



RIPE NCC Member and Stakeholder Survey

Executive Reader Report

December 2002

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Introduction to the Executive Reader Report

During the course of this survey I met a large number of interesting and helpful people.

Many of them told me of their current work and time pressures. These pressures had been heightened by increasing technical changes and service demands. Unfortunately the changes had also been accompanied by a decline in resources of all kinds. For those in the commercial world, profit was almost a forgotten word.

"How can we fit everything into the limited time available?" was a question often asked.

For the majority of RIPE and RIPE NCC members English is a second language. For such members, apart from finding the time required, the actual reading of a large report presents another challenge in itself.

Having produced the report on the survey I suggested to the RIPE NCC Managing Director that a much shorter version might be helpful in addition to the Full Report.

He supported this approach, so I have produced this version entitled "Executive Reader Report" and I understand that both Reports will be made available to members.

The essential difference is that the Executive Reader Report (ERR) provides the conclusion and omits the wealth of member comment that is contained in the Full Report (FR) to support those conclusions. This reduces the number of pages significantly – as the comments were in a smaller font the effective reduction in material to be read is even greater.

I have used the same section numbers in each report. This means that any reader of this report wishing to examine an individual question or issue in more detail can easily access the same section of the Full Report for that question or issue.

I hope the Executive Reader report will make the issues easier to read and digest, since there are many important aspects to be debated by members. In the reports I have flagged the major points which have received general support from greater than 20 percent of the respondents (ie from 50+).

For many questions and issues this has meant that there is both a group who are satisfied – and a group who are not and want change. Some of the suggested changes put forward by groups of members are quite significant in their potential impact on RIPE NCC services.

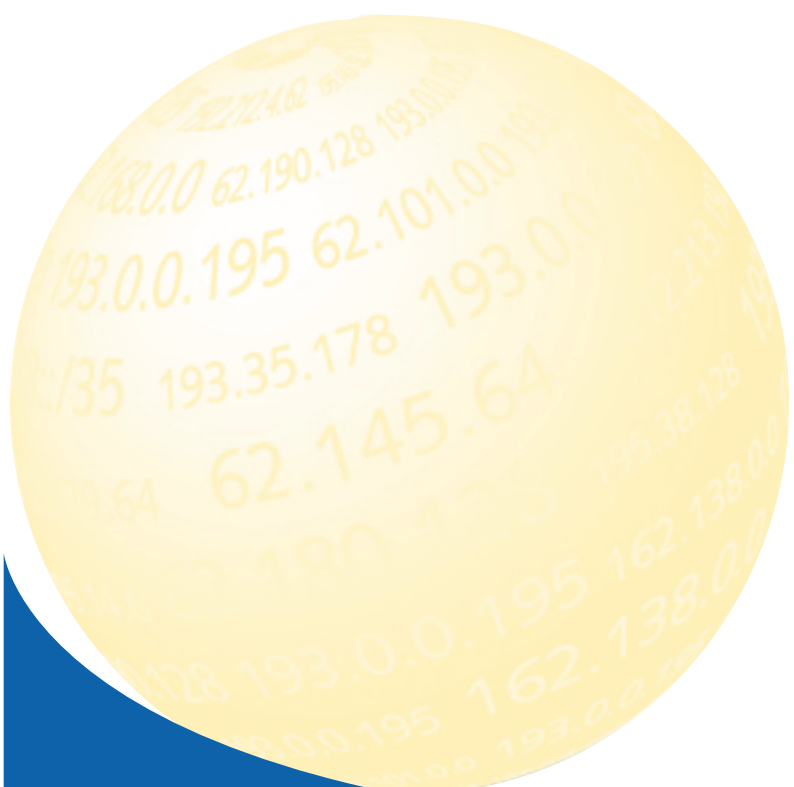
There are also cost implications which are both positive and negative depending on the particular question or issue. After a period for general discussion, members may decide that there should be change in some cases.

This will present a major implementation challenge to RIPE NCC in making those changes in a way which does not, at the same time, disadvantage those who are currently satisfied with the services they receive.

In considering members as a market full of customers, it is obvious that there is considerable diversity of interest and need to be met if "market" satisfaction is to be achieved. Given resource limitations and many other variables this will never be entirely possible.

The RIPE NCC "market" is much more than ordinarily complex. Multi dimensional segmentation of the market to focus any change effort as effectively as possible will be difficult.

If members do decide on changes at the macro level then RIPE NCC staff will need to consider each individual comment in the Full Report at the micro level to ensure the best and fairest allocation of resources – as well as being able to understand and effectively communicate with those whose needs are NOT being met.



1. Background and Context

Many readers of this report will be familiar with the background, history and evolution of RIPE and RIPE NCC. Indeed, many will have been very active participants in the creation and development of what is now a very important part of the current Internet infrastructure.

