
ICANN84 | AGM – At-Large Development Session: Making Meetings Work: How to Lead and Participate Effectively
Wednesday, October 29, 2025 – 15:00 to 16:00 IST

MICHELLE DESMYTER

Thank you. Hello, and welcome, everyone, to the At-Large Development Session: Making Meetings Work: How to Lead and Participate Effectively. My name is Michelle DeSmyter, and I am the remote participation manager for today's session. Please note that this session is being recorded and governed by the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior and ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy.

During the session, questions or comments will be read aloud if submitted within the Q&A pod. Interpretation will include English, French, and Spanish. If you'd like to speak during the 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 the language you will speak if speaking a language other than English, and please speak at a reasonable pace. I will now hand the floor over to Claire Craig.

CLAIRE CRAIG

Thank you, Michelle. Can you go back one on the slide? No, the first. Okay, never mind. Let me bring mine up. This is Claire Craig for the transcript record, and I have with me everybody—well, no. I am one

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of the co-vice chairs of the ALAC, and this is one of our At-Large Development sessions. We decided to have this is an open meeting so that everyone can be free to contribute and participate in this session. So, I'm one of the facilitators, and I have with me Evin Ashley Erdoğan who is part of the APRALO. She's an APRALO individual member, and I will let Evin introduce herself.

EVIN ASHLEY ERDOĞDU

Thank you very much, Craig. Hello, everyone. Evin Erdoğan, speaking. Thank you so much for having me here as well and for the invitation to facilitate. I hope the meeting gets a little more crowded in the next couple of minutes.

To most of you, I'm probably a familiar face, and it's great to be back here with At-Large. I supported At-Large and the ICANN community for a number of years on the Policy Development Support Team, and then worked with the community in a different way to develop the Continuous Improvement Program framework. I'm now with DotAsia organization, as Claire mentioned, in the community now. DotAsia is a registry operator, so we are a member of the Registry Stakeholder Group in the GNSO, but I'm an APRALO individual member. So, happy to be in the At-Large community as a community member. We have such a diverse community in ICANN and especially in At-Large. So we're very much looking forward to this development session with you and how we can engage in effective and constructive meetings. I turn it back over to Claire. Thank you.

CLAIRE CRAIG

Thank you, Evin. So can we go to the next slide, please? Just an idea of the agenda. We just took about the first four minutes. Welcome. But we'll get into the objective shortly. We will give you a brief introduction as to what we're going to be doing today, and then we're going to spend the bulk of the time talking about the role of the chair, and we're going to do that through an interactive session, as well as we will be speaking to the role of the participant. Because sometimes we think that the chair is the only important person in ensuring that a meeting runs smoothly, but participants have quite a role to play in that as well, and that's one of the things that we want to ensure that we leave this meeting with an understanding that we both share and participants play an active and effective role. Then we're just going to do a quick wrap-up, because at the end of the meeting, putting it all together with a wrap-up and some takeaways. So we move to the next slide.

So, 15% of an organization's collective time is spent in meetings, and we know that we probably spend more than that. But 50% of that, most of us will say are unnecessary, and that is just a fact that's out there. So if we have to spend so much time in meetings, then our meetings need to be productive. Next slide, please.

One of the things that I want you to keep in mind as we go through this session is what makes a successful meeting. So we're not going to talk to that at this point, but as we do the exercise, I want you to

keep thinking about that, and that's part of the dialogue that we're going to be having. Next slide, please.

What are the goals? This presentation focuses on making meetings work effectively. It will cover how to lead and participate in meetings. Key points will include what makes a meeting successful. And this presentation, as I said before, includes some resources. Next slide, please.

There are 5 Ps to successful meeting. While there are 5 Ps at the beginning, Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance, and we know someone who make it 6 Ps and there will be a P before the Poor, we will not speak to that right now. But the 5 Ps are: Purpose. We must have a clear purpose, not just have meetings for the sake of having meetings. If there is no need for a meeting, by all means, it should be canceled. Participants. The relevant people need to be invited and have the information that's needed so that they can contribute effectively. If persons are going to participate effectively, there needs to be a certain amount of preparation, which is so that there must be a focused agenda and this should be shared beforehand. There's a process to outline the structure and the flow of the meeting, and what comes out of that would be a payoff, and we want to look back at the end of this to see whether we have the intended outcome has happened, and if there are any action items coming out of there. So moving on to the next slide.

We're getting into our activity shortly. Prior planning is essential. We're going to be looking at an agenda for a 60-minute meeting. Next slide, please.

