that because there is a significant cost saving and benefit it seems to me, and a benefit as well, not just the costs of losing that room. Thanks.

SALLY COSTERTON

Thank you, Chris. Jonathan wanted an intervention.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Yeah, just briefly. I was excited to see when this came out that my joke suggestion about us all meeting someplace to have a virtual meeting made it onto the survey. But I apologize, this is just occurring to me this minute, because this conversation about the public forum and Chris's intervention, did we consider the possibility of making the opening ceremony virtual? And so, if we're going to have that room for just a couple of days, actually make it the last couple instead of trying to push things to the front so we've got a public forum at the end.

Because it's an interactive session in which it's really imperative people be present for it, whereas the opening ceremony is more of a presentation-style event, and it seems less important to have people's presence. So this is not a well-thought-out idea, but if we were trying to move the fewer days of the large room somewhere, moving it to the end instead of the beginning might make more sense.

SALLY COSTERTON

Thank you, Jonathan. Yeah, I think this is a very creative suggestion. I'm looking at Ted, he's nodding his head. You can't see him nodding, but he is nodding. Chris, just going back to you, a couple of points, just to hope they're helpful. So the question of getting the community together at meetings, this wasn't part of this exercise, but it's nonetheless, I think, a very relevant point, and getting back to that original idea of the policy forum. The place for that to happen is in the meeting planning group, the agenda planning group, which is the one Owen has just joined, that he was referring to.

So I would encourage the members of that group to think about that option because there's absolutely nothing stopping us doing that from an operational standpoint, provided we know well in advance that that is what the community wants to do. Because just in case it's not obvious, and maybe it's not obvious, I don't think it is necessarily, the production brief, if you want to call it that, for an ICANN meeting, any ICANN meeting, is the schedule.

Now we obviously have what we call a block schedule which is what that agenda planning community group works with because we know there's a fairly standardized, we know we start if you like with a straw man, a block schedule, but the process of that agenda planning group meeting, and it's a community group that we facilitate as staff and it tends to meet right through the period between meetings to plan the agenda so it'll start meeting quite soon after this meeting to look at them on, many of you in this room have been part of that group over time.

It is absolutely there for the community to say, well, you know, we'd like to do this instead of that. But back to the laws of physics, we'll then say, well, okay, can we come to some agreement about therefore we can't? What tends to happen is people want both things at the same time and I understand that, and they'll say, I want this discussion and I want non-conflicted time to do that, but also in my community need this time to do my thing.

And I know we all know this, but that is that there is a real place for that discussion to happen, and I just wanted to sort of to mention that because I really think that we can use that very creatively, very openly as we see fit, and as you see fit to help move that forward. So I think that's really positive to take out of this discussion. Now we have a hand-held mic, I think. Yes.

ROLLA HASSAN

Hello, thank you. My name is Rolla Hassan, ICANN fellow. My question is regarding to meeting location and the visa challenge,

because even if we have a visa support letter from ICANN, we are not securing a convenient appointment with the embassy. So my question is, how can ICANN facilitate this and make it more easier for the participant to have a similar like the travel booking and etc.? Thank you.

SALLY COSTERTON

Thank you. Well, that is a very important question. I don't know if I've got Joseph in the room. Is he here? Never mind, okay. I can answer that or I can do my best. Oh I'm looking at Christian now. I can do my best to answer it. This is a perennial problem, and it isn't even a static problem because as all of you know that the visas are a product of bilateral relationships between one country and another. So just to be clear, and I don't want you to take this-- where have she gone? Oh, you're there. Now I would be speaking to the mic. Sorry. Thank you.

ICANN cannot and never has been able to secure visas for travelers, including our own staff, because we don't control visas. We're not in a government and we don't have power over any government to do that. So I know that people often wish that we could, and in my entire time at ICANN, that has always been an issue, it will always be an issue in that sense. We don't have that power. What we can do, which is what I think your question is, is what can we do?