However, there will also be many, including more recent members, who will be unaware of the early history in any detail. This is important because in considering the very broad range of comments – some full of praise for RIPE NCC and some more critical – a number of points need to be remembered:

- There was no other organisation or model to copy when RIPE NCC was established. RIPE NCC is the RIR with the longest experience.
- The internal staffing proposal at commencement was for 3.5 staff to service a huge demand for rapid growth in services. In such a situation the question can reasonably be asked, "is the priority at the outset to meet the demand or to develop perfect administrative procedures?"
- The RIRs which emerged later have had the benefit of being able to learn from RIPE pioneers.

RIPE has been in existence since 1989. Initially, all work was undertaken by enthusiastic volunteers. However, the administrative tasks needing daily availability and continuity created the need for a more permanent structure.

At the outset the services were provided by revenue from voluntary contributions but as demand continued to grow rapidly, the decision was made to change to a "user-pays" model. While the current arrangements for cost recovery may be seen as less than perfect in today's environment – again there were no appropriate models which could be copied at the time.

When it began, RIPE NCC had 6 employees and 141 registries; today it has 100+ employees and 3000+ registries. Initially those receiving services were in relatively close proximity; now, more than a decade later, the members are far more widely spread.

RIPE NCC primarily provides services to members in Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa north of the Equator. Membership is open to any organisation or person using RIPE NCC services.

RIPE NCC conducted a previous survey three years ago. Since then, the organisation has not only grown rapidly, but in the last 1 – 2 years the global and local Internet and commercial environment in which the NCC and its members operate has changed significantly.

RIPE change has always been driven by open discussion and debate. To encourage such debate, the Managing Director of RIPE NCC, Axel Pawlik, commissioned this survey of "Members and Stakeholders" by KPMG.

Before proceeding further, some readers may find it helpful to read the document "Activity plan for the proposed RIPE Network Coordination Center". This document written by Rob Blokzijl, dated May 5 1991 (ripe – 35) is provided as an appendix. (Appendix to Full Report [only](#))

Many comments and suggestions for change have been made by members in response to this survey – and these may well merit discussion and consideration since over a decade has elapsed since this original activity plan.

However, it should also be readily acknowledged that the objectives and plan set out in the document by Rob Blokzijl, written over a decade ago, have formed an important – indeed vital – role in the successful growth of the Internet within the RIPE region.



2. Methodology

The methodology and the survey instrument were developed in collaboration with RIPE NCC staff.

Broadly, the aim was to seek comment on two separate but related issues:

- views on the current services offered by RIPE NCC
- views on the services which RIPE NCC should offer in future and how this might affect issues such as its operating model, charging rates and relationships with members and other bodies.

In accordance with RIPE NCC's open communication policy, all material such as the explanatory information, the survey response forms etc. are available on the RIPE NCC website. In the interests of brevity, they are not duplicated here – but a few explanatory comments may be helpful.

2.1 MEMBERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

RIPE NCC is a not-for-profit association owned by its members but other people and entities can be viewed as stakeholders who have a constructive interest in RIPE NCC's successful operations. A range of possible stakeholder categories is set out in the website documentation.

The response forms for Members and Stakeholders are similar in structure but are not identical. In each, there are two main sections:

- Questions
- Issues for Consideration

For members, the questions focus on the services that members receive; their views on service standards; possible future services that members might see to be of value. Stakeholders are questioned on the role that RIPE NCC plays, and should play, in its own region, globally and in relationships with other bodies.

The Issues for Consideration have more commonality and allow some comparison between the two groups of respondents. However, again they are not identical.

2.2 CONFIDENTIALITY

KPMG gave an assurance of confidentiality of the source of response. Both in the emailed responses and in the face-to-face meetings, many members indicated that they considered anonymity to be important. Potential respondents sought confirmation of this assurance.

To maintain this on a consistent basis, the names of individuals, organisations or countries have been replaced with substitutes such as "xxxx" or "in our country" rather than stating the name of the organisation or country.

2.3 TRANSLATION

Respondents were given the option of responding in their own language. In practice, this option was only used by a few – but many expressed appreciation of this alternative.

2.4 MEETINGS

To enable in-depth discussion on the various issues, visits were made to a range of cities representative of RIPE NCC membership.

The meetings were usually appointments with 1 – 3 people, while the average attendance at open forums was 5 – 6 people with a range of 1 – 9. This excludes nil attendance at the Amsterdam open forum. Including the RIPE meeting at Rhodes, the number consulted in this way was 153.

Places visited were Amsterdam, Brussels, Frankfurt, Stockholm, Budapest, Dubai, Cairo, Paris, Madrid, London and Moscow. In addition, the opportunity was taken to visit 34 public Internet access points covering all locations except Moscow. Four of the thirty-four were members. These additional contacts were a useful adjunct to the main program.

Attendance at the RIPE Rhodes meeting provided many opportunities for discussions with individuals and small groups of members.

In the city visits, there were two types of meetings:

- An open forum which could be attended by any member who wished to participate in discussing the project, asking questions and raising local issues.
- Targeted appointments with individuals and entities selected by RIPE NCC.

