

**Travel Support Guidelines Teleconference
TRANSCRIPTION
Friday 15 May 2009 03:00 UTC**

Note: The following is the output of transcribing from an audio recording of the Travel Support Guidelines Teleconference on Friday 15 May 2009, at 03:00. Although the transcription is largely accurate, in some cases it is incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages or transcription errors. It is posted as an aid to understanding the proceedings at the meeting, but should not be treated as an authoritative record. The audio is also available at: <http://audio.icann.org/atlarge/Travel-Guidelines-15-05-2009.mp3>

Present for this teleconference:

- GNSO Council Chair

Staff:

Heidi Ullrich

Glen de St. Gery

Kevin Wilson

Adigo Operator: Adigo Operator

Operator: Joined.

Operator: Joined.

Please say your name, followed by the # sign.

Operator: Left.

Heidi: Heidi.

Operator: Joined.

Kevin: Kevin Wilson

V: Good evening, Kevin.

Operator: Joined.

Kevin: Hello. This is Kevin Wilson.

Heidi: Hi, Kevin. It's Heidi.

Kevin: Hello, Heidi.

Operator: Joined.

Kevin: Who joined the call?

Maya: Hi. This is the French/Spanish interpreter.

Kevin: Okay. Great.

And who is here today on the English side?

Kevin: This is Kevin Wilson, and I hear Heidi.

Heidi: Yes. This is Heidi Ullrich.

I: Hi, Heidi. This is Maya.

Heidi: Hi, Maya.

V: [inaudible]

Operator: Joined.

Kevin: Hello Avri -- are you there?

Avri Hello?

Kevin: Avri?

Avri: Yes.

Kevin: Great. This is Kevin. And Heidi's on the call, too.

Avri: Okay. Hi, Kevin.

Kevin: Hi.

Avri: Hi, Heidi.

Kevin: Are you on the East Coast?

Avri: No. I'm in Geneva.

Kevin: Oh, you are. We're [inaudible] it's morning.

Avri: Yes. It's early morning. Yes. It's about 5 in the morning.

Kevin: Oh. 5 in the morning. Okay. That's a little better than 3 in the morning. Not much. I think this will wake you up with a thrilling subject, I'm sure.

Avri: Yes.

Kevin: Did I hear Cheryl on the call, Heidi?

Heidi: I don't believe so. Not yet.

Kevin: Okay. Well, [inaudible]

Glen: Glen [inaudible] Kevin.

Kevin: Hi, Glen. Glen, what time is it for you? You're in the same time zone with Avri?

[Technical difficulties -- roaring sound]

I: She's in France, yes?

[laughter]

Heidi: Hi, every.

Kevin: I guess we'll wait a couple more minutes.

Maya: And Kevin, this is the French interpreter. Because it is kind of the end of the day for us here in Los Angeles, we're a bit more exhausted. For the simultaneous, if you could just slow down just a tad for me, I would highly appreciate that.

Kevin: Okay if I spoke slowly?

Maya: Yes. I mean not "so" slowly. But just not too quickly.

Kevin: Good. Yes. Heidi is doing a good job of telling me to speak slowly.

Maya: Okay. Thank you so much.

Kevin: Okay. Good.

Heidi -- do you have the ability to see how many people are on the call?

Heidi: No. Adigo can take care of that.

Kevin: Well, I can see on Adigo. You're talking about the Adobe Connect? Or on the phone?

Heidi: I'm also connected with the Adigo Operator, who can tell me. Let me just see if we can ask.

Kevin: Okay. Because it's a pretty quick call if it's just Avri. Because if all of us jump to the bottom... I'm sure she will want to know the bottom line.

Adigo Operator: Heidi, it's Tonya. There are four people total on your English channel.

Heidi: Okay. Anything on French?

Adigo Operator: Maya, can you answer that one? Let me confirm, but I don't think so.

No. No one is on French.

Adigo Operator: Okay.

Kevin: Okay. I know the four people including -- this is Kevin and Heidi and Aubrey, I heard.

Adigo Operator: And Glen.

Kevin: And Glen. Okay.

Adigo Operator: And I guess I would be five.

Kevin: Is your name Maya?

Adigo Operator: No. I'm Tonya.

Glen: And Heidi -- I've just been informed Les Allinson will be joining us. I wonder if [inaudible]

Kevin: So, should we... I'm trying to think of what the best way to do this is. Avri, maybe... Heidi -- what do you think? Should we go ahead and start? I think there may be more people coming.

Heidi: I think one more person will be dialing in. I'm just trying to see if I can get him on Skype. He's in Fiji, and he normally has difficulties dialing in. I'm just checking.

