

ALAC and At-Large Travel Requirements – Draft – 20Mar2009

The Past

Prior to FY09 (July 2008 – June 2009), ICANN supported ALAC/At-Large Travel as follows:

- A. 15 ALAC members at ICANN meetings (5 Nominating Committee appointees (NCA) and 10 selected by RALOs or before their existence, by the Board).
- B. 2 Liaisons at ICANN meetings.
- C. Once RALOs existed, 1-2 RALO leadership positions, typically the Chair and/or the Secretariat. The average number per meeting stabilized at about 7 per ICANN meeting.
- D. Once RALOs began forming, about 15 representatives of ALSs from within the region where the meeting was held.
- E. As RALOs were being formed, and to a lesser extent afterwards, there were regional meetings at times other than ICANN meetings to which regional ALS representatives were funded.

For FY09, the ALAC waived D and E to be replaced by the At-Large Summit.

In the formal August-08 Travel Procedure for FY09, the “current situation” (that is, preceding FY09) mentioned only A and ignored all other previously supported travel. Ultimately, items B and C were reinstated on a meeting-by-meeting basis, ostensibly due to the short notice of the formal withdrawal of such funding and due to the need to plan for the Summit. In the Procedure, Liaisons were described as being funded by the receiving organization, but that was later changed to being funded by the sending organization.

Moreover, at the Paris meeting, the Board passed a resolution saying that starting in FY10 (beginning in July 2009), the ALAC would received funding on a level similar to Supporting Organizations under the Travel Procedure, which was widely interpreted as being the chair and NCAs, plus 50% of the remaining members.

To go from A+B+C+D+E to roughly 2/3 of A has been described by some as having the having the budget “slashed”. However, it must be noted that this last reduction was inferred from previous staff statements and Board actions and was never explicitly stated.

The Future

ICANN has made and is making a very sizable investment in ALAC and At-Large. The recent At-Large Summit in Mexico City, coupled with recent ALAC involvement in a number of GNSO and ICANN activities, and the moderately optimistic ALAC independent review process shows that this investment may yet prove to be a wise one.

By its very nature, ALAC and At-large represents users and not those with vested financial interest in the business of the Internet. Very few active members of the community are employed with ICANN-related issues in their job descriptions, and virtually none are in a position to have employers partially or completely fund travel to ICANN. In fact, for many, even the ongoing levels of activity are undertaken as personal activities without even time-off being given by employers.

If ICANN should follow-through on not funding travel for some ALAC members, it is virtually certain that most or all would not attend ICANN meetings. This would significantly threaten the ability of ALAC to function, and would likely prompt at least some of the other members (including NCAs) to resign due to the lack of a critical mass at meetings.

Moreover, it would be foolish to scrimp and save on funding RALO leadership attendance at ICANN meetings. These are the key people in the regions who must motivate and act as liaisons to their ALSs. It is critical that these people be tied into the ICANN organization.

Lastly, the At-Large Summit was widely praised as being both successful and indicative of the promise of At-Large. Although such a massive undertaking is not envisioned again in the immediate future, it seems wise to maintain some level of activity and contact. To this end, it is suggested that one General Assembly per RALO (with an average of 15 ALSs each) be funded on a regular basis. These could be during ICANN meetings when the venue makes this possible for the region where the meeting is held, or otherwise shorter meetings held in-region.

Logistics

It is very important that ALAC members, at the very least, be housed in the same venue as that used by the majority of other ICANN Supporting Organizations and Committees. The opportunities that this provides for interaction between ALAC members and other ICANN workers cannot be overestimated and is felt to be crucial for ensuring that ALAC becomes a truly integrated part of the ICANN family. Similarly, for those ALAC members who are interested, it is essential that travel procedures enable them to be present during the entire ICANN meeting (including the Board meeting) and that for long trips (perhaps over 15-18 hours) they be allowed to arrive sufficiently early so as to be awake and productive during their first meetings.

The need for making travel arrangements well in advance for both cost and visa reasons, and the need for developing working per-diem distribution mechanisms have been discussed ad infinitum in Mexico City, and are being mentioned here solely to reinforce their importance.

We expect that you will be receiving a number of private statements attempting to delineate specific air travel requirements. The ALAC is very supportive of clear procedures and transparent exception processes allowing the use of reasonable economy airfares which maximize the volunteer traveler's comfort and benefits.

ALAC has made previous statements on travel issues which are still applicable – see https://st.icann.org/alac/index.cgi?al_alac_bud_sc_0308_1_1.

Summary

ALAC requests ICANN travel funding at roughly the level that it was prior to FY09. Specifically:

- 15 ALAC members at each ICANN meeting;
- 2 Bylaw-mandated Liaisons;
- 8 RALO leadership positions at each ICANN meeting (recent changes in the European RALO imply that they will now have 2 leadership positions instead of 1);
- 5 regional General Assemblies per year (1 per region), to be held during an ICANN meeting if appropriate. Airfares will be lower due the regional nature, and non-ICANN meetings will be much shorter.