By selection in this way it might be argued that there could be bias in a number of ways. In practice, KPMG is satisfied that this was not the case. The practical experience in all the meetings clearly demonstrated that those who participated were open and extremely frank in commending the RIPE NCC operational positives and equally frank in detailing the negatives – without any constraint.

Encouraging aspects were that:

- those who were critical did so from a perspective that RIPE NCC was an important body that they wished to see prosper;
- they acknowledged that members had a responsibility to work constructively with RIPE NCC staff in introducing any changes which members might decide on as an outcome of this survey.

A good spread of RIPE member market segments covered

- Large, medium, small members
- Single service to multiple service users
- New members and those of long standing
- Members, who were simple, single service providers and those who provided a range of services and/or were part of organisations providing other services eg. Telcos
- Organisations who did not use some RIPE NCC services because they had the skill or knowledge "in house"
- Geographic representation.

Three or four of the people consulted at Rhodos were opposed to the survey. They considered that the decision had been taken inappropriately and that the money could have been better spent. With these very limited exceptions the response from the remaining participants (95%+) has been extremely positive about this RIPE NCC initiative; although some have wondered as to how RIPE NCC will use the information and what the long-term benefits will be.

The forums lasted 1.5 – 2 hours. The meetings were from 1 – 3 hours in duration with 1.5 – 2 hours being the average. Almost all the attendees at the forums came with a printed copy of the survey. Interestingly, no more than thirty percent of those attending meetings came with a survey response form, but most of those who did had drafted their initial replies.

Meetings and forums started in a somewhat neutral environment. It was necessary, in each case, to give a reasonable background of the evolution of the project and its aims and objectives. After this opening briefing had been considered by those attending, there was enthusiastic and very frank participation.

A range of issues were raised that were critical of RIPE NCC performance. However, these were made in the spirit that RIPE is a family and an important institution where members have been given an opportunity to state their views for the ultimate good. There was also high praise for the organisation's technical innovation. This was coupled with comments such as "there are massive global changes taking place impacting the RIPE NCC operations" and "when you actually eyeball a RIPE NCC staff member they are, without exception, friendly people" and "it must be remembered that when RIPE was started, there was no model to copy and they had to get stuck in and deal with rapidly growing demand."

While the numbers at the open forums were initially considered disappointing, in retrospect, the smaller the number, the more open the debate and the opportunity for all to input. Given the wide range of locations and the numbers involved, this appears to be an effective way to gather representative, in-depth qualitative information. Examination of the subsequent responses showed that many respondents had participated in one of the types of face-to-face discussion. These particular responses also tended to contain more detail and to offer suggested solutions.

KPMG would like to thank all who took the time and made the effort to respond – and in particular those who gave up considerable time to participate in the meetings and discussions.

2.5 EFFORTS TO MAXIMISE PARTICIPATION

The Managing Director of RIPE NCC made a preliminary announcement in regard to the survey in mid 2002.

A further announcement was made by him at the stage that all the relevant information was placed on the web page.

Announcements of, and encouragement to participate, were made at a number of meetings and other venues eg the RIPE Rhodos meeting.

A progressive series of mailing to lists was undertaken by RIPE NCC staff during the course of the consultation period.

A number of related organisations also undertook to post notices on their web site and to email their members – this additional assistance was much appreciated.



3. Response Range and Sources

TABLE 1 MEMBER RESPONDENTS ORDERED BY ISO-3166 COUNTRY CODE

CODE	COUNTRIES OF MEMBER RESPONDENTS	NUMBER
AE	<i>United Arab Emirates</i>	1
BH	<i>Bahrain</i>	1
CH	<i>Switzerland</i>	12
CZ	<i>Czech Republic</i>	8
DE	<i>Germany</i>	49
EG	<i>Egypt</i>	7
ES	<i>Spain</i>	18
FR	<i>France</i>	23
GB	<i>United Kingdom</i>	47
HU	<i>Hungary</i>	5
IE	<i>Ireland</i>	2
IT	<i>Italy</i>	18
NL	<i>Netherlands</i>	26
PL	<i>Poland</i>	8
PT	<i>Portugal</i>	3
RU	<i>Russian Federation</i>	8
SE	<i>Sweden</i>	13
SK	<i>Slovakia</i>	2
UA	<i>Ukraine</i>	8
	TOTAL	259

TABLE 2 STAKEHOLDER RESPONDENTS ORDERED BY ISO-3166 COUNTRY CODE

CODE	COUNTRIES OF STAKEHOLDER RESPONDENTS	NUMBER
DE	<i>Germany</i>	2
FR	<i>France</i>	2
GB	<i>United Kingdom</i>	4
IT	<i>Italy</i>	1
NL	<i>Netherlands</i>	3
SE	<i>Sweden</i>	2
-	<i>TOTAL Inside RIPE NCC Region</i>	14
-	<i>TOTAL Outside RIPE NCC Region</i>	12
	COMBINED TOTAL	26

GRAND TOTAL OF ALL RESPONDENTS = 285



4. Response Analysis – Guidelines and Comments

This analysis attempts to strike a balance between summarising the data as briefly as possible and providing sufficient quoted material (in full Report *only*) to give a realistic picture of the weight and thrust of respondents' views.

