

ICANN | GAC

Governmental Advisory Committee

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Governmental Advisory Committee Comments Regarding Draft FY24-28 Operating & Financial Plan and Draft FY24 Operating Plan & Budget

Introduction

The ICANN Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) welcomes the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft FY24-28 Operating & Financial Plans and Draft FY24 Operating Plan & Budget published on 14 December 2022 (see - <https://www.icann.org/en/public-comment/proceeding/draft-fy2428-operating-financial-plan-and-draft-fy24-operating-plan-budget-14-12-2022>). GAC members have reviewed ICANN org's draft planning documents and herein provide comments regarding aspects of the draft proposals that are applicable to ongoing and future GAC activities.¹

General Comments

The GAC thanks the ICANN org Finance Team for continuing to evolve and improve the detail and scope of information provided to the community in the draft operating plan and budget materials. Over the past few years, the GAC Leadership has continued to observe improvements to the format and detail of the extensive materials made available for community review as well as the information provided during direct opportunities for community information sharing with the ICANN org Finance Team. It has also been noted that

¹ This comment was prepared by the Committee's leadership and is made on behalf of the entire GAC. It has been subjected to review of the GAC membership and is intended to complement, but not replace, any input that may be provided on the Draft FY24-28 Operating & Financial Plan and Draft FY24 Operating Plan & Budget by individual GAC members.

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this year's public comment opportunity has again been moved up to occur slightly earlier in the calendar year, continuing the trend of productively extending the time available for organizational and community planning.

Specific GAC Comments

The GAC acknowledges the apparent careful coordination within and between both the Draft Operating and Financial Plans for FY24-28 and FY24 (hereinafter Draft FY24-28 O&FP - <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/draft-op-financial-plan-fy24-28-draft-opplan-fy24-2022-en.pdf>) and the Draft FY24 Operating Plan & Budget (hereinafter Draft FY24 Budget <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/draft-budget-fy24-2022-en.pdf>). The documentation allows readers to see how the organization's strategic and operating initiatives are being addressed over the course of both one-year and five-year operating plan periods. This coordination is important in providing assurances to governments that particular areas of GAC interest are preserved as important organizational operational priorities that will be adequately resourced over the next five years.

Additional Budget Request Process

The GAC appreciates that the ICANN org has once again chosen to offer the Additional Budget Request (ABR) Process to recognized community groups this year. The ABR is a critical tool that permits various communities to experiment with and test innovative new processes or service offerings that can improve the work of the ICANN multistakeholder community.

Although the GAC does not make use of the ABR every year, for FY24 the committee has developed and submitted an ABR proposal seeking support from the organization to conduct a pilot effort to test the ability of the organization to offer sign language interpretation at future ICANN public meetings and events (*see* <https://community.icann.org/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=215287619>).

The proposal is consistent with ICANN's strategic objective to "Improve the effectiveness of ICANN's multistakeholder model of governance" and encompasses the intersection of ICANN Strategic Goal #6, "[s]upport and grow active, informed, and effective stakeholder participation" and Operating Initiative #3, to [e]volve and strengthen the Multistakeholder

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Model to facilitate diverse and inclusive participation on policymaking” (see Draft FY24-28 O&FP at page 236).

The proposed pilot effort will create opportunities to provide, test, and evaluate this capability and the GAC hopes the proposal will be viewed favorably by the ABR evaluators.

Community Engagement and Service

In describing functional activities involving community engagement and service, the Draft FY24-28 O&FP recognizes the need for increased resources to address “[s]takeholder demand for engagement and capacity development through the GAC’s Underserved Regions Working Group and Public Safety Working Group” (see Draft FY24-28 O&FP at page 74).

The GAC appreciates that ICANN org staff have also recognized the GAC’s intention to resume capacity development activities throughout the FY24 year – specifically setting aside a line item for this type of “Other Community Event” (see Draft FY24 Budget at page 18). Proactive capacity development activities throughout FY24 will help the GAC address the challenges and opportunities presented by a dynamic committee membership roster and will enable the GAC to onboard new participants while regularly informing all committee participants about topics of high interest to governments around the world.

Constituency Travel

The GAC endorses the commitment in the Draft FY24 Budget to maintain constituency travel support at the current FY23 budget levels. While it is possible that in future budget years it may be needed to temporarily increase community travel support to encourage attendance as ICANN public events continue to evolve in the hybrid-in-person formats, it is also reasonable to expect in FY24 that many potential attendees may still be either personally leery of or professionally not permitted to engage in international travel for much of the budget year. In fact, improvements to remote meeting access developed up to and through the ICANN75 public meeting may impact future demand for in-person attendance at public ICANN events.

The GAC also appreciates that ICANN org staff have not only recognized the GAC’s intention to proceed with planning the committee’s next High Level Governmental Meeting (HLGM) but also have made allowances for providing travel support resources for such an eventuality in FY24 (see Draft FY24 Budget at page 18). The Draft FY24-28 O&FP further reinforces that delivery of

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GAC HLGGM meetings are a key progress milestone needed to increase the engagement and participation of governments and intergovernmental organizations in the work of ICANN (*see* Draft FY24-28 O&FP at page 29). The GAC Leadership is currently collaborating with the ICANN Governmental Engagement Team to review and consider the best options available for the committee's next HLGGM in FY24 or beyond.

Closing

The GAC appreciates this opportunity to share the committee's perspective on the Draft FY24-28 Operating & Financial Plan and Draft FY24 Operating Plan & Budget. The committee looks forward to contributing to future comment opportunities as they relate to ICANN's finances and other operations-related proceedings.

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