

ICANN Business Constituency (BC) Comment on [ICANN Budget and Meeting Structure](#)

7-Feb-2025

Background

This document is the response of the ICANN Business Constituency (BC), from the perspective of business users and registrants, as defined in our Charter. The mission of the BC is to ensure that ICANN policy positions are consistent with the development of an Internet that:

1. Promotes end-user confidence because it is a safe place to conduct business;
2. Is competitive in the supply of registry and registrar and related services; and
3. Is technically stable, secure and reliable.

BC Feedback on ICANN Budget and Meeting Structure (“How We Meet”)

ICANN is a not-for-profit entity and should not be seen as amassing huge capital reserves. The BC is concerned that seeking to secure further savings through meeting budget cuts – which is where a mass of community work gets done to impact on the global remit of ICANN – should not be the immediate path when more work is envisaged in the years ahead.

Budget:

The budget document shared indicated a desire for savings of up to \$2M. However, it is unclear whether this amount represents projected savings for the financial year from the total budget of over \$12M or if it applies to each public meeting. If the latter, this would imply a drastic reduction in the number of in-person meetings, as hosting a single in-person public meeting currently costs approximately \$4.7M.

While savings might be achieved by reducing the number of meeting days or converting one public meeting into a fully virtual event, it is essential to recognize that face-to-face meetings play a crucial role in advancing community efforts. Reducing these opportunities could cause unintended strain leading to more volunteer burnout or elongating further the lifecycles of PDPs and other essential community work.

Meeting Structure:

The BC believes that rather than reducing the number of public meetings, ICANN should maintain a quarterly meeting structure, with three in-person meetings and, potentially, one fully

virtual meeting. Given the work ahead—including the next round rollout, EU member state transposition of NIS2, SSAD implementation, DNS Abuse contract enforcement, and more—there will likely be an increased need for community engagement and meetings.

To introduce a once-per-year fully virtual meeting format, the BC proposes implementing a pilot for one or two years, followed by a review to assess its effectiveness. The virtual meeting should be strategically scheduled either in the quarter before the AGM or immediately after the first in-person meeting of the year.

Virtual Meetings:

A major challenge with virtual meetings is the timing, as some regions are inevitably disadvantaged due to time zone differences. When scheduling virtual meetings, priority should be given to regions with poor connectivity, ensuring that meetings occur during working hours when technical support is available.

Infrastructural deficits in parts of Africa and the Global South further complicate virtual participation. Hosting meetings at times when connectivity support is minimal places these regions at a significant disadvantage and should be carefully considered in planning.

Sponsorship Revenue:

ICANN should seek to expand sponsorship cadres and provide opportunities for smaller event essentials like coffee breaks and meeting takeaways to be sponsored. Budget savings can be further secured through new tiers of sponsorship. While local hosts for public meetings are already required to cover a portion of the meeting budget, ICANN could explore ways to enhance this model by encouraging increased financial contributions from host countries or ccTLDs, where feasible

Additionally, monetizing streamed content on various platforms could generate supplementary revenue, reducing the burden on ICANN's core budget.

BC/CSG Interest:

Historically, early in the meeting week (typically on Sunday), the BC held a members-only session to align positions and set expectations before the formal meeting week. Later in the week, a 90-minute open session allowed for reviews of ongoing developments, interactions with the ICANN Board, cross-community discussions, and engagement with ICANN leadership. However, in recent cases, BC meetings have been reduced to a single 90-minute open session, limiting opportunities for engagement. The BC strongly advocates for restoring its previous meeting structure.

The CSG meetings at ICANN public events have consistently served as a valuable platform for in-depth constituency interaction. The trial of a panel session at ICANN San Juan attracted significant interest, highlighting the potential benefits of allocating dedicated time for such sessions within the CSG meeting structure.

Additionally, the NCPH, comprising the CSG and NCSG, has several key tasks to accomplish collectively within the GNSO each year. Regular statutory meetings at ICANN public events will aid in aligning on key issues before critical deadlines. While Day Zero events at ICANN meetings have proven beneficial, their frequency should be increased, and a dedicated intersessional event should be reinstated to enhance coordination within the NCPH.

Conclusion:

The BC urges ICANN to reconsider the approach of cutting meeting budgets as a means of achieving savings. In-person engagement is fundamental to the success of the community's work. Alternative revenue sources, including sponsorship expansion and content monetization, should be explored to maintain the effectiveness of ICANN's meetings while ensuring financial prudence. Additionally, adjustments to meeting structures and schedules should prioritize inclusivity and participation, particularly for regions with connectivity challenges.

This comment was drafted by Lawrence Olawale-Roberts with edits by Mason Cole and Segunfunmi Olajide. It was approved in accordance with our [Charter](#).