

January 24, 2011

This letter is to provide comment on ICANN's strategic planning process.

The ccNSO's Strategic and Operational Planning Work Group (SOP WG) was created in November 2008 in order to coordinate, facilitate, and increase the participation of ccTLD managers in ICANN's strategic and operational planning processes and budgetary processes.

The SOP WG, and the ccTLD community, have been working diligently and consistently to make constructive contributions to all aspects of ICANN's strategic and operational planning, by maintaining dialogue and providing constructive feedback.

Recent moves by ICANN, however, have seriously compromised the ability of the SOP WG, and indeed all stakeholders, to adequately and provide valuable feedback on the strategic planning process and the plan itself. During communications with senior ICANN staff in mid-November 2010, the SOP WG was informed that the Strategic Plan would be approved at the ICANN meeting in Cartagena, that is to say December 10th, 2010. However, ICANN missed all of its own deadlines for submitting a copy of the Strategic Plan in advance to the SOP WG to allow for enough time for meaningful comment. Finally, on November 27th, ICANN posted the draft Strategic Plan for public comment, with a comment period open until January 10, 2011.

The SOP WG, and other stakeholders, are attempting in earnest to provide ICANN the feedback it requires and requests to improve its draft Strategic Plan. It has been frustrating and counterproductive having no commitment to timelines and process. The very feedback from the community that ICANN professes to desire is being compromised by the ICANN process, or lack thereof, itself. As well, ICANN's accountability has been seriously compromised, which is ironic considering this is one of ICANN's key strategic objectives. In addition, the process contradicts previous comments made by ICANN's Chair and CEO on the desirability of community participation in the strategic planning process.

ICANN should alleviate this situation by firstly, establishing an organized process that it can commit to, and secondly, increasing the number of days provided for public comment to 60 days. This may require changing internal planning processes, but is crucial to ensuring sufficient time for community members to provide appropriate feedback.

Regards,

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