And I think given that it's a changing picture, because it obviously depends on political dynamics usually between one country and another, we can certainly and do avoid going to countries where we

know there are a lot of problems. And if you go onto our website, we have a special page, which we actually is usually potential hosts interested in, meeting hosts, and we can show you, you can see all the requirements that we say to a country, there's a lot of different things that they need to be able to deliver, and one of them is what we consider to be an acceptable level of visa access.

Now, that's the first thing. So there are some countries in the world where we know that getting visa access for our travelers is going to be so difficult that it's not even worth starting. But overall, the next thing I'd say is that once we've chosen a venue, so we work with the local government, the local host, and my engagement team working with me is very close to this process. And so every time we start even considering a venue, we don't just go straight there and say, okay, fine, here you go, we'll come to you.

We go and do a detailed assessment on paper, then we do a site visit, an in-person site visit, which includes our engagement team, not just our operation team. And we go and meet the host and we go and meet the government. And if there isn't a host, which there isn't always, then we go and make our own arrangements and we go and see, okay, what is the visa position going to be here? And that tells us whether we're going to have a problem above normal amounts. And if we are, then we get ahead of that and we say okay, we're going to have to put in some special support to help people, which is what you're talking about.

I think that on a more practical note, the other thing that I would say and based on my experience is, if you're coming to an ICANN, and this is just general piece of advice and it applies to the staff as well, we need you to start applying for visas, well, we don't need you to, we strongly advise you to start applying for visas as early as you possibly can. What we can do to help that is to announce as far ahead as we can where the meetings are going to be, and we're doing that. We've committed to doing that, and we're doing that.

We're making huge progress, and we're nearly done with being able to go back to announcing meetings two years ahead, maybe even more. Now, what you then run into, and I know this, is some countries won't let you start applying for a visa just whenever you feel like it. You can't apply more than 100 days before you travel, I'm making this up. So it's a complex one, it's a sort of mixture of those different factors, but to summarize what ICANN can do and is doing and has done, decide and choose meeting venues as early on as possible.

And actually, the public comment supported that as well, coincidentally, which gives you your empowered. Then, you can decide when you're going to go, and also, don't go to places where, we wouldn't do that anyway, but don't pick places where we know that it's going to be really, really problematic. But unfortunately, the other thing that happens is we plan so far in advance, sometimes relationships between countries change, new

governments come into power, visa attitudes change. I'm choosing my words very carefully here.

Things can change over time, much after we've made the decision. And so it's a long answer, but it's such an important question, and I know it's very important to a lot of people, and it's very important from an accessibility standpoint. I hope that's helpful. Probably wish you hadn't asked the question now. Have we got any more questions in the queue?

MARY WONG

We do.

SALLY COSTERTON

We do. Okay.

MARY WONG

We're going to go back to the table and I think maybe after that, to the floor.

PAULO DREWIACKI

Paulo Drewiacki speaking in my private capacity here. We're talking a lot about cost savings for ICANN, but not seeing so much of the outside inside perspective from the cost saving to the travelers as well. But just one doubt, do we have any kind of agreement with airlines?

I know that we have ICANN Travel, ICANN fund the travel, but I'm talking about people who are traveling on their own to ICANN meetings, couldn't we have any type of agreement with airlines and such to make it easier for some people to come to ICANN meetings because sometimes air travel is something that is quite hard for people to get, be it for cost reasons or several other reasons.

SALLY COSTERTON

Thank you. I don't know, Ted, you want to comment on that? We don't at the moment, as far as I know. And I don't think we could be able to do that because we can do things like that when we're contracting for people that we are funding. I'm just reaching out, and Ted can disagree with me, and I can see Xavier there as well, so he can make a comment. What we can't do is necessarily-- I'm reaching out. Do you want to just answer this? But I'm pretty sure it's difficult for us to do that.

PAULO DREWIACKI

Just to clarify, I'm not saying that we should pay, but maybe having an agreement such as that, if you're traveling for ICANN, you have a special discount code.