So this is a Capacity Development Working Group agenda. It's a 60-minute meeting, and your task in the next 10 minutes, and specifically, we try to put you in groups with your language so that you'll be more comfortable. Work in the groups and look at the agenda, identify what problems there are, and redefine that agenda. We have 10 minutes to do that, and then the next 10 minutes we're going to be talking about how you have redefined the agenda. What were some of the problems that you saw with the previous agenda, and how do we move forward. Are there any questions?

JONATHAN ZUCK

Are we creating the first agenda? Oh, I was just asking. Are you going to give us an agenda to fix? Are we creating one and then fixing that one?

CLAIRE CRAIG

No, no, no. We're giving you an agenda, and we'll put the agenda up on the screen now, but we do have the agenda in different languages so we will give it to you as a group, and you can look at it. Can we go to the next slide, please?

So this is a 60-minute agenda for this call. The agenda starts with the roll call, which we usually do at an ICANN meeting. Then we go

into welcome and introductions, and we ask people to give us their SOI (Statement of Interest) updates. Then we review the discussion of the agenda items. Next, we will review any action items from the previous meeting. Then item five on this agenda is a capacity development priority, so we have reports from five RALOs. Item six, we have presentations, discussions, and decisions on seven proposals for this capacity development webinar that is coming up. Then we have update on the Fellowship and NextGen program engagement. Item eight, we talk about the communication and outreach plans for capacity development. Item nine, Any Other Business. And on the agenda, we actually have three items as Any Other Business. And then the last item will be the next meeting, date and time.

So this is your activity. You have 10 minutes to look at this agenda. Decide what are the problems with it, and decide to fix it. We are also going to give you a worksheet that you can use. Yeah, we have a worksheet. We're going to give you the worksheet now as well that you're going to develop your agenda using. Okay. So if you could get into your groups and begin the discussion, you have 10 minutes. Any questions? Have I confused anybody?

For those of you who may have come in late, this is the French group. This side of the table is the Spanish group. And if you're more comfortable using the flip sheets, you can use that, or you could use the forms that we're going to be distributing. Yes, Olivier?

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND Thank you very much, Claire. Is the agenda in the other languages as well? Or is it just in English?

CLAIRE CRAIG It's in the—

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND So it's in the sheets. Okay. Thank you.

CLAIRE CRAIG Yes. Okay. Any other questions? Yes?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE I want to say Claire was clear.

CLAIRE CRAIG You have seven minutes left for this activity.

Hello, everyone. We have one minute left. I'll give you three more minutes. Hello, everyone. You have one minute left. Please select one person who will report, and you have two minutes to report.

Hello. Which group would like to go first? First, we want you to tell us what problems you would have seen with this agenda. I know you would not have had enough time to fix this agenda completely, but if you have gotten to the point where you did substantive work on it, that would be good.

Okay. Let's ask this group here, the English group up here, since they're all sitting in one place. Can we have the French group come back in please? They're not hearing. Does anybody speak...?

JONATHAN ZUCK

All right. I've been asked to kick the reporting off here. I was part of the English language speaking group, and I think the first thing we noticed was that it was just too much to cover in a 60-minute meeting. So the first exercise would be to really prioritize the items that were to be covered, and maybe see which of them could be handled via the list instead of on the call and removed from the agenda. Because, as it stood now, somebody did a count that we had basically 22 items on this agenda, which would give them each three minutes, and it took us that long to talk about one word. So that was a big deal. Call this figure out what could happen to the list.

We wonder about some of the things that have become standard on some of our calls, such as roll call, that could be handled, ideally, as a scribing effort and not a verbal effort. The review and discussion of agenda items, perhaps the chair has the ability to just do an overview of the agenda, but maybe doesn't open it for discussion because that should have been handled via in the planning for the meeting.

There was also missing from this timings associated with the different elements, because if you had done them, then you might have realized that you had 120-minute meeting, right? So part of

the exercise of doing the timings is seeing how long something really is, just like trying out your presentation to know how long that is, which is why we try to encourage people to try their presentation because everybody thinks their presentation is shorter than it is.

We didn't have speakers assigned to the individual places, and as we know, that in the absence of that in an agenda, it ends up taking time. "Oh, were you going to go?" or "Were you going to go first?" "Oh, you were going to..." "We worked on this together, but you said you were going to start," and then we've spent three minutes just deciding who will give a presentation. And my time is up.

CLAIRE CRAIG

Thank you, Jonathan, for that. Who is going to go next? But keep the thoughts going, just in case we have some time at the end to come back. So Jonathan spoke to a number of things directly to the number of items on the agenda, as well as the fact that there were no times associated. So if you can speak about other things, that would be good, because there are some other things that may have been associated that were problems with the agenda.

