ICANN | GAC

Governmental Advisory Committee

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Governmental Advisory Committee Comments Regarding Draft FY22-26 Operating & Financial Plan and Draft FY22 Operating Plan & Budget

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Introduction

The ICANN Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) welcomes the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft FY22-26 Operating & Financial Plans and Draft FY22 Operating Plan & Budget published on 17 December 2020 (see - https://www.icann.org/public-comments/draft-opplan-budget-fy22-26-2020-12-17-en). GAC members have reviewed ICANN org's draft planning documents and herein provide targeted comments regarding specific aspects of the draft proposals that are applicable to GAC activities.[1]

General Comments

The GAC thanks the ICANN org Finance Team for further improving the detail and scope of information provided to the community in the draft operating plan and budget materials. Over the past few years, the GAC Leadership has observed ongoing improvements to the format and detail of the extensive materials made available for community review as well as the information provided during direct opportunities for community information sharing with the ICANN org Finance Team. It has also been noted that this year's public comment opportunity

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[1] This comment was prepared by the Committee's leadership and is made on behalf of the entire GAC. It has been subjected to review of the GAC membership and is intended to complement, but not replace, any input that may be provided on the Draft FY22-26 Operating & Financial Plan and Draft FY22 Operating Plan & Budget by individual GAC members.

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has again been moved up to occur earlier in the calendar year, continuing the trend of productively extending the time period available for organizational and community planning.

Specific GAC Comments

The GAC is pleased to acknowledge the apparent careful coordination within and between both the Draft Operating and Financial Plans for FY22-26 and FY22 (hereinafter Draft FY22-26 O&FP - https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/draft-op-financial-fy22-26-opplan-fy22-2020-en.pdf) and the Draft FY22 Operating Plan & Budget (hereinafter Draft FY22 Budget draft-budget-fy22-2020-en.pdf). The draft documentation allows readers to see how the organization's strategic and operating initiatives are addressed over the course of both one-year and five-year operating plan periods. This coordination is important in providing assurances to governments that particular areas of GAC interest are preserved as important organizational operational priorities that will be adequately resourced over the next five years.

Community Engagement and Service

In describing functional activities involving community engagement and service, the Draft FY22-26 O&FP continues to recognize the need for increased resources to address "[s]takeholder demand for engagement and capacity development through the GAC's Underserved Regions Working Group and Public Safety Working Group" (*see* Draft FY22-26 O&FP at page 116).

In past years, the GAC has had to rely on the ICANN Additional Budget Request phase of the annual ICANN budget cycle to secure support for its successful capacity building workshop program. The GAC was pleased to receive assurances from ICANN org staff this year that those workshops can be adequately resourced from the core organizational budget during FY22 as the community eventually returns to face-to-face meetings. The GAC hopes to be able to use the available engagement resources to plan and implement two face-to-face regional capacity building workshops and another workshop in conjunction with an ICANN public meeting during FY22.

Constituency Travel

The GAC also supports the resource commitment in the Draft FY22 Budget to maintain constituency travel support at the current FY21 budget levels. While it is possible that in future

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budget years it may be needed to temporarily increase community travel support to encourage attendance as ICANN public events return to in-person formats, it is also reasonable to expect in FY22 that many potential attendees will be either personally leery of or professionally not permitted to engage in international travel for much of the budget year. In fact, improvements to remote meeting access developed during ICANN 67, 68 and 69 may limit future demand for in-person attendance at public ICANN events.

The GAC appreciates that ICANN org staff have not only recognized the GAC's intention to proceed with planning the committee's next High Level Governmental Meeting (HLGM) but also have made apparent allowances for providing travel support resources for such an eventuality in FY22 (*see* Draft FY22 Budget at page 12). The Draft FY22-26 O&FP further reinforces that delivery of GAC HLGM meetings are a key progress milestone needed to increase the engagement and participation of governments and intergovernmental organizations in the work of ICANN (*see* Draft FY22-26 O&FP at page 49). The GAC Leadership is currently collaborating with the ICANN Governmental Engagement Team to review and consider the best options available for the committee's next HLGM in FY22 or beyond.

Operating Initiatives

GAC members generally support the 15 ICANN Operating Initiatives as described in the draft documentation (see Draft FY22-26 O&FP at page 14) – particularly the initiative to "Monitor legislation, regulation, norms, principles, and initiatives in collaboration with others that may impact the ICANN mission". It is noted that this important operating initiative is incorporated across a number of the ICANN organization's functional activities in both the five-year and one-year time frames including in the Office of The Chief Technology Officer (*id*. at pages 65 and 234), Government and Intergovernmental Engagement (*id.* at pages 113 and 283), Global Communications and Language Services (*id.* at pages 124 and 293), and Governance Support (*id.* at pages 137 and 307).

Governmental regulatory attention related to Internet issues has become one of the key factors impacting the current Internet ecosystem, and in particular ICANN, in recent years. Noting that ICANN is committing resources in each of the mentioned functional activities above (*see, id.* Financial Estimates Table at page 182), the GAC reaffirms its commitment to ICANN's mission to ensure the stable and secure operation of the DNS.

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Closing

The GAC is grateful to ICANN org for this opportunity to share the committee's perspective on the Draft FY22-26 Operating & Financial Plan and Draft FY22 Operating Plan & Budget. The GAC looks forward to contributing to future comment opportunities as they relate to ICANN's finances and other operations-related proceedings.

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