But go ahead and begin, if you wish.

Kevin: Okay. I'll go ahead and start, and have you listen in.

I see there's also someone on the Adobe Connect, as well. We have a full house. Great.

This is being recorded, as well?

Heidi: Yes.

Glen: Yes.

Kevin: So I'll speak to those who might be listening to this, later.

This is the Travel Support Guidelines Presentation. It's just a quick briefing. This is primarily as a courtesy to the community on capturing the essence of the work we've been doing and that the community has been doing over the last couple of months.

So we're doing a quick presentation here, and we can open it up for questions, as well.

My name is Kevin Wilson. I'm the Chief Financial Officer for ICANN. The purpose for this is to simply clarify what travel supports will be in FY10. To share with the community initial thoughts on community feedback on the levels of support, and then

give a quick update on where we are on our effectiveness of delivering support. And then the impact on the FY10 budget.

Then we'll go over some of the process points, so people are clear on what we're planning to deliver in terms of travel.

I think the main point here that I'm showing on Slide 2 here is that the purpose for the travel policy and travel guidelines is to facilitate the work of ICANN. Not distract from the work of ICANN. I think there's a common belief that we're spending a lot of money.

We have a kind of lose-lose situation -- where we're spending a lot of money and a lot of staff time and effort, and getting a lot of unhappy travelers showing up. They're either not getting funded or not getting funded well, or they're not -- for a variety of reasons -- really appreciating their work.

More importantly, they're distracted from the work of ICANN. Our goal is to change that to a win-win-win, where we're spending money efficiently and getting the work of ICANN done in the most effective way we can.

I think the first question that comes up is why would ICANN provide support? This is an evolving process. I think these three reasons really dictate the purpose for the support.

The first is to allow participation for those that might not be able to afford it otherwise. Particularly from developing countries. There's that element.

There's also an element of outreach to facilitate new members to participate and engage with the ICANN community, who might not have otherwise done so. To bring them into the ICANN tent and participate in that process and learn about the process.

That's most actively demonstrated with the fellowship program.

The third one is -- I think the primary focus -- especially for participants in this call... to facilitate the policy-development afterwards. Although a lot of work is done offline and remotely, and we certainly will see here in this presentation and elsewhere... there's an increasing desire to use tools and resources better to increase participation.

I think there's a strong belief that the face-to-face interactions at the ICANN meetings and other venues, as well. It's very important for there to be that face-to-face interaction. Therefore, people need to come together to get the work of ICANN done.

Striking the right balance between being fiscally responsible and accomplishing those things is the challenge of the travel guidelines.

Briefly, on the process that we've encountered today and have been working through... We'll walk through this, for those who may not be as familiar with the travel-support process.

There was an initial workshop in Delhi, at the Delhi meeting, a little over a year ago.

There, the concept of travel support and formalizing it as a policy procedure was brought forth.

There was a lot of discussion -- online forum and e-mails, et cetera. After that, there were several drafts posted. There were comments made. I think there was a lot of input culminated at the Paris meeting. A travel-support procedure was provided to the board.

Those travel-support procedures were posted in August of 2008. We've been generally following those procedures, and knowing that that was a first-pass at the support procedures.

There was commitment at that time to revisit those procedures, and that's what we're doing right now. From the lessons learned over the last year, and the feedback we've received.

In Mexico City, we held a workshop to elicit more feedback on those procedures. We opened an online comment period. We held a public forum for that and we've had several conference calls on that.

We've also issued a travel summary that went out to supported travelers for the Sydney meeting, and provided a FAQ for that. That's where we are, right now.

The table chart here shows what the current support is for the current procedures. The GNSO roughly has about 13 supported travelers -- including the chair. The non-com appointees and half the remaining counselors.

[I know when there's duplicate -- like we had this year -- then the two categories, and sometimes it can be less].

The CCNSO had similar chair/non-com appointees and half the remaining counselors. They have not used all of those, but that was their allotment.

The ASO also had a chair and half the remaining counselors. They have [met the client] to discuss travel support in the FY09 period. Board and board members and liaisons are supported for each meeting.

At-Large, generally, is the 15 ALAC council members. And the approximately 8 RALO leaders that come to the ICANN meetings. Obviously then in the Mexico City meeting, we also have the At-Large Summit, in which I think there were about 80 or 85 people. The [inaudible] leaders from various regions were also at that summit.

The Fellows are about 20 to 25, per meeting. A slightly different method of allocation -- but it works out to be about 20 to 25. Non-com, a little over 20. Then the other groups -- policy-making and advisory-group making... Supporting organizations and advisory committees... [S-AC], our second GAC, had no travel support this year from the policy.