Who's going to be next? Is it the French? French-speaking, sorry. Okay. I think Sergio wants to go. Yes, the Spanish-speaking group. Okay. You have two minutes.

SERGIO SALINAS PORTO

Claire, gracias. Thank you. I'm going to speak in Spanish. Well, what we saw—is everyone present? I don't want to start because I don't want four minutes to be subtracted from my time. Okay.

We noticed that it was pretty extensive agenda with a lot of action items that cannot all be considered. So we reduced the agenda to six items. The agenda starts with the welcoming for five minutes, reviews, other items to consider for five minutes, the review of the action items or agenda items regarding to each work group or whatever activities that will be done internally. Then the presentation and analysis of what's being proposed or the proposals. Our understanding is regarding that action item, the votes for those seven proposals could be done online, and that way, that will help reduce the time dedicated to that in the meeting. As far as the new proposals, we only gave 10 minutes for that, and then at the end, Any Other Business, so that would be another three minutes. So, in other words, we figured that that kind of meeting would be a little more detailed. And that's it.

CLAIRE CRAIG

Again, this group spoke to the items on the agenda and the timing for the agenda. So that's what we've heard, some of the issues that the agenda could be reduced. And they also gave some options for how the items that they have taken out of the agenda can be treated with. So, now let's go back to the English-speaking group on this side. Two minutes, please.

SEGUNFUNMI OLAJIDE

For the record, my name is Segunfunmi Olajide. What we did was that we're able to merge some of the items on the agenda, particularly one, two, and three, we merged them to be about five minutes. Five and six, also we merged them to be one item. Seven, eight, nine, we are allocated six, five, and three minutes, respectively.

A meeting is not complete without question and answer session, so we added question and answer session. We allocated about 10 minutes for questions and answers. Then speakers were allocated for each of them, so we considered that as well.

Then the last item is next meeting time and date. About two minutes will be sufficient to cover that. Thank you.

CLAIRE CRAIG

Thank you. What we noticed that that this group added to what the others would have added was in the speakers who would be speaking on each topic. So that's important for the agenda. So you're aware of who are some of the people who would be speaking on the topic as well.

And now we go to the French-speaking group who will tell us what are some of the things that they saw.

HOUNZANDJI HERVE

Herve speaking, AFRALO secretary. I'll be speaking in French. We wanted for the agenda to be in French, Spanish, or English. And hopefully we had the same reflections because, as you have said it all, there are way too many item actions on the agenda. And in the end, we did not invent anything. We did the same as our English-speaking or Spanish-speaking friends.

First action item is Welcome, two minutes. Then item four and five were merged, and we gave it 20 minutes. Then action item six would be the third action item on our agenda, 20 minutes as well. And then for agenda item eight, communications and outreach, this was the fourth action item on our agenda. And then we added a fifth action item, which are action items for the next meeting. Because sometimes you conduct a meeting, and then the meeting ends, and you don't know what you're going to do next time. So we added this. And then for the Any Other Business, action item under this we will talk about the next meeting date and time. Thank you very much, Claire. It was clear, I think.

CLAIRE CRAIG

Thank you so much. I hope this exercise was useful because some of the things, the takeaways we got from this, was that you each numbered your agenda, which we did. You'd had the description of the items on the agenda. You had the time, some person spoke to having the name of the person who would speak to the agenda item, and we also had a fifth column, just in case there was a need

for any comments or any information that you would like to share on the agenda as well.

Evin will just provide us with just a couple of other items that we need to consider as the chair in setting up a meeting.

EVIN ASHLEY ERDOĞDU

Thank you, Claire. This would go for anyone who's facilitating a meeting, but also can go for participants as well. Something I was hearing from everyone was how you're drilling down on the format and what the agenda is. Thank you. I'll move closer. But in general, I would think also about the substance as well. What do you want from the meeting and who is coming to the meeting? I find that when you know who you ideally want to come to the meeting, then you can target the agenda to what their expectations are, and sometimes you need to make them aware of what you'll be asking them.

So, practically, just share the agenda two to three days in advance, share it with everyone that you want to come to the meeting. Try to have them confirm their attendance, if possible. Ask very specific questions and highlight areas where their feedback will be needed, and know your audience. Sometimes this isn't always possible. Like this session, we have some people attending from the public, but to the extent that you can know who they are, what the dynamics are, and how you can facilitate a constructive interaction with the group.

