
ICANN72 to be Virtual Annual General Meeting, ICANN73 Planning Update

LOS ANGELES – 15 July 2021 – Today, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) announced that ICANN72 will convene as a Virtual Annual General Meeting due to the continuing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The health and safety of the ICANN community and staff is always a top priority, and as such, holding ICANN72 as an in-person or hybrid meeting would not be feasible by its scheduled date. The resolution and full rationale from the ICANN Board of Directors can be found [here](#). This Public Meeting was initially scheduled to be held in Seattle, United States of America, from 23 to 28 October 2021. ICANN72 Virtual Annual General Meeting will take place in the Pacific Daylight Time zone (UTC -7) but the exact dates may change slightly following consultation with ICANN community leadership.

Challenges to in-person meetings remain. Vaccination access continues to vary significantly throughout the world. Though the situation in the U.S. is improving due to accelerated vaccination rates, globally the COVID-19 virus remains a persistent and variable risk. The ongoing emergence and spread of new variants, including the most recent Delta variant, clearly demonstrates that considerable risk remains.

Many countries, including the U.S., continue to maintain strict travel and border restrictions. Requirements for travel as well as indoor events continue to change rapidly and on short notice. Additionally, the pandemic continues to severely impact the ability of embassies and consulates around the world to resume routine visa services, which has created a backlog. Global diversity and representation are fundamental to ICANN Public Meetings. These factors would significantly limit global diversity of in-person participation and thus likely hinder the effectiveness of an in-person meeting in October 2021.

The ICANN Board, recognizing the need for certainty when planning major events like ICANN72 and ICANN73, agreed that it was important to consider this issue as soon as possible, without waiting for its next regular meeting. The Board members reviewed many inputs, including the recent [community survey](#) and [community discussion at ICANN71](#). They fully appreciate the importance of face-to-face interaction and agree with the community's desire to a return to in-person ICANN Public Meetings as soon as is practical. At this time, relevant experts have a higher level of confidence that the global pandemic situation, in particular vaccination and infection rates, will be much improved by early 2022. The travel and event landscapes are anticipated to be clearer and more conducive to holding a Public Meeting with robust in-person participation from most, if not all, regions by early 2022.

The Board affirmed its intent to hold ICANN73 as a hybrid meeting with an in-person component if it is feasible to do so. ICANN organization (org) will work in coordination with the ICANN community to begin planning ICANN73 in San Juan, Puerto Rico, as a Community Forum with a meaningful “virtual first” hybrid format to support the community's ongoing priorities, policy advice, and development work. More information about ICANN73 in March 2022 will be shared in the coming weeks.

Additionally, the Board encourages ICANN org, in coordination with the ICANN community, to initiate a pilot program to start hosting smaller in-person or hybrid community meetings before the end of 2021. Since the beginning of the pandemic, ICANN org has aggressively worked to enhance the virtual experience for Public Meeting participants and will also be implementing

these improvements for smaller regional events when circumstances allow. Please [sign up](#) to receive ICANN announcements in your inbox to receive the latest information.