
Public Comment Summary Report

How We Meet: Reviewing the Implementation of the ICANN Public Meetings Strategy

Open for Submissions Date:

Wednesday, 09 April 2025

Closed for Submissions Date:

Monday, 19 May 2025

Summary Report Due Date:

Monday, 02 June 2025

Category: Operations

Requester: ICANN org, Other

ICANN org Contact(s): alperen.eken@icann.org

Open Proceeding Link: <https://www.icann.org/en/public-comment/proceeding/how-we-meet-reviewing-the-implementation-of-the-icann-public-meetings-strategy-09-04-2025>

Outcome:

The open proceeding generated a broad spectrum of community feedback on proposals to optimize ICANN Public Meetings, including potential changes such as shortening the Community Forum by one day, consolidating high-attendance sessions, and prioritizing cost-effective meeting locations. While there is notable support for exploring a five-day Community Forum, citing efficiency and cost savings, many contributors emphasized that any reduction in meeting days must not compromise the depth or inclusivity of stakeholder engagement.

Suggestions included more strategic scheduling, enhanced use of virtual tools for preparatory and follow-up sessions, and careful safeguarding of critical policy and community interactions. Proposals to group the Public Forum and Geopolitical Forum on the first day, introduce a new Board-community engagement session, and consolidate wrap-up sessions were generally viewed as promising, provided they are piloted and evaluated for impact.

The proceeding has advanced ongoing work by surfacing practical considerations and highlighting the need for transparent, community-driven decision-making. The value of the Public Comment process was evident in the diversity and nuance of input received: many participants stressed the importance of maintaining regional rotation, ensuring accessibility, and balancing cost savings with the core objectives of the multistakeholder model.

Several responses called for clear criteria and robust evaluation mechanisms before adopting new formats or policies, such as automatic shifts to virtual meetings or multi-year venue contracts. Overall, the Public Comment process has been instrumental in identifying both

opportunities and risks, ensuring that any future changes to ICANN's meeting strategy are grounded in broad consensus and reflective of the community's priorities

Section 1: What We Received Input On

The purpose of this Public Comment proceeding was to gather community input on proposed updates to the implementation of ICANN's Public Meetings Strategy. These updates were intended to enhance the efficiency, inclusivity, and cost-effectiveness of ICANN Public Meetings while addressing challenges such as rising costs, evolving community needs, and logistical complexities.

Specifically, feedback was sought on options including shortening the Community Forum by one day, prioritizing meeting locations that offer economical options, establishing policies for online meeting transitions during unforeseen circumstances, and exploring the feasibility of converting one annual meeting to a virtual-only format. Community insights on these topics were expected to help shape practical solutions aligned with ICANN's commitment to global participation and operational sustainability.

Participants were encouraged to review the detailed options outlined in the accompanying report and provide input on specific questions related to each proposal. Their feedback was considered critical in ensuring that ICANN Public Meetings remain effective platforms for collaboration while adapting to changing circumstances. The proceeding has now closed. All input received will inform further analysis and potential future changes, however no changes have been made at this stage.

Section 2: Submissions

Organizations and Groups:		
Name	Submitted by	Initials
Asian, Australasian, and Pacific Islands Regional At-Large Organization	Sana Nisar	
Country Code Names Supporting Organization Council	Alejandra Reynoso	
China Internet Network Information Center	Nan Chu	
Governmental Advisory Committee	Benedetta Rossi	
Business Constituency	Business Constituency	
Intellectual Property Constituency	Margaret Milam	
International Trademark Association	Lori Schulman	
Internet Infrastructure Coalition	Christian Dawson	
Internet Service Providers and Connectivity Providers Constituency	Philippe Fouquart	
Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic	Jakub Kubaň	
Non-Commercial Stakeholder Group	Mesumbe Tomslin Samme-Nlar	

Registrars Stakeholder Group	Zoe Bonython	
Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC)	SSAC Staff	
Tucows Domains	Sarah Wyld	
At-Large Advisory Committee	Policy staff in support of the At-Large Community	
Root Server System Advisory Committee (RSSAC)	RSSAC Staff	
Registries Stakeholder Group	Registries Stakeholder Group	

Individuals:

Name	Affiliation (if provided)	Initials
Mia Brickhouse	Meta	
Benson Mugure	STORM Guidance (Mauritius) Limited	
Nitin Walia		
Barkha Manral		
Jiali Li		
Michele Neylon		

Section 3: Summary of Submissions

Submissions to the open proceeding reflected a wide range of views on the proposed updates to ICANN's Public Meetings strategy. Many contributors supported exploring a shorter Community Forum, citing potential cost savings and improved efficiency, but emphasized that any reduction in meeting days must not compromise critical sessions or the inclusivity of stakeholder engagement. Several suggested that if a five-day format is piloted, it should be carefully evaluated, and some advocated for even further streamlining to four days.

