

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL TO PILOT A THEMATIC APPROACH AT ICANN74

25 March 2022

What is the proposal?

Assign one (1) day of the four-day ICANN74 Policy Forum as a work track for one (1) agreed topic (i.e., theme), so that interested community groups can leverage the hybrid format to deepen discussions - whether with one another, the Board, and/or ICANN org - on the selected topic/theme. This does not mean that programming for all community groups must be based on the selected track.

What is the benefit of a dedicated work track?

A trend that has emerged from the virtual-only experience is the shared focus on specific topics, where several community groups hold discussions on the same topics throughout the Meeting. By dedicating one day to a specific topic of the community's choosing, the heightened focus on a high-interest topic may create greater awareness and surface areas of consensus or concern more quickly, thus helping to progress decision-making.

What if my community does not consider the selected topic a priority for us?

The 1-day track envisages just 1 unconflicted slot, likely the first session of the day (Block 1). This means that groups who are not participating in that themed track can plan their own schedules for the rest of the day. Even for groups participating in the themed track, there should be flexibility in how the remaining sessions for that day will work, as these will be based on each group's preferences.

For example, if the selected theme is "SubPro: Progress to the Next Round", there can be individual topic-based sessions for interested groups with ICANN org staff responsible for specific aspects of the ongoing Operational Design Phase and/or a community forum with the Board. *Please refer to Annex A for an illustrative example of a themed track for SubPro.*

Allocating a day to a work track will not affect the rest of the Policy Forum schedule. The only other unconflicted slots will be for a possible plenary session and the geopolitics forum. As discussed during the Planning Call, the Community Meetings Planning Group may also decide not to have any plenary sessions at all for ICANN74, if a themed track for 1 day is chosen.

What is the difference between a "theme" (or track) and a "plenary" session?

For ICANN Meeting purposes, a "plenary" session refers to a session for which an unconflicted slot during a Meeting is set aside for a topic that the community considers of high interest and timely for discussion. Generally, these sessions have tended to be one-off sessions, and the topics are not necessarily related to ongoing community policy work.

In contrast, a thematic approach is intended to:

- Focus on a topic or set of topics that several community groups are already working on and that could benefit from further community engagement and interaction with the Board and org;

- Maximize the hybrid meeting format to advance progress on selected topics, ensure a common understanding, and inform timely decision making
- Allow for deeper and more sustained discussions on one topic area throughout the day and/or Meeting and
- Facilitate follow up work after the Meeting.

In considering whether your group wishes to propose a topic of interest as either a “theme/track” or “plenary”, it may be helpful to reflect on whether that topic is more suitable to a standalone session or a more sustained approach throughout the day, and whether the topic relates to a current work stream - especially policy development, advice, or implementation - or if it is of more general interest.

If we adopt a thematic approach for ICANN74, will we still need plenary sessions?

This is a decision for the community, in the same way as it is for the community to decide whether to pilot a thematic approach (and, if so, what that theme should be).

Pending that decision and based on the expected capacity restrictions in The Hague, our suggestion is to allocate no more than 1 unconflicted slot for a standalone plenary (in addition to 1 unconflicted slot for the geopolitics forum), if 1 day is a themed track for the 4 Meeting days.

Please refer to Annex B for an illustrative mockup block schedule reflecting this meeting structure as a starting point for your group’s discussions and decisions.

What kind of additional preparation will my group need to do to participate in the thematic approach? What about newcomers to ICANN or the topic?

To maximize the actual Meeting sessions and ensure constructive discussions, pre-Meeting work is expected to leverage existing channels such as Prep Week webinars, regional GSE events and newcomer programming. Interested community groups will be asked to provide feedback and suggestions for specific topics.

What are the next steps from here?

To finalize the block schedule and enable everyone to begin planning and scheduling their ICANN74 sessions, it will be helpful to obtain feedback on the following points:

- By **Tuesday 31 March**:
 - Whether your group agrees with piloting a thematic approach, with 1 track scheduled for 1 day at ICANN74
 - If so, what your group thinks that topic or track should be.
 - *Note: Please refer to the slides from the Planning Call for the two topic suggestions that the org support staff included, based on our understanding of current policy-related issues and overall community interests (viz., SubPro: Progress to the Next Round and Security Issues & Technical Developments). During the Planning Call, participants suggested prioritization as another potential theme.*

- By **Friday 1 April**:
 - The number of standalone plenary sessions (if any) that your group believes is ideal for ICANN74
 - If your group supports having 1 or more plenary sessions, what those topics are (ranked in order of preference).
 - *Note: Please refer to the slides from the Planning Call for a list of previous plenary topics for which we have received community feedback regarding a follow up or repeat session.*

ANNEX A: AN ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE OF A SINGLE-DAY WORK TRACK (BASED ON SUBPRO)

Block 1 (unconflicted slot)	09:00 - 10:00	Community Session (unconflicted slot)
Block 2 (does not have to be unconflicted)	10:30 - 12:00	SubPro Topic 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This can be a dialogue session with the Board (e.g., to understand Board and community views on specific topics) or with org staff (e.g., on the ODP) ● Alternatively, interested groups could work with org staff or among themselves on specific topics related to SubPro ● Groups could also use the time for their own work on other topics
Block 3 (does not have to be unconflicted)	13:15 - 14:30	SubPro Topic 2 (as above)
Block 4 (does not have to be unconflicted)	15:00 - 16:00	SubPro Topic 3 (as above)
Block 5 (does not have to be unconflicted)	16:30 - 17:30	SubPro Topic 4 (as above) or Board-Community General Discussion or “Recap” session to exchange views on topics from the day

ANNEX B: UPDATED ILLUSTRATIVE BLOCK SCHEDULE

Subject to room availability and capacity, bilateral meetings can be scheduled in some of the unconflicted slots.4

***DAY 1 EXAMPLE OF THEMED FORMAT**

ICANN74 Policy Forum	DAY 1		DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4
	MON, 13 JUNE		TUES, 14 JUNE	WED, 15 JUNE	THU, 16 JUNE
60 min 9:00-10:00 Block 1	SubPro: Working Together on Progress		SO/AC Policy Work	SO/AC Policy Work	SO/AC Policy Work
10:00-10:30	Break		Break	Break	Break
90 min 10:30-12:00 Block 2	SubPro Topic 1	SO/AC Policy Work	Plenary Session (TBD)	SO/AC Policy Work	SO/AC Policy Work
12:00-13:15	Lunch Break		Lunch Break	Lunch Break	Lunch Break
75 min 13:15-14:30 Block 3	SubPro Topic 2	SO/AC Policy Work	SO/AC Policy Work	SO/AC Policy Work GNSO Council GAC Communiqué	SO/AC Policy Work
14:30-15:00	Break		Break	Break	Break
60 min 15:00-16:00 Block 4	SubPro Topic 3	SO/AC Policy Work	SO/AC Policy Work	SO/AC Policy Work GNSO Council GAC Communiqué	SO/AC Policy Work
16:00-16:30	Break		Break	Break	Break
60 min 16:30-17:30 Block 5	SubPro Topic 4 (OR) Board / Community Joint Session (OR) "Recap" session to exchange views on topics from the day		SO/AC Policy Work	SO/AC Policy Work GAC Communiqué	Geopolitical Forum
17:30-18:30	Networking Hour		Networking Hour	Networking Hour	Networking Hour

= NON-CONFLICTED SESSION

Notes:

- Tech Day (Monday) and DNSSEC Workshop (Wednesday) are also anticipated for the schedule.
- Working lunches will not be possible due to capacity and catering restrictions.