



AT-LARGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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AL/ALAC/ST/0710/1rev1

ORIGINAL: English

DATE: 28 July 2010

STATUS: FINAL

ALAC Statement

On ICANN Travel Policy

Introduction

By the Staff of ICANN

The attached statement on ICANN Travel Policy was discussed by the At-Large Advisory Committee during its teleconference on July 27th, 2010 and [endorsed](#) with a 8-0-0 vote.

On July 28th Alan sent the ALAC Statement on ICANN Travel Policy to ICANN CFO Kevin Wilson on behalf of the At-Large Advisory Committee.

(End of Introduction)

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ALAC Statement on ICANN Travel Policy

Dear Kevin,

Thank you for joining the ALAC Executive Committee wrap-up meeting in Brussels. We appreciate you listening to our concerns, and we found your insights based upon your discussions about travel support with other SO/ACs helpful.

The current process for travel support is unwieldy and appears expensive for ICANN. Many (or perhaps most) of the volunteer travelers seem unhappy with the experience and results. To spend that amount of effort without the "gold medal" performance that you were aiming is surely disappointing.

I suspect that minor tweaks are not likely to fix the problems, so I offer a new approach. I think that it may address the overall concerns that ICANN has regarding fiduciary responsibility while putting more control in the hands of the travelers.

In short, I am suggesting that you OPTIONALLY allow travelers to make their own air travel arrangements, but subject to a number of constraints. I am also offering one variant that will maximize the benefit to ICANN and its constituent units of the budgeted travel funds.

I believe that you will still need an "official ICANN" travel agent, but offered as a resource not as a requirement. I am sure that many travelers will be happy to use them if the process were streamlined. Moreover, they will play an essential role in ensuring that the overall process costs are "reasonable", which should be a prime the target. I do not know if you currently use the same travel agency for staff travel as you do for volunteer travel, but I would suggest that doing so maximizes the agent's desire to keep ICANN happy on all counts, and guarantees them a substantial amount of business.

I support the current allocation of travel by "slots" allocated per group per meeting, but with an important variant I will discuss later in this note.

0. In the interest of transparency, I would suggest that whatever air travel rules are used be applied equally to Board members/liasons as well as other volunteer travelers.

1. Travel is based on economy or business class as per the current rules. However, for long haul travel (flights over 6 hours or overall travel time over 18 hours), I suggest that booking on premium economy be allowed. Premium economy includes few of the real perks of business class, but does afford a modest increase in passenger comfort. Such bookings would still be subject to the price limitations to be described.

2. Prior to starting travel for any given event, your travel agent should compile a list of "ball-park" air fares for the list of cities typically used by ICANN travelers. The list might include 50-60 cities but based on my personal experiences, it should not take much time or effort to compile. I acknowledge that doing this well will require a good travel agent who understands the issues related to travel from and to locations that are "unusual" in the sense of traditional business travel and understands transit visa issues for those not from North America or western Europe. If some needed cities are omitted, they can be added later. Estimates should be based on fares of regularly schedules "business oriented" airlines. By

that I exclude charter airlines, fares provided by consolidators and fares offered by airlines that focus on vacation and tour-package travelers - all of whom tend to provide very poor service to recover from irregular operations. The estimate should include the service fee that would be charged by the agent if they did the booking.

3. I recommend that there still be an "exception" policy to handle requests outside of the constraints described here, but there should be far fewer of them. One exception that I would explicitly call out would be travel to and from the local airport where such travel clearly exceeds what could reasonably be covered by per diem allocations.

4. Hotel nights and per diem (if used - see later) should be based on the need to be sufficiently rested for the first scheduled meeting. I have included details of such scheduling in previous messages, and can do so again, but I will not clutter this note with such details.

In short, the person should be allowed to arrive early enough to get a full night's sleep the night before their first meeting. For venues where flights only arrive in the evening, this may mean that they be allowed to arrive a day early.

5. Hotel nights and per diem should be based on departures that allow the participant to attend all scheduled meetings. This should include the ability to stay in their room until a reasonable number of hours prior to flight time. Both this rule and the prior one are equivalent to the "reasonable" constraint placed on staff travelers, and volunteers should be offered no less.

6. Air travel fares up to the \$300 or 10% (whichever is greater) above the estimate should be allowed. The \$300 figure is what was used for a number of years and (as far as I understand) resulted in a higher level of traveler satisfaction and was not an unreasonable average burden for ICANN. I have added the 10% to accommodate similar issues for those travelers where business class is allowed. With the ICANN travel agent understanding this rule, many of the current exemptions would no longer be necessary.

7. For those travelers who can provide their own air travel at substantially below that of the estimate (perhaps the same \$300 or 10%), ICANN should be willing to provide travel advances to pay for the ticket.

8. If a traveler needs to arrive early or late due to the lack of reasonable air options, the hotel and per diem should be covered by ICANN. There will be relatively few such cases and they can be easily audited or verified. Any such "extensions" are subject to audit by ICANN with the penalty being permanent withdrawal of self-reservation privileges.

9. If there is a substantial amount to be saved on airfare by scheduling an earlier arrival or later departure, such schedules should be allowed with ICANN paying the additional hotel and per diem, but only if the net savings is at least the greater of \$300 or 10% of the original estimate. If making their own reservations, the traveler must document such savings. It is possible that the traveler may not be working for those days, but ICANN is still coming out ahead!

10. For reservations made by the traveler, unless an exemption has been granted, ICANN will reimburse no more than the lesser of the airfare paid, converted into US\$, or the original estimate plus the greater of \$300 or 10%.

11. I suggest a variation of the strict slot principle. Specifically, that the total airfare per group be compared to that budgeted (with allowance for business class travel granted for medical or size reasons), and that the group be allowed to use any significant savings for other pre-approved travel purposes (either to allow additional people to attend later ICANN meetings or for other events that support the mission of the group. For Board members, this should probably be tallied on an individual basis.

12. I would suggest a *reasonable* deadline for submitting travel expenses with a commitment by ICANN to pay promptly after submission if the deadline is met. I would be happy to comment on "reasonable".

Although not related to air travel, some people have hypothesized that reimbursing real and reasonable expenses instead of per diems (in cases where they are currently used) would result in a net savings to ICANN. However, I strongly question whether this is worth the additional staff time required to administrate it, the volunteer time to submit claims, or the grief that will be caused by the occasional rejection of claims.

I would be happy to provide further details or participate in any discussion on this proposal.

This message was originally written on my own behalf, but has since been reviewed by the ALAC and regional RALO leaders and has benefited from that review. At the ALAC meeting of 27 July 2010, it was formally and unanimously endorsed by the ALAC. You are welcome to share this with others and to have it posted to the ICANN Correspondence site.

Warm regards, Alan