There was broad, though not unanimous, support for consolidating high-attendance sessions such as the Public Forum and Geopolitical Forum on a single day, provided this does not diminish the value of the Public Forum as a venue for community feedback on the week's discussions. Some stakeholders expressed concern that moving the Public Forum earlier could reduce its effectiveness, while others saw value in front-loading high-profile sessions to set the tone for the meeting. The idea of a new, open Board-community engagement session was generally welcomed as a way to improve transparency and reduce redundant discussions, though several groups stressed that this should not replace tailored, individual interactions between the Board and specific community groups.

On meeting locations and formats, there was strong support for prioritizing venues that offer economical travel, accommodation, and facilities, including the possibility of returning to previously used locations within the regional rotation framework. However, many emphasized the need to maintain regional diversity, accessibility, and transparency in the selection process, with some warning against over-consolidation that could limit local engagement or create barriers for underrepresented regions.

Most respondents supported a clear policy for shifting meetings online in unforeseen circumstances, provided there are robust criteria and transparent communication. While a minority favored experimenting with regular or pilot virtual meetings, the majority underscored the continued value of in-person engagement for trust-building, effective policy development, and cross-community collaboration. Additional suggestions included strengthening sponsorship strategies, improving planning horizons, optimizing hybrid tools, and ensuring that any changes are community-driven, transparent, and subject to ongoing evaluation.

Section 4: Analysis of Submissions

The submissions to the open proceeding demonstrated a broad spectrum of support, concerns, and constructive suggestions regarding proposed updates to implementation of ICANN's Public Meetings strategy. There was moderate support for piloting a shortened Community Forum, primarily contingent on maintaining the quality and inclusivity of engagement. Many respondents agreed that cost savings and efficiency could be achieved by reducing the meeting by one day, especially if accompanied by improved scheduling, greater use of virtual preparatory sessions, and careful prioritization of essential in-person work.

However, several groups, including the Business Constituency and contracted parties, expressed reservations, emphasizing that a compressed schedule could limit opportunities for newcomers, reduce cross-community collaboration, and disproportionately impact participants from resource-constrained regions. The idea of grouping high-attendance sessions (Public Forum, Geopolitical Forum, Welcome Ceremony) on a single day received mixed feedback: some saw it as a practical way to optimize venue use and set the meeting's tone, while others cautioned that moving the Public Forum earlier could diminish its value as a forum for end-of-meeting reflection and accountability. The proposal to introduce a new open Board-community engagement session was generally welcomed for its potential to increase transparency and reduce redundancy, however several stakeholders insisted this should complement, not replace, tailored Board interactions with specific groups.

Regarding meeting locations, there was strong support for prioritizing cost-effective venues and returning to previously successful locations within the regional rotation model, provided this does not undermine regional diversity or accessibility. Many respondents highlighted the need for transparent criteria in venue selection, balancing cost savings with the imperative to reach underrepresented communities.

There was broad support for establishing a clear policy to shift meetings online in the event of unforeseen circumstances, with calls for robust communication protocols, technical preparedness, and well-defined triggers for such a shift. However, most stakeholders did not support converting one of the three annual ICANN Public Meetings to a regular online-only format, citing the irreplaceable value of in-person engagement for trust-building and policy development. Some supported piloting a fourth, virtual-only meeting or exploring hybrid models, but stressed the need for careful evaluation of participation impacts and time zone equity. Across all topics, respondents urged ICANN to maintain a community-driven, transparent process for any changes, with ongoing evaluation and feedback loops.

The How We Meet Discussion Group will further analyze the submissions and their inclusion in the final report.

Section 5: Next Steps

A dedicated “How We Meet” discussion group session will be held during ICANN83 in Prague, where community members will have the opportunity to observe the discussion and ask questions. This session is designed to ensure open dialogue and provide a platform for clarifying any outstanding issues or concerns regarding these options.

Following ICANN83, the How We Meet Discussion Group will finalize its report, which will be shared with the ICANN President and CEO. Later, an implementation plan based on the decision of the ICANN President and CEO’s decision will be developed. This plan will include clear timelines and the transparent implementation of the decision.