It was agreed with the Managing Director of RIPE NCC that this should be a document which would allow members to discuss the major issues, so the approach has been to identify issues which have been raised or supported by at least twenty percent of respondents (in practical terms this means 50+). The aim has been to include all major points and, in this way, recognise that all members/readers are busy people with many pressures on their time and whose businesses function in a highly competitive environment.

Inevitably, there is overlap between some "questions" and some "issues". This has some advantages since it is evident that many respondents have been thinking about their responses in more depth during the process. They tended to become more expansive in the "issues" section and introduce new issues for consideration.

Some organisations, especially the larger ones, considered that they were both members AND stakeholders. They were given the option of deciding in which category they wished to respond. Some elected to respond as stakeholders but in their responses to make comments based in their service experiences as members.

In some cases, more than one individual replied from each organisation – this was particularly so from large organisations. Such multiple person responses were counted as a single response in the totals – but the actual comments from all individuals were considered and taken into account in the analysis.

Readers are advised that this inclusive approach has had the potential to increase some duplication where comments have been included in the text of the report. (Comments are in Full Report *only*.)

In many of the meetings where more than one person attended from an organisation, there was some debate as to who would complete the survey. When multiple responses were subsequently received from a single organisation it appeared that where respondents agreed, the comments were almost identical, but there was often a single issue where they did not agree.

For many individual questions the consolidated responses for each one exceeded 100 pages to be analysed. For each question in the report a range of relevant comments were extracted. While every effort was made to reduce the number and avoid duplicates – this was not always possible.

In extracting and including members' comments in various sections of this report no attempt has been made to amend any perceived errors of a typographical, punctuation or other nature.

(Readers of *this* report please note – *any actual comments made by respondents are in the Full Report only.*)



5. Member Response Analysis

5.1 SURVEY QUESTIONS

5.1.1 Q1: Please describe the services that you currently receive from RIPE NCC, in the order of their importance to you.

Members responded to this question in a number of different ways.

Some went to the Member Services web page, which has five service categories and ranked these in order of importance. Those who used this format ranked them in the following order:

- Registration Services *top of all lists*
- Member Tools } *equal second*
- LIR Training Courses }
- General Member Services
- Test Traffic Measurement *clearly last*

The majority of respondents took a more detailed approach. The question had been given considerable thought. Many made useful comments and listed topics, which were services to them although, not listed as such on the RIPE NCC Member Services page.

The leaders in ranked order of importance to respondents were:

- IP allocation
- AS Numbers
- Reverse Delegation
- Routing Information.

Training was seen as important by many who considered that it should not be ranked. Their proposition was that in its current form it was clearly important to new LIRs. Indeed many proposed that training should be a fee-based precursor to membership with the fee refundable on joining. It was thought that this would be valuable to those who received training, whether they joined or not, and also of benefit to NCC staff in dealing with initial membership allocation.

More training was seen to be highly desirable in new and advanced topics. If Training Services were expanded in this way, to be an ongoing service with new and advanced material, respondents indicated that it would then be given a high ranking in their service order of importance.

A number of respondents raised the issue of "importance" not simply being a matter of frequent and regular use of a service. It was argued that there was value in having some services available, which might only be used occasionally eg. Reverse /16 Blacklist.

Any change in service availability should take this last point into account.

The following received a significant level of support from many respondents but are not ranked in any priority order:

- Documentation
- Database
- Statistics
- Encryption tools
- RIS Looking Glass
- Syntax Checker
- RIPE Meetings
- Working Groups
- Route objects
- Who-is look ups
- Members by country
- RIRs Comparative policy
- Mailing Lists
- European Operators Forum WG
- Liaison with ICANN and other RIRs
- Global address space distribution
- Policy
- Guidelines on mergers – this was seen as a service likely to grow in importance to both members and RIPE NCC and one requiring regular updating and case histories as models.

5.1.2 Q2: Please comment on whether the current services you receive meet your needs in terms of timeliness, quality or any other aspect.

A large number of respondents indicated that they were completely satisfied or were satisfied with only minor reservations.