SALLY COSTERTON

That's what that is, that's a commercial arrangement in order to generate that. That's my understanding.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER

I think the closest we've ever come to that opportunity is in Rwanda where there was, I believe, a 10% discount kind of coupon offered. But that's coming from a small airline, very specific to that country, so it was an intent to bring tourism. But I would think dealing with a large airline in what may seem like a large group of people to us is a very small group of... and I think Xavier may want to say something, but I don't think we have that ability to negotiate with an entire... United Airlines or something.

MARY WONG

I just wanted to make a comment about the cost savings point too. I think one is obviously that was a consideration, a fairly substantial consideration for going to this exercise, but it wasn't the only one clearly. But I also wanted to say that maybe it wasn't quite so clear in today's discussion, it was certainly a theme that we tried to focus on during the months leading up to the public comments.

And actually, you can probably see that in some of the ideas about returning to the same location, doing multi-year contracts, because it also provides predictability. Whether it's predictability for travelers funded by ICANN or for businesses or for self-funded travelers, knowing in advance where you're going means that you can book in advance as much as possible.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER

To add to that as well, one thing we do is when we speak about a less expensive venue or a less expensive location that does take

into effect where you know hotel rooms should be less expensive for everybody, food, cities like here. So things that are advantageous to ICANN are also hopefully a trickle-down effect too.

MARY WONG

Thank you. I think there was a question or comment from the floor.

SANA NISAR

Hello, I'm Sana Nisar, and I just wanted to appreciate the open and inclusive approach ICANN has taken in collecting the feedbacks. So we just emphasize the importance of inclusive participation, and especially for the newcomers and maintaining a balance between efficiency and engagement quality.

So while the idea of a potential fourth online only meeting is being proposed, it's open and important conversation from my end. As this idea is explored, how will ICANN ensure that any new format supports the true inclusion and doesn't add the pressure on already stretched volunteer communities, especially in the regions with the digital or time zone challenges?

SALLY COSTERTON

Thank you. That's another incredibly important point, which came up a lot in the discussion group, and those around the table will be familiar with this, we talked a lot about time zones. This was not a specific focus of this work, but it was discussed um. For a personal

reflection, I think there's a very high level of awareness about this. It's extremely difficult to deal with time zone issues, it's a problem rather like visas that we wrestle with consistently, but we can't control it unless we sort of break up the meeting groups into different parts, which is not the point.

So again, it's a question of prioritization, and that is really part of your question, because the second part is how do we make sure that the burden on people is acceptable, given that the vast majority, or not the vast majority, a substantial portion of our community, contributors are volunteers, and they are giving up their private time to come and work on these policies. So I think we're very mindful of what is the role of the meetings in helping to fulfill that participation in a way that is not unreasonable.

And that came up extensively, and it's one of the reasons, I think, why there's such a commitment to hybrid participation and recognizing that we need to maintain rotation, we need to get the balance between the two. And thank you for your comment, but I did want to acknowledge to you that it has been, it will continue to be discussed as a key, as a really important factor in terms of thinking about how do we put the journalists together and where do we go, what kind of facility, what kind of countries do we go to? Thank you.

MARY WONG

We're going over here. So we did have a couple of comments in the chat, but it's really, and I'll just generally describe them as an

exchange about maybe considerations around countries that have very specific requirements for visas, potentially leveraging e-visas as much as possible. And I do acknowledge that Owen says we should never go back to Cancun. On that note, I think Molehe and then Chris Disspain. And then unless there's anyone else from the floor, I think we'll close the queue at that point. Okay.

MOLEHE WESI

Thank you very much. Molehe Wesi for the record. Mine is quite simple and reflecting to Paolo's question on travel. At one point during the discussion group, there was a conversation around a review of the travel management agent. And I know there has been one that has been onboarded. I'm not sure if that opportunity of saying those that are self-funded and are traveling, it could possibly be an avenue to utilize that common travel agent and playing at economics of scale to bring down the cost for many other people. That's another avenue.

