

Initial Input FY 2013 draft Operational Plan and Budget

Introduction

The Strategic and Operational Planning Working Group (SOP WG) of the ccNSO welcomes the opportunity to comment on ICANN's FY13 draft Operating Plan and Budget Framework.

The SOP WG notes and appreciates that the FY2013 draft Ops Plan and Budget is by its very nature an extensive and complex document in order to reflect the increasing complexity and ICANN's level of operations and projects activities and their budgetary impact. The working group also notes that as a result of the changed public comment procedures the timeframe to provide substantial input has been limited from more than 40 days to 24 days. Therefore, the working group wants to call to your attention and underline that at this stage of the public comment process, it is only able to provide procedural input and comments.

The SOP working group intends to provide its substantive comments by 7 June 2012

The SOP WG was created at the Cairo ICANN meeting in November 2008. The goal of the WG is to coordinate, facilitate, and increase the participation of ccTLD managers in ICANN's strategic and Operating planning processes and budgetary processes. According to its Charter (<http://ccnso.icann.org/workinggroups/sopiwg-charter-18aug10-en.pdf>) the WG may as part of its activities take a position and provide input to the public comments forum and relate to ICANN or other Supporting Organizations and Advisory WG's on its own behalf. The views expressed are therefore not necessarily those of the ccNSO (Council and membership) or ccTLD community at large. The ccNSO Council and individual ccTLD managers, either collectively or individually, will be invited to endorse or support the position or input of the WG.

Membership of the WG is open to all ccTLD managers (members and non-members of the ccNSO).

Adverse impact changed public comment process

The SOP WG notes that the public comment on the draft Operational Plan and Budget has been adjusted to reflect the implementation of the Accountability and Transparency Review Teams Recommendations nr 15-17. As a result the public comment period on ICANN Draft FY2013 Operating Plan and Budget opened on 1 May 2012 and closes on 24 May 2012, and the "Response Cycle" closes on 15 June 2012. Effectively this results in a reduction of the public comment period from 31 days to 24 days, compared to last year's process. At the same time the volume and complexity of the FY 2013 draft Ops plan and Budget has increased considerably.

Without going into the merits of “ Comment” and “Response Comment” cycles, the SOP WG firmly believes that the revised, split, public comments timeframe for this fundamental process has the exact opposite effect than the intended purpose “*to provide adequate opportunity for meaningful and timely comment.*¹” This element should be taken into due account especially if a Supporting Organisation, such as the ccNSO, has to coordinate its own processes within the constraints of the public comment mechanism.

Although it is outside the scope of the draft Ops Plan and Budget, the WG urges ICANN, in particular the ICANN Board Public Participation and assigned staff, to review and reconsider the current, public comment process for the future, including its timeframes.

Need to increase predictability of planning process

Since its creation in November 2008, the SOP WG has been involved and provided input in ICANN’s strategic and operational and budget planning processes. On numerous occasions, the SOP WG has underscored the importance of predictable and adequate scheduling, which is an essential aspect of recurring and foreseeable planning processes like the operational and budget planning cycle. The SOP WG is concerned that only after the draft Ops Plan and Budget was made public, briefing calls were organised and eventually re-scheduled. Moreover, the fact that the calls were set halfway through the public comment period itself generates further worries and doubts on the effectiveness of the process.

The SOP WG strongly urges ICANN to be consistent with its planning, and schedule well in advance of publication of its Operational Plan and Budget (Framework).

Clarification schedule FY 2013 Ops Plan and Budget decision

The SOP WG noted that the Board has changed its working procedures, in particular with regard to decision-making. As a result the timeline of decisions on the FY 2013 Ops Plan and Budget has become unclear. We would like to understand if the Board is going to decide on the FY 2013 Ops Plan and Budget at the Prague meeting, and if not, when this will happen.

¹ ATRT Recommendation 17.