However, a significant number raised a range of aspects, which they considered to be in need of improvement:

- Process is unduly bureaucratic
- Process takes far too long
- Website documentation is not customer focussed (especially when members tried to involve senior managers in their organisation)
- Language was a barrier to many since all material was only in English
- Opposition to service cross subsidisation
- Assignment window was considered to be too small
- Need for a much clearer policy and process for mergers, this should be regularly updated
- Need for account managers for each main language and / or country
- Second opinions take too long
- Need to include invalid objects in ASUSED
- Dispute resolution procedures weak or non-existent
- Access to WHOIS database too easy
- Monthly summaries required for the many (almost daily) changes
- Need for a friendly, people-manned telephone help service
- Services do not meet legal, contractual and/or security conditions required by law in some member countries
- Expansion of range of training desirable
- Need for an "urgent request" process.
- Opposition to technical development as a service
- Current documents considered to be too complex
- Lack of customer service focus
- Undue emphasis on address preservation
- Need for RIPE NCC to have top level staff with a responsibility for large sub-regions within the overall RIPE region
- Policies are perceived to be derived from processes – rather than the reverse

5.1.3 Q3: Please list any other RIPE NCC services which you are aware of and do not use.

A range of services was listed. Respondents divided these into two categories. Firstly, services which they did not use and where they made no comment as to whether they would use them in future ie. they might or might not use them in future. Secondly, services which they did not use but which they were definite that they would use in the future.

Category 1 – Do not use currently – may use in future.

- Test traffic measurement
- AS assignment
- Statistics
- Working Groups
- Training
- Routing related projects
- K – root server
- Backup DNS for ccTLDs
- RIS
- PGP Key Authentication
- DNS Services

Category 2 – Services not currently used but which will definitely be used in future.

- IPv6
- RIS
- DNS Services
- Training (if range expanded)
- PGP authentication
- Statistics

5.1.4 Q4: Why does your organisation not use them? Because they are not relevant to your needs?

Members offered a range of reasons for non-use. The main reasons were:

- No current IPv6 infrastructure
- Not aware of other services
- Not relevant to current needs
- Alternative services available in house
- Alternative services available more conveniently
- Alternative services available more cheaply
- Lack of time and resources to make sensible and effective use of other services
- Budget restraints within the member organisation
 - Too complex to install

The most consistent reason put forward was the member's inability to understand the benefit of certain services to their own business. They argued that if they did not understand the benefits then they would not be in a position to put forward an adequate financial proposition to the key decision makers in their organisation. Test Traffic Measurement was the most regularly given example of this situation.

5.1.5 Q5: Please describe, in priority order, any services that you need which should be provided by the RIPE NCC in the future. Please also indicate whether you would be prepared to pay increased fees to receive these services.

While a number of services were suggested, many indicated that:

- No service expansion was sought, or
- No new services were appropriate in the current financial environment, or
- Before considering expansion more attention should be given to explaining the value to be gained from using existing services.

Suggestions for new services proposed (not in any priority order) were: -

- A more active role in providing a technical perspective to European governments
- Independent review of service quality
- Better financial management of projects
- Collaborative sharing of innovation costs
- Monthly summary of changes in documents
- The possibility of creating SubLIRs
- Linking all RIR databases
- Providing documents in languages other than English
- DNS database

5.1.6 Q6: As a member, what do you consider the most appropriate ways for RIPE NCC to encourage and receive input from the RIPE community?

There was considerable support for the present methods. A range of suggestions was made:-.

- Encourage more posting to WG mailing lists
- Local meetings in members' countries twice yearly
- More hostmaster visits to members
- Better meeting organisation
- More attractive report presentation

- A voting home page
- Single page summaries of changes
- More direct contact between RIPE NCC staff and members

5.1.7 **Q7: For the RIPE NCC to more effectively carry out its responsibilities, what do you feel is your role as a member of the RIPE NCC?**

In replying to Q7, many members indicated that they considered this to be a very relevant question. They believed that membership brought responsibilities. They also indicated that if/when RIPE NCC moved towards having a customer service agreement with members, then the suggestions that were being put forward here should be considered for inclusion in such an agreement.

Others who suggested a less formal arrangement, still stressed that if RIPE NCC operated in an extended family or collegiate manner, then within families, responsibilities should be shared and not one-sided.

The main suggestions were:

- Paying fees promptly
- Participating in discussions
- Providing helpful accurate information when making IP requests
- Being consistent in assignments
- Observing RIPE policies and documents
- Providing sound feedback to RIPE NCC

5.1.8 **Q8: RIPE, a collaborative forum open to all parties, forms decisions by consensus through an open and transparent process. What are your views on the manner in which the organisation should make (and be seen to make) decisions in appropriate ways – but at the same time, quickly enough to stay relevant?**

There was widespread support for the present process. Consensus and discussion were considered to be easily the most appropriate ways. It was acknowledged that RIPE and RIPE NCC had a difficult task in operating in a rapidly changing technical and commercial environment. This was complicated further by the need to manage change and introduce new ideas across significant geographic, linguistic and legal barriers.

Main responses provided were: -

- Having a country delegate responsible for two way communication
 - Easily accessible and understandable information provided by RIPE NCC
 - More use of electronic tools for meeting participation and voting

5.1.9 Q9: RIPE holds regular meetings in different parts of its region Do you attend these meetings? Do they meet your needs?

Almost all respondents had attended at least one meeting but the majority did not anticipate future attendance unless the meeting was in their immediate geographic location and / or there was a topic under discussion that was of immediate relevance to the operating needs of their organisation.

