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## **APNIC Executive Council Response to APNIC Member Survey Report, 1999**

Dear APNIC Members and friends,

In February 1999 the APNIC Executive Council commissioned a survey of the APNIC Membership, as a means of gathering broad input from APNIC's stakeholder community into its planning processes. The survey was conducted by KPMG Consulting, primarily during the APRICOT '99 conference in Singapore, and the resulting report has been completed and circulated to the membership of APNIC.

As recommended by KPMG, the APNIC Secretariat is providing this commentary to assist and fully inform APNIC members. The Secretariat welcomes and agrees with the thrust of the report and is pleased that their work and contributions have been recognised and have received this independent acknowledgment.

We present our comments in detail below, under a number of section headings:

- Issues on which APNIC has commenced action
- Issues on which APNIC is preparing to take action shortly
- Issues which APNIC is investigating in terms of major policy or resource implications
- Issues outside the scope of APNIC
- Conclusion

If any APNIC member would like to receive more detailed comments or clarification on any specific issues, please feel free to contact us. Additional comments by APNIC members on any aspect of the report are also welcomed, either on the APNIC-Talk mailing list, directly to the Executive Council, or to the Secretariat on any aspect of the report. In particular, input is sought on major matters by Friday 21 May 1999.

The purpose of this survey was to gather member-focussed input into the APNIC planning processes. The Secretariat has now commenced further work in preparation of a strategic plan for consideration, discussion, and support by the Executive Council at a workshop/meeting in June in San Jose.

I sincerely thank all members of APNIC for the time and effort involved in providing such valuable input to the survey, and I particularly thank the primary consultant, Dr John Earls of KPMG Consulting, for his diligence in seeking such a wide range of inputs and in synthesising those inputs into such a comprehensive report.

Paul Wilson  
Director General, APNIC  
13 May 1999

## **1. Issues on which APNIC has commenced action**

The following items raised in the Survey have already been incorporated into APNIC's plan of activities for 1999, as presented in the 1998 Annual Report.

### **Documentation:**

Several comments were received to the effect that APNIC policies and procedures are insufficiently documented and that more reliable informational and explanatory material should be produced.

During 1999, APNIC will continue work on updating and extending APNIC's collection of documentation, including policies, procedures, forms, web resources, agreements, and supporting documentation. Importantly, we will update the kit of information which is supplied to new members, which introduces them to their responsibilities as APNIC members, and to the full range and details of services which APNIC offers.

### **Quality of Service:**

The survey report notes that most respondents provided favourable responses on issues of quality of service; however, some raised concern over processing time, complexity, and the need to consider the special circumstances of those making requests.

The APNIC staffing plan for 1999 (as presented in the 1998 Annual Report) will continue to build the capacity of APNIC to undertake the work required in service of APNIC Members, and to improve the quality of that work. The ongoing improvement of technical services (both hardware and software) will also progressively provide efficiencies; and will be undertaken wherever it is justified by the improvements gained. Also, the increased contact with members arising from the planned training courses and the visits by senior APNIC staff will better inform APNIC of the range of member needs, improving the conditions for a focused, prioritised response to those needs.

### **IPv6 Registry Service:**

IPv6 is an issue of immediate concern to a number of APNIC members.

While it will be some time before IPv6 is in widespread use throughout this region or the Internet globally, APNIC has worked to ensure that an allocation service will be in place and operating by 1 May 1999.

## **2. Issues on which APNIC is preparing to take action shortly**

### **Translation:**

Translation emerged as a major issue in the survey, with a variety of opinions expressed as to how it should be undertaken by APNIC.

Later in 1999, APNIC will establish a more systematic approach to document translation, with an aim of translating core APNIC documents into the major languages of the region. APNIC will commit resources to this activity, but will also seek the active assistance of members in order that it may be undertaken economically and fairly.

### **Training:**

The survey report notes that the call for relevant and accessible training was common to the majority of respondents.

APNIC is currently recruiting a Training Manager to take responsibility for developing and delivering an international program of training courses of relevance to APNIC members. With this appointment, a more formal approach to APNIC training will be possible, on a predictable, scheduled basis.

**Confidentiality and Security:**

The nature of the information required to properly evaluate requests raises legal and commercial concerns for members and their customers. The security of confidential information supplied to APNIC is of particular concern.

As a formal mechanism to ensure awareness of its obligations, APNIC will shortly finalise a confidentiality agreement for all APNIC staff and contractors. APNIC's obligations regarding confidentiality of members' information will also be outlined in a revised membership agreement, for circulation later in 1999.

APNIC plans to implement a mechanism for issuing digital certificates to its members, during the coming year. This will provide a framework for greater security of interactions between APNIC and its members, including confidentiality, authorisation, and non-repudiation of email and other transactions.

**Routing Registry Service:**

The survey report notes that multiple respondents called for the establishment of a routing registry.

This service is planned for release during 1999, after and a trial (RPSL-compliant) server was has already been deployed early in the year.

**3. Issues which APNIC is investigating in terms of major policy or resource implications****Fairness and Consistency:**

Several respondents expressed frustration at the complexity of the processes involved in requesting address space, and the difficulty of complying fully with allocation policies. Furthermore, while they generally understand the reasons for APNIC's policies and procedures, APNIC members stress that APNIC must recognise the commercial and practical realities of the their business activities.

As a membership-based organization, APNIC must ensure that its policies and procedures are applied fairly to all members. This makes it difficult or impossible for APNIC to recognise "special cases" where different policies may be applied with flexibility. With APNIC members under greater competitive pressures, it is more important that fairness is ensured, that procedures are clear and transparent, and that there are procedures for dispute resolution and related activities.