And also what you're talking about, how familiar are they with the topic? You might want to make things in more layman's terms, like Jonathan's very good at that, and a lot of our ALAC chairs translating it to newcomers, or being more specific. And what are their interests and motivations for this session? Ideally, we don't want to be reading from slides or having a rehearsed kind of script. We want to be organic and responding to people and also paraphrasing what they're saying so that they feel that their contributions are meaningful.

CLAIRE CRAIG

Good. Thank you, Evin. There's a question. Yes, Jonathan?

JONATHAN ZUCK

I think some of it was really intriguing that the Spanish-speaking group did. I think it's something that Sébastien has mentioned a couple of times as well, which is to really think through an agenda about how to take the maximum advantage of the fact you have a group of people on a call and to focus on discussion. So you had the idea, for example, to take the decision part of this out of the call and put it into a poll that was on the list, for example. Something similar could be on action items, maybe reaching out to the people with missing action items as a separate effort that's prior to the call, as opposed to it being something you're reading and going, "Oh wait. Oh yes, that seems done." And it becomes this thing that takes more time than it ought to in the meeting. So really maximize the discussion portion of this and minimize the things. And part of this

may be presentations as well. If it's one directional presentation without opportunity for discussion, that can be a webinar, it could be a pre-prepared presentation that people listen to in advance, so that the discussion component is maximized on the call.

CLAIRE CRAIG

Okay. Thank you so much. Thanks, Jonathan. I think I may have actually done what we're trying not to do, which is to cram too many things into this session. So this is the second activity. This is we're dealing with the participants at this time. So how do we facilitate quality engagement? And we talked about preparation before the meeting, and Jonathan just spoke a lot about that. Oh, okay. One minute. Cooperation and support during the meeting and follow-up after the meeting. But I know that Sébastien has his hand up, so let's give Sébastien the floor.

SÉBASTIEN BACHOLLET

Thank you very much. I just wanted to say—so the experiment that we conducted within EURALO, beforehand we had a meeting online, and after the meeting, we had a physical meeting. During the online meeting, we could define the landscape, and then we asked people to react to that landscape afterwards. So we need to use the possibilities to have online and physical meetings. We need to leverage those two possibilities. Thank you.

CLAIRE CRAIG

Thank you for that, Sébastien. Moving on to the next activity. This one, we will distribute some Post-It Notes stickers and you can write your feedback on these. Yeah, just take a couple and pass it along, please. So what you're going to do in this one, again, you could work in a small group but we ask you to write your suggestions. How can you optimize your contribution as a participant? Identify risks to or opportunities for better participation. Propose ways to help all voices to be heard in the meeting and answer questions. Here are the questions on the slide. The next slide, please.

In a small group, what can participants do during a meeting to help manage time better? How can the participants contribute without dominating the discussions? How can participants support the chair in keeping the meeting focused? Write down at least three practical actions participants can take to improve time and contribution management. We want you to then share what you've written down.

Again, we have 10 minutes. But if we could do it in less, then we'll have more time for the discussion after. I think we only have 20 minutes left in the session, so let's reduce it to 15 minutes so that we could have a follow-up after this. Okay. So let's get started. Thank you.

There was a question. How much time am I giving you now? Let's give you seven minutes now, and we'll have seven minutes for discussion.

Hello, everyone. We have one and a half minutes left. Can you begin to regroup, please? Hello. Can we resume, please? Can someone call the French group together? Can we please resume so that we can end on time?

Okay. We ended with the French-speaking the last time? Okay. So we ended with the French speaking the last time, so we will start with [Judith] now. We have seven minutes. So just give us a couple of suggestions that you would have come up with. I'm sure you have a couple of items, so just give us two and we move on.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE

We started by saying we always need to start on time. Secondly, we need a timekeeper, somebody who will check the amount of time allocated to every person. One minute per person. Three, stay focused on the subject matter. Number four, do not speak if something that you want to say has already been said, please. No need to repeat the same thing again. Always prepare what you're going to say ahead of time. Do not start thinking as you speak. And finally, you need to allow everyone to speak. It shouldn't be the same people speaking all the time, and it pertains to the leader to make that call. Thank you.

CLAIRE CRAIG

Thank you so much for that. I wouldn't recap. We may recap at the end. So we would go now to the English speaking on this side.

SEGUNFUNMI OLAJIDE

We have a few list, and the first is to ensure that participants should be encouraged to use the Q&A feature of the Zoom Meeting, and also the chat room. And if your second point is to appoint an online moderator to back the chair. Participants are to keep the intervention short and focused. Don't touch on related topics. A ground rule is if you've used the mic once, use the chat for other contributions. That's all. Thank you.

CLAIRE CRAIG

Thank you. I think we're getting some really good ideas coming out of this that I hope we'll use in our future meetings. We will now go to the Spanish-speaking group.