The responses to the question "Do they meet your needs?" overlap significantly with the answers to the next question (Q10). For ease of reading most of the negative reasons have been transferred to Q10 which addresses reasons for non-attendance.

Issues raised in responses were:-

- Attendance is mainly a function of proximity and cost
- WG Chairs require facilitation skills as well as technical knowledge
- Meetings are seen as for "old timers" who knew each other
- Members often have difficulty in explaining the benefits of meeting attendance to their employers
- Lack of knowledge that meetings exist or about their content
- Too many overlapping sessions at meetings to obtain real benefit

5.1.10 Q10: If you do not attend, are there any particular reasons for your non-attendance? What could be done to encourage your attendance?

Reasons for non-attendance were:

- Cost, especially in the current environment.
- Inappropriate location in relation to where the member lived. This included not only distance, but in some cases route complexity.
- Lack of time – especially for smaller organisations with limited staff.
- Not provided with material about the benefits of the meetings which would allow justification to superior officers.

In answer to the second part of the question on what could be done to encourage your attendance, the points raised included:

- Lower cost or cost subsidy.
- Provide more information that demonstrated the relevance and benefits.
- Greater linkage with other bodies in joint activities (APRICOT / APNIC given as an example).
- Hold meetings in a wider range of countries. While this might produce smaller numbers in many locations, it was seen to be an opportunity to involve a wider range of senior management who would not normally attend. This would require some special workshops or briefings.

However, a number of respondents argued that the most important and fundamental issue was to try and increase reach and participation by using live webcast, audio conferences and other techniques. These were seen to be rapidly improving and declining in cost. It was further argued that this represented an area for sponsorship by industry suppliers, major telcos and government subsidies. It was also seen as an area for meaningful collaboration with educational institutions.

5.1.11 Q11: Are there any particular individuals or organisations that we should invite to participate in this survey?

This question produced a very limited number of responses. Those that did so, indicated that they either assumed or had verified that all key individuals or organisations would be, or had been, given an opportunity to participate.

Suggestions included:

- Sister organisations ARIN and APNIC
- Governments
- Research network and individuals
- Companies in the Internet industry.

It was believed by most that any individual or organisation whose views would be relevant would already be on a RIPE NCC mailing list.

5.2 ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

As indicated earlier it was obvious that many members were thinking about questions and issues as they moved through their responses. Such thought is an essential part of conducting this type of study in a qualitative way. There is a deliberate overlap in some questions and issues. A combination of these two factors has meant that not all responses fit neatly into a specific question or answer. On top of this it has been necessary in the analysis to introduce a couple of additional issues to take proper account of responses that do not fit neatly elsewhere. Throughout both sections the points/issues which are raised consistently include:

- Members and the Internet community need a well functioning RIPE NCC
- The organisation's technical innovation is of a very high standard
- RIPE NCC fees are a relatively small cost in our (members') businesses, but we still want high service standards and quick response times
- While the main function should continue to be address allocation and management, RIPE NCC should continue to have some involvement in other issues
- Any other issues/services should be related to and relevant to members' businesses
 - RIPE NCC should not be involved in activities where they compete with their own members or the service could be better provided elsewhere

- Projects get started too easily – especially in the current financial climate. There should be a model which sets out a clear technical brief, financial brief, desired outcomes, time line etc.
- Consideration should be given to collaboration with others in obtaining other funding (provided this does not compromise autonomy as a whole)
- While initial R and D is acceptable, there should not be ongoing subsidisation
- Consideration should automatically be given to spinning off viable developments and the non-viable should be wound up
- After members decide on the future services they want, having discussed the results of this survey, there needs to be structural changes and a review of staffing levels, skills and experience
- RIPE NCC was seen to assume that issues which are technically sound and logically presented would be readily accepted by everyone. Respondents believed that the NCC should realise that they function in a political, commercial environment where organisations and countries may have different views and objectives to RIPE and RIPE NCC. These differences are not always obvious or transparent and the organisation needs to develop much more proactive approaches to promote members' interests
- RIPE NCC is seen as a monopoly; whereas members believe that it needs to behave as if it is in a highly competitive environment to meet members' needs rather than its own. It should realise that, for any country where it is supplying a service, it must conform to the law, regulations, and financial practices eg. privacy legislation, contract requirements etc.

5.2.1 **ISSUE A: Should RIPE NCC be simply a registry or should it provide other services?**

The prevailing view was that RIPE NCC should be PRIMARILY, or PRINCIPALLY a registry. Any additional services should have a clear relevance to the primary mission, be cost effective and RIPE NCC should not provide any services which were its competition with its own members.

It was also argued that there needed to be a clearly understood separation between the registry role and any other activities eg. a role as a technical voice in European policy decisions and protocol development. Another respondent, in making a similar proposition, suggested that RIPE had three main roles described as "Registry" and "Watcher" and "Coordinator".