I'm not sure if it's a possibility or it still is a possibility. And some of the issues as being blessed to have been funded by ICANN to travel for some of the meetings, the agent themselves become an impediment when you ask certain things because they sort of close it off. I know there's some complexities on how they work, but they make it close to impossible and overly expensive when you ask for certain things over and above what is being provided by ICANN.

Possibly, I'm not sure with the current one, has that issue of cost being addressed with them as a service that they are offering? Can

we leverage them as self-funded travelers to actually book through them and get a discounted rate? Thanks.

SALLY COSTERTON

That's a really interesting question, and I think we should take a look at that. The second part, well, both. The first part, we have a new provider, and one of the reasons why we have a new provider, if you want to put it that way, or one of the requirements is a better word, that we had for the new provider when we did the RFP was about affordable tickets, more affordable tickets. And that's just as important for us and the staff as it is for all the other users of that service.

So far, the feedback we've had has been incredibly positive, that they are more affordable and they're offering better range of more cost-effective tickets. So it's a good start, early days, that's the provider. Could we go to them and say, would they be prepared to offer a service to other travelers that we don't fund? It's AmTrav, it's a very big organization. It's a corporate travel agent. I don't know the answer, but we'll take it away and have a look at it. And thank you for the suggestion.

MARY WONG

Chris, and then out to close us out.

SALLY COSTERTON

Chris, and then out to close us out. Please, Chris.

CHRIS DISSPAIN

Thanks, Sally. I remembered the other thing that I wanted to say. It's a plea more than anything. Some of the stuff, these ideas that are up here and you've got next to it doesn't require changing the strategy, completely agree. However, people have answered a very high-level question. And the operationalizing of these is key to maintaining people's agreement. I'll give you an example. The one you've got up there about going to a virtual meeting in the case of unforeseen circumstances, it makes perfect sense, it's a no-brainer, except, of course, the key's in the detail. Now, at what point, how early can you call it? How late can you call it?

What are unforeseen circumstances? Who makes the decision? Is it open and transparent, et cetera, et cetera? So that stuff about there's 27 people who agree to that and six who don't, whatever the numbers are, is fine, but there is a lot of assumptions being made in people's minds about what that looks like. So if you decide to do it or to suggest it rather, it's going to need to be dealt with very clearly from an operational point of view so everyone is comfortable. And that's just one example. Thanks.

SALLY COSTERTON

Excellent point, Chris, and that's a very good lead over to Alp for next steps, because this is a good bridging point. I think it's true of all of these issues. So what this is, is always designed to be a lightweight process, a discussion group, it's not designed to be, as I said in my opening comments, a bottom up, completely

comprehensive review of the whole strategy. That should not be taken to mean that this will all disappear into a black hole and then it will be implemented and there will be no further discussion.

That is clearly not desirable or part of the process. One of the things that we need to work out next is how is that implementation, what are the guidance, if there is guidance, that the discussion group wants to give to the CEO that accompanies the recommendations. I think that's one thing, Chris, because I think there is quite a lot of detail in the submissions, which is what Molehe was saying, but we need to pull back out which will inform those sets of recommendations and what do the discussion group feel about that and do they want to introduce some new thoughts.

And then, I'm speaking on behalf of Kurtis, which I don't want to do, but we always agreed the model would be that it would go back to the organization, therefore to the CEO. And I'm sure that Kurtis will then want to have a discussion about how that is then implemented, and the kind of things you're describing are absolutely part of that process. So I think that's well understood.

As ever with life, we don't want to then go back into another sort of a permanent public comment process on all these things. So we'll have to strike a balance between when are we done and how much input is enough. But we know how to do that in this community, I'm not worried about that. But I wanted to reassure the group that that is well understood. Thank you all. Alp, your turn to take us to the cocktail.

ALPEREN EKEN

Thank you so much, Sally. One last thing for the discussion group, I will send an email to everyone regarding the next meeting, scheduling of the next meeting. And the meeting is adjourned. We can stop the recording. Have a great time, everyone.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]