We've heard today from feedback from that -- and there's an online public form, which has recently closed... We've submitted our analysis and summary analysis of those

comments. I'll send that to Glen and Heidi and Gabi tonight. You can send those to your groups, and make sure that... If they'd like to, they can read all the comments and the summary of those.

Essentially, it boils down to these. There are some who suggest that ALAC should be reduced back down to roughly half of the council support level. There's also feedback that ALAC should be supported at a higher level -- roughly equivalent to the [SO]s.

In addition, the RALOs have... There's been a request for the RALO groups to have face-to-face meetings in their regions, for each of the RALOs. In addition to those that come to the ICANN meetings. The leaders of those groups.

The GNSOs requested, in particular, support for all counselors. Not just half the counselors. It's particularly felt that their work was getting distracted by funding just half the counselors.

Some requests for GNSO support at a higher level -- mainly business class travel for all travelers. Then there's also been discussions about what the GNSO restructuring would do with this travel-support process.

In addition, the GAC formalized a request for support -- focusing on some of the lesser-developed countries. I think registries, in particular -- and registrars, in general -- have also voiced a thought that travel funding from ICANN for various constituencies and stakeholder groups should be reduced or [held tight].

So it's not unanimous in one direction, but there was a strong belief in growth.

This next chart -- Slide 7 -- is a draft slide. I don't want anyone to take it away as the gospel on what would happen in the next set of guidelines. But it is the one that we're using for the draft budget, which we're about to post this week. I wanted to share this with you.

That's really the purpose for this call. The reason we've pulled it together today is to give the community members early input or early awareness of our financial assumptions that we're using for this.

Essentially, I'll highlight the changes to what was presented in the framework at Mexico City, and what the changes are to the budget.

In essence, it's about a \$300,000 increase in community travel support. This reflects the community's strong wishes to increase the support of the community members. The strong proviso is that it increases the ability for the supporting organizations and advisory groups to get ICANN's work done.

This draft will show an increase in the funding for counselors. The level would be roughly equivalent to that of the counselor level. Instead of half the counselors being funded, we'd have all counselors -- or the equivalent number of that.

The thought on CCMSO was to maintain that at the half-level. The ASO, as well, at half-level.

The GAC requests... This draft guideline and the financial assumptions that go into the budget... is that we would have a modest program that would start in something like 5 or 6 funded GAC members. Possibly through something like the mechanism of the Fellowship Program.

For At-Large, the financial assumption is that the 15 ALAC counselors would continue to be funded for the ICANN meeting. Those would not be reduced down to the other levels. That would continue, as is. I have here eight RALO members, as well.

If you want to put a little footnote there, I think there's some more work to be done, in possibly considering the idea of regional meetings or local meetings. To possibly do some support for those, as an alternative or to supplement and complement that.

This assumption is that SSAC and RSAC do not change their support. Those are the numbers. That's how we got to 300,000. Once again, I emphasize that -- that that slide is for general purposes that we're using for the budget assumptions.

I also want to mention that the At-Large Summit numbers are not included in Fy09.

Slide 8 captures... Yes, Heidi -- thank you. I just got a note that I was coming up blank with a word for "General Assemblies." The regional meetings with RALOs. I apologize for that. Let me drive home that word.

Slide 8 shows not very significant financial impact on the budget, but that we should address more clearly on how to calculate economy class. Making sure that per-diems are appropriate for a given city and that sort of thing. There were some comments that we heard on those areas. We're working on those, as well.

We've also heard lots of comments on logistics. Everything from, "Not enough time in the travel planning," to "Obtaining visas," or "Not accommodating for visas in different countries with different schedules, et cetera."

We've heard a lot of comments on the travel support not being responsive. And concerns with the travel agents, themselves.

This Slide 10 is just a quick snapshot of some of the work we've done on the logistics. In preparation for the Sydney meeting, I just wanted to highlight a couple of these.

I think that the overall theme is that we're really working hard internally to shore up our system, so that at least when travelers arrive, they're not only talking about travel and the headaches they've had with the process and the ICANN administration of the travel [technical difficulties] But those issues are [inaudible] resolved.

So we've issued a travel summary, which had an FAQ. And we've heard

Operator: Joined

We've heard more feedback on those travel administration. I think we're making good progress on that.

We have a one-stop-serves-all e-mail account. And we have an exception process that's being processed so there's a fast turnaround, and we're clear internally how to process exception requests. If someone wants to change their flight and come a day early and save money -- or come a day early and spend more money -- how would we respond to those?