Other service suggestions were:-

- Forum for apolitical debate to prevent unworkable government schemes
- An aggregator and communicator of new, relevant technical knowledge
- Provide a RIPE Route-Server
- Act as a consultant
- Training in a wider range of topics
- Make information available in several languages

5.2.2 **ISSUE B: Should the RIPE NCC provide leadership in areas of emerging new technology related to the RIPE NCC members? If so, what areas should it specialise in?**

The majority of members believed that RIPE NCC should provide leadership. The divergence was on what form that leadership should take. A distinction was made between

- Leadership in communication on new technology issues of relevance to members
- Leadership in undertaking new technology development
- Leadership in educating and training on new technology relevant to the operation of members' enterprises.

All of these were supported by different groups of respondents.

The main areas where it was proposed that RIPE NCC should provide leadership were:

- IPv6 policy, distribution and training
- Uses of multicasting, mobile IP wireless and multimedia networks
- Best practice deployment rather than development
- Telecommunications areas which are likely to have a growing impact on members.

5.2.3 **ISSUE C: The RIPE NCC spends significant resources training LIRs. Are you aware of these programmes? Do you consider this effort to be worthwhile and effective?**

Almost all respondents were aware of the training programs which were highly regarded by a very large majority.

Courses were clearly seen to be of great value to newcomers and there were requests for more training in new topics and at a more advanced level.

Other issues raised were:

- Should courses be on a cost recovery basis?
- It would be of value to both parties if courses were offered to prospective members at cost with a rebate if they joined
- Is training fairly allocated across the region?
- Consideration should be given to innovation in training delivery techniques, especially technologies, to make it more widely available.

5.2.4 **ISSUE D:** Should the RIPE NCC regularly seek members' views on the standards of existing services provided? If so, what are the most effective means for seeking member input?

There was unanimous support for RIPE NCC to seek views on both service standards and new services.

A range of means of seeking input was suggested. The main ones were:

- Surveys
- Proactively requesting feedback by email rather than just having a policy people could do it if they wished
- Questionnaires
- Online web-based feedback similar to that used by CISCO and others
- Mailing lists
- RIPE meetings
- A post LIR initial establishment approval questionnaire
- Invitation to comment on RFCs
- Interactive posting on RIPE website as a "customer satisfaction" measurement
- Web forum
- Online voting boxes
- A feedback forum or mechanism at the end of each RIPE NCC service
- A mechanism that allowed individuals to respond in their own language
- Open a chat room
- Appointing a person who is dedicated to service each area or country
- At least once a year meeting with a RIPE NCC staff / head to review performance.

5.2.5 **ISSUE E:** In addition to views about services, what are the best ways for RIPE NCC to regularly receive input and comments from its members? Do you feel that your views and needs are adequately represented under the present structure?

Many of the responses to this question overlap with the previous questions. Most respondents felt that the current structure allowed them to adequately express their views – but also respondents believed that more could be done by RIPE NCC to encourage and seek input, rather than leaving the input initiative to the members.

Points which were raised included:

- That services were unduly bureaucratic and therefore time consuming
- The difficulties facing a newcomer in using Working Groups and their related mailing lists where all others participating appeared to be old friends
- The need for discussion groups to provide a **clear** web summary for non-participants
- A private forum for LIRs
- A suggestion box.
- A dedicated point of contact in RIPE NCC
- A newsletter
- More support for WG chairs

5.2.6 **ISSUE F: Compared to other essential services which you receive such as gas, electricity, telephone and car registration, how would you rate the RIPE NCC service standards?**

There were a significant number of complimentary responses. For those who used a 10-point rating scale, the mean was 6 – 7.

Once again, the main negatives were wait time, bureaucracy and problems with documents – but on the other hand, one respondent's description was "RIPE is the best possible solution to its market segment".

5.2.7 **ISSUE G: If you had to identify your top service provider of any type of service you receive, what is it that makes them stand out?**

Readers of this section should bear in mind that respondents are not talking about RIPE NCC here. They are giving examples of the reasons why their best service provider of any type of service impresses them. Of course, in doing so, they implicitly hope that these will become features of RIPE NCC services in the future. Examples from other service providers were:

- Outstanding customer focus
- Swift response times
- Available, reliable, dependable
- Respond to feedback
- Unintrusive
- Good, easy to use web page
- High quality ALL the time
- Good price/service ratio

- Good dialogue and speedy escalation process
- In my own language
- Really listen to client needs AND then act
- Transparent information

OTHER ISSUES

Members were given the opportunity to raise any other matters they considered to be important. On examination, these could be broadly considered to fall into two categories which are analysed separately:

- RIPE NCC future structure and operation
- External relationships

To aid comparison, the additional responses in the Stakeholders' section have been analysed under the same issue headings.

5.2.8 **ISSUE H: RIPE NCC future structure and operation.**

Members were of the view that while RIPE NCC had functioned successfully, the environment in which it operated had changed significantly.

Members faced much greater financial pressures. RIPE NCC as a service organisation needed to have a much greater customer service focus. This would determine which services it should be offering and the manner in which they should be delivered. Once this was decided then structural changes would be necessary.