**Fee and Membership Structure:**

The survey report details several comments relating to the need to maintain a fee structure within the reach of the members while maintaining high service levels. There was also discussion of fee-for-service considerations.

For a number of reasons, the growth of APNIC's revenues is slowing down, while at the same time measures being taken to improve services are resulting in increased expenditures. The legacy of the Asian Economic Crisis, and the industry trend towards consolidation and growth by acquisition will continue to threaten the APNIC fee base until a suitable response is made. A proposal to amend the membership categories and fee structures was raised at the Members' Meeting and will be further discussed at EC level before being put to the membership for voting.

In relation to introducing new services on a fee-for-service basis, it is important to investigate the potential impact such an approach may have on APNIC's current taxation status.

**APNIC Advisory Structures:**

The survey report provides considerable detail of discussions relating to a perceived need for an expert steering committee or advisory board.

Certainly an advisory committee and/or working group structure is a potentially very valuable means of maintaining ongoing expert input into technical, industry, and/or operational aspects of APNIC, and the Secretariat would be very happy to work with such a structure. We also recognise the need for, and would be happy to provide, effective support for such a structure, including mechanisms for appointment of members, and a vehicle for effective conduct of its business (such as more frequent and longer member meetings). Member consensus on the structure and its workings, as well as support for the extra costs involved, would both be important early steps in implementing such a structures.

**APNIC Promotion and Outreach:**

Some respondents voiced the need for APNIC to increase its own profile and build a greater community understanding of its role and services.

There are clearly substantial benefits to be gained from more concerted outreach and promotional activities by APNIC. Activities such as newsletter publication, conference attendance, conference hosting, web site development, and related online activities, and other promotional strategies should be considered within a wider promotional plan, considering likely costs and benefits.

It also seems clear that APNIC should expend more effort on the promotion of membership benefits and responsibilities to its own membership, in order to increase participation and interest in APNIC's activities and direction.

**Developing Countries:**

The survey report documents several comments regarding a perceived need for APNIC to play a role in facilitating the penetration and growth of the Internet in developing countries, either by special programs of assistance or differential fee structures.

The region served by APNIC is more diverse in cultural and economic terms than those served by the other registries. The financial burden of APNIC membership is far heavier in developing Asian countries than it is in developed countries, and without some discrimination within our fee structure, some countries will continue to be severely disadvantaged in terms of their participation in APNIC, and their access to APNIC services. APNIC holds a social responsibility to the entire region and will investigate potential strategies for fulfilling this responsibility, such as differentiated pricing. However, the extent to which such strategies can be supported by the APNIC membership is a matter requiring considerable consultation and consensus formation.

**Internet Resource Constraints:**

The survey report notes the common response that APNIC must always ensure effective management of functions relating to the growth in size and complexity of the Internet.

While APNIC emphasises that IPv4 address space will be available for allocation for some years to come, we also expect that IPv4 allocation policies will need to be further adjusted in future, particularly if IPv6 services are not widely deployed. This process will not be simple and will require the support and participation of APNIC members to ensure that their common needs are met.

**Decision Making:**

The survey report details several comments relating to the ways in which policies are developed and decisions made, and better means of ensuring greater participation across the membership.

APNIC is acutely aware of the need to represent the membership as a whole. With a view to increasing participation of the membership at all levels of the process, APNIC is introducing a staged document revision process, allowing comment at all stages. The size of the Executive

Council was recently increased to provide a broader representation. Visits to members by senior APNIC staff have also provided valuable opportunities for increased involvement and APNIC will investigate alternative ways of providing direct interaction with members. Several matters relating to voting procedures were also raised in the course of the Members' Meeting and these warrant ongoing consideration.

#### **4. Issues outside the scope of APNIC**

##### **GTLD and DNS:**

Reference is made to potential APNIC activities in these areas.

While APNIC is involved in service provision relating to reverse DNS (in-addr.arpa) registration and delegation, it is not currently involved in the conventional DNS. We do however work closely with other AP\* organizations working in this area, such as APNG and APTLD.

General Consultancy and Support Services: Some survey respondents suggested that APNIC should provide expert services to support ISPs in the start up stages, or in general operational areas.

The Secretariat is certainly aware of the need for such services in many cases, in support of our newer members, and those in regions where expertise and support is not available. At the same time, there are a substantial number of APNIC members who do not need services in these areas, and the support of these members would be an important element in extending APNIC services as requested.

#### **Conclusion**

The Secretariat of APNIC again thanks all those who participated in this survey. It is very encouraging to know that respondents generally view our services favourably and that there is such a strong awareness of the roles and responsibilities of Executive Council, the Secretariat, and the members themselves. However, we are committed to improvement in all areas of our service and operation, particularly those that have been identified through this survey process.

As Dr Earls correctly states, the survey, while very useful, is not an end in itself. The feedback received - both positive and negative - will be incorporated into APNIC's planning processes: It will be used to evaluate activities already under way and it will shape APNIC's plans for the medium and long terms. APNIC is first and foremost a membership organization and must ensure at all times that it remains open, responsive, and relevant to the needs of the membership. Through processes such as this, APNIC can continue to work towards these goals. Furthermore, the completion of this survey does not mean the closure of discussion on any of these issues. Your comments, criticisms, and suggestions are always encouraged, either through the public APNIC-Talk mailing lists or directly to EC or Secretariat.