VANDA SCARTEZINI

Well, I'm going to talk in a mix of Portuguese and Spanish. That's your opportunity to understand.

For us, an important thing is to have a clock, a timer, that has to be very clear for the participants so that they can know what the time is, and that's clear for them, and this is to be in accordance with the agenda, the time that has been defined on the agenda.

The other thing is not to divert from the focus, to agree on the chair that the chair will call the person's attention if they start to divert. This is very important for us, because the Latinos, they speak a lot. And so it is important not to let them go away from the main focus of the meeting.

Third, to know very clearly what the agenda is and to have the speech prepared so that the time is assigned. Whatever the person is going to say has to be very clear, and they need to know what the time assigned in the agenda is. This way we can cover the three items.

CLAIRE CRAIG

Thank you, Vanda. And now we move to this group who will provide us with their input.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Thank you. I was, once again, the scribe. Sometime I would like to have a conversation about chat, because I actually think chat is a distraction from the efficiency of a meeting, but we should talk more about that.

We try to take this assignment very seriously. And you said, “What can participants do to help?” and we’ve heard some good things already. One thing that we said was practice your presentation and time it before the call so that you actually know how long it will take. And if it’s longer than your set time, then modify it. The other is limit the number of points. If it’s an improvisational intervention, someone said be rational. That seems hard to enforce.

And then another one was kind of interesting and hit a little close to home, was respect other people’s time and avoid a lot of extraneous things—jokes, thank yous, things like that that burn time on the clock, and they may be friendly, but find a balance

there and not spend a lot of time on that. I, unfortunately, am guilty of that particular thing. But yet I'm man enough to repeat it even though it's me. Anyways, that was one of the things that came up with. Thank you.

CLAIRE CRAIG

Thank you so much, Jonathan. In the interest of time, we move to the takeaways, and Evin will just speak to those.

EVIN ASHLEY ERDOĞDU

Sure. Thank you, Claire, and thank you all. This was clearly got a lot of brainstorming going, and hopefully you found it really insightful.

All of you here in the room and also in Zoom are participants at an ICANN meeting, whether it's your first or 150th. But all of you have been in a meeting that has not been so great, or has been really constructive and engaging, or maybe just somewhere in between. So whether you've been a leader or a participant, we just want you to think today about what has made those meetings effective or a waste of time.

So, how do you get at the heart of a good meeting? You all suggested a lot of good points here. Probably try to meet again and keep implementing these different changes. And just a couple points, we didn't really have time, unfortunately, today to get to it, but the culture here in the room is so diverse, and the multistakeholder model depends on a respectful and tolerant participation regardless of culture. Vanda mentioned, for instance,

maybe LAC has a certain culture about conversation. Maybe in APAC some people are kind of shy to speak up. So how do you respect the culture but ensure that everyone's participating fully because that is the multistakeholder model?

Someone over here said KISS or Keep It Simple, Stupid. There's a lot of jargon, you know. So sometimes when we can just be open and direct but kind, that can be really helpful. So hope you all had a really fun and candid conversations today and come away with some great ideas to implement going forward. I'll turn it back over to Claire.

CLAIRE CRAIG

Thank you, Evin. We have some useful resources that we will share with you, but I just want to share a conversation that I had with an interpreter who just met me at one of the events. What the interpreter was saying—because remember, our meetings, we do have interpretation—the importance of speaking slowly, it's critical. Sometimes we don't think about it, but in different languages, the way words are positioned, they may have to hear an entire sentence before they can translate it accurately. And sometimes we may find that the translation is not done accurately, and it's probably because the speaker is speaking too quickly. The other thing that we need to remember, and this is again, from the interpreter, was that part of why we speak is so that others will understand. If we speak too quickly, we're just speaking to ourselves and we're not speaking for the others.

So this is something that I would like to leave as a takeaway. We had some other resources that we wanted to share with you. But again, we just had just too much for the 60 minutes. And in the interest of time and in respecting everyone's time as well, we just want to say thank you for attending this session. Thanks to all of you who arrived on time and who participated. Sometimes you go to a meeting and people say, "Let's give them five minutes before we start," what you're actually saying is that you don't respect the persons who came on time. So you're telling the persons you came on time, but it really doesn't matter because we need to ensure that everybody is in the room. So let's take that into consideration as we move forward. Again, thank you for participating. Thanks, Evin, for supporting and facilitating. Thanks to the staff who helped with making this possible. And the ALAC group for agreeing that this would have been a good presentation for one of our Development sessions. Thanks to the interpreters, and continue to enjoy the rest of the ICANN meeting.

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