If such a review of service and structure is considered desirable, then following the open debate model espoused by RIPE, the consideration of the points raised by respondents' needs to be open to all members.

Topics raised by members covered:-

- Remove bias towards technical issues and conservation
- Assign a RIPE NCC person to each country/operator
- Focus on the realities facing members
- Policy establishment before process – rather than the other way round as it is at present
- When responding to these proposal changes reallocate staff to meet the new structure required
- Separate the forums for technical debate and an entity for address distribution with a commercial service focus

5.2.8 **ISSUE J: External relationships**

Among the responses to questions, members considered that a more proactive relationship was necessary with governments and other agencies. This was seen by many to be a service. This point was raised again as an additional "issue".

As this was the second time of this topic's introduction, only a small number of examples are given here:-

- Need for far more inter RIR collaboration (it was good on ICANN)
- Be proactive in ensuring governments have a more balanced picture
- Facilitate governments' plans for internet expansion where they intend to use the educational community
- Be aware that each government has its own plan for internet expansion consistent with its other national objectives (not all the same)



6. Stakeholder Response Analysis

6.1 THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION

In considering the responses from "stakeholders", there are some points that need to be borne in mind.

1. Quite a large number of respondents considered that they were **both** members and stakeholders. They were given the option of deciding for themselves as to the category in which to respond.

As a consequence between 35 – 40 percent of the responses in the "Stakeholder" category come from respondents who are also members.

2. Since it was assumed that most stakeholders would not be members, the "Survey Questions" section for stakeholders contains fewer and quite different questions so no direct comparison is valid.

The most important question in the stakeholder survey is split into four parts, as follows:

"What do you consider the most effective way for RIPE NCC to play its role? ...

- **Within the RIPE NCC service region?**
- **Within the global Internet community?**
- **With other organisations who provide services to RIPE NCC members?**
- **With government or other regulatory bodies?"**

3. Unlike the section on questions, the section on "Issues for Consideration" provided for stakeholders' comment was almost identical to that provided to members. Comparison between members' and stakeholders' views is therefore possible to some extent – constrained by the point made earlier that a significant percentage of stakeholders are also members.

6.1.1 What do you consider the most effective way for RIPE NCC to play its role within the RIPE NCC service region?

A number of suggestions were made:

- Focus on the primary function of address distribution
 - Improve oversight by the Board of RIPE NCC management operations

- Have some "member only" meetings
- A clearer policy making process
- Greater distinction between policy making and policy application responsibilities.
- Better management of the wait queue
- Ensure consistent address allocation policies across RIRs

6.1.2 What do you consider the most effective way for RIPE NCC to play its role within the global Internet community?

A number of suggestions were made:

- More effective representation at policy and standards bodies meetings
- More effective collaboration with other RIRs; much of it is currently seen as unstructured and without management knowledge
- In the absence of Mirjam Kuehne, ensure that an adequate stand-in replacement is available to fill the role which she has performed so well
- Review RIPE NCC's R & D functions. If these continue, the costs should be borne by those who benefit – or if done as a community service, the cost should be borne by their larger members with capacity to pay.
- Pursue the RIRs blueprint for reform

6.1.3 What do you consider the most effective way for RIPE NCC to play its role with other organisations who provide services to RIPE NCC members?

There were a limited number of responses to this question.

Two main points were made:

- RIPE NCC should adopt a neutral position in regard to the provision of services to members by other organisations, especially commercial suppliers
- The relationship between RIPE and other organisations such as ASO, CENTR, IANA, ICANN and IETF were important but very ill-defined. These needed to be clearly set out, explained to members and the actual functions of each of these organisations communicated to RIPE NCC members.

6.1.4 What do you consider the most effective way for RIPE NCC to play its role with government or other regulatory bodies?

Communication and representation in this area was seen as an important role for RIPE NCC. In cases where it would allow opportunities for RIRs to represent members' interests, then some form of regulatory body and/or similar memberships should be actively taken up by RIPE NCC and other RIRs.

Points put forward were:-

- Increase influential visibility especially with the EU
- Become members of main regulatory bodies to ensure that both parties are aware of each others financial, regulatory, technical and legal constraints
- Build links with ICANN Government Advisory Committee
- Offer neutral expert advice and comment to ensure better knowledge
- Endorse and support the comments of networking practitioners from the RIPE community

6.2 ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

6.2.1 **ISSUE A:** Do you believe that the RIPE NCC should simply function as a Regional Internet Registry (RIR) or do you think they should provide other services to their members or the Internet community?

The suggestions made include:

- Concentration on the prime mission of IP operational management with service agreements for members who should be considered as customers
- Improve the means whereby members actually **participate** in the development and approval of the activity plan
- Adopt a more commercially oriented approach and only become involved in projects where there are clear benefits to the majority (or a large number) of members
- Divestment of non-core R&D functions to research organisations
- Clearly identify