We've come up with a lot of help with that, and we'll document that in the next draft of the travel guidelines.

So I think we've heard that travel support is still an effective tool to help the [inaudible] work of ICANN stakeholders. I think we want to drive home that point.

When I put my CFO hat on in cost containment, I think that we should be cutting back on travel. But there is so much good work that's come from the travel support -- we need to consider this as a good use of funds.

There've also been quite a few comments and suggestions on the way meetings are run. Both in the selection of venues -- to consider the costs... In particular, the cost to the participants that aren't supported by ICANN. That's being factored into the meeting-planning process. And that there's more remote participation and tools that are utilized to improve that process.

What of processes going forward?

I mentioned earlier the comment period [end], and actually we've posted the analysis today of all those comments. I'll send them on after the meeting here, to be distributed if you like.

This week, by the 17th of May, we post our draft of the FY10 operating plan and budget. That will be open for comment up through the Sydney meeting. That includes the extra \$300,000 in the travel support. We're going through the final review with the board finance committee, actually, in an hour and a half. Subject to that review, we'll go ahead and post it.

The travel-support guidelines... Last year we called it a policy, and it merged into a document called the travel-support procedures. That was posted last August. We're calling it now a "Travel Support Guidelines." Hopefully, that word will stick. That will describe all of the parameters that we're discussing, and more. It will clarify the principles as well as the travelers who would be supported by constituency.

I think there is a strong belief that we need to continue. It's wise for us to let the constituencies decide for themselves, and not dictate, and come up with micromanagement. Some constituencies and stakeholder groups have different reasons than others for supporting travel. We want to encourage that decision at the local level. At the same time, we want to guide that along, so that the work of ICANN continues as much as possible.

The next point is -- after the open comments are received on the travel-support guidelines, we'll get community feedback. We'll integrate that feedback into the final

budget, and that budget will be prepared in final form, and sent to the community for final feedback during the Sydney meeting.

At the board meeting, the board would presumably approve the budget with those travel-support numbers in them. Shortly thereafter, or even shooting for during the Sydney meeting, we'll post the travel-support guidelines for FY10. Also, shortly thereafter -- near the same time -- we'll submit a travel summary. Meeting specific, it would provide the details of support for that meeting -- and the administrative details.

The goal is to set expectations. We're improving. We're not going to make it to the gold standard by Sydney. We're confident there are enough challenges and exceptions that we're working through, and getting our ducks in order. But we're making progress, and we're open to community. We'll see that and appreciate the progress we're making.

We are holding ourselves up to the gold standard by the Seoul meeting in the fall. But like I said here... The goal is to have the constituents discuss policy and do the work of policy. It's not about travel support other than, "Did you have a nice trip?"

Are there any questions or comments from the few people on the call?

Brief update... I think there might've been someone that joined later on. This is just to summarize the administration of...

Avri: No. It was me coming back in, because I have a terrible connection.

Oh, you do. Avri -- could you hear okay?

Avri: Yes. It came in and out, but I managed to follow it.

Operator: Joined.

Avri: Oh, someone else joined, again.

Kevin: Great. I just wanted to make sure you're clear that your travel support grew. That really had a strong influence on us. So I wanted to applaud the community efforts in giving us feedback. One of the key factors in this is that we really don't want to have councils so distracted on travel. How to allocate it and how to measure it and that sort of thing. To get them more on the policymaking efforts.

Avri: Yes. It's difficult for the council, at this point. There's the whole reorganization -- in addition to policy. In addition to the changing roles of counselors versus working-group members.

I hope you're right, that we stop talking about travel, soon. But I'm just not sure that that's the case.

Kevin: Okay. Well, I appreciate any specific suggestions you have on making it happen. [inaudible]

All right. Good. That's pretty much the end of my presentation. Any other questions or comments online or orally on the phone? That'd be great.

I wanted to thank everybody for joining the call. Thank you to translators. Thank you, Heidi and Glen, for the support. We'll talk to you soon.

Heidi: I think we have a question.

Kevin: Okay.

[technical difficulties -- roaring sound]

Kevin: Hello?

Glen: [inaudible]

Kevin: Glen -- you said there's a question?

Heidi: No, I'm just checking. Just a moment, please.

Kevin: Okay.

Glen: No, I'm fine. Are you all right [inaudible]?

F: I had like about a 50% packet loss on this call. But I've caught most of it, and I appreciate it.

Kevin: Good. Okay. Great. Avri, thank you. Take care, everybody. We'll all sign off and say goodnight or good morning. Good day. Wherever you are.

F: Okay. Thanks.

Kevin: Thank you. Bye-bye.

F: Bye.

[session ends]