

07 August 2020

RE: Process of Adoption of the FY 2021-2025 Operating Plan and FY 2021 Operating Plan and Budget

Katrina Sataki  
Chair  
ccNSO Council

Dear Katrina Sataki

Thank you for your communication of 6 July 2020 regarding the process followed for the ICANN Board Adoption of the FY 2021-2025 Operating Plan and FY 2021 Operating Plan and Budget. Your letter has been published on the ICANN Correspondence Page here: [Letter](#). Your letter raises important questions about how the ICANN Board, community and org can better coordinate when unanticipated changes arise within our planning cycles.

In December 2019, ICANN org published for [Public Comment](#) the draft Five-Year FY21-25 Operating and Financial Plan and draft Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) Budget. These drafts were developed based on the approved FY21-25 Strategic Plan. Both plans were the subject of broad participation and engagement from the ICANN community.

ICANN org engaged on the draft Five-Year FY21-25 Operating and Financial Plan and draft Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) Budget with the community throughout the planning process. The public comment forum which ran for 67 days, closed on 25 February 2020. There were a total of nine community groups and three individuals that submitted a grand total of 171 comments. All comments received during the Public Comment Forum for the initial drafts were considered and none required material changes to the drafts published, though useful input was provided that led to improve the clarity of the final documents. In addition to the Public Comment Forum, ICANN actively solicited community feedback and consulted with the ICANN Community in various sessions as follows:

- On 12 September 2019 and 13 September 2019, ICANN org held Community webinars on the FY21 Planning Schedule.
- On 12 January 2020 ICANN org held two Community webinars on the draft Five-Year FY21-25 Operating and Financial Plan and draft Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) published for public comment
- On 08 March 2020, ICANN org held a Community webinar at ICANN 67 where the ICANN Board and org engaged with representatives of the ICANN bodies that submitted comments during the Public Comment Forum to help ensure the comments were adequately understood and appropriate consideration was given to them.
- Several individual SO/AC engagement sessions were held, notably at the invitation of ALAC and the ccNSO SOPC to review the draft plans, during which multiple topics and questions were addressed.
- On 28 April 2020, ICANN Org held 2 Community webinars on the revised draft FY21-25 Operating and Financial Plan and FY21 Operating Plan and Budget.

After the public comment forum concluded, the critical and unusual global circumstance of the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic arose and confinement measures expanded worldwide around mid-march. In response, ICANN org evaluated possible scenarios of impact on its plans and financial position. As a result, ICANN org and Board Finance Committee determined to update the draft plans to account for the anticipated economic impact. On 27 April 2020, ICANN org published, for the purpose of transparency, the updated plans proposed for board adoption and organized two informational webinars to explain the changes suggested to the draft plans (with supporting rationale), answer questions, and collect community input on these changes ([FY21 Planning Webinars](#)). These webinars were aimed at providing a timely, open and public opportunity to bring clarity and transparency on the updated plans, where anyone can provide input, have questions answered, and everyone can hear the same information. As ICANN org worked to present the next year's plans to the Board by the mid May to allow for sufficient time for the Empowered Community processes to run prior to the start of the fiscal year, there was not sufficient time to open a second and meaningful public comment forum over the COVID-19-related changes. In the timeframe, the upfront publication and webinars appeared to be the most effective solution to provide a broad, open, public and fair opportunity for the broadest possible audience to receive information, obtain understanding and provide input.

We value the constructive input and the opportunity that your letter provides to explore further the possibilities to find suitable solutions for engagement that can be used in exceptional circumstances like the ones that have led to the process of adoption of the FY21 plans, including the possibility to organize shorter public comment processes. This will be taken into account in the continuous improvement of mechanisms that ICANN retains to engage substantially and openly with the community and the public.

We appreciate and thank you for sending your letter thus creating the opportunity to address this important topic. We believe that your letter and this response further contribute to the useful engagement that results in improvements of the mechanisms and processes that ICANN offers to continuously expand its engagement, transparency and accountability to the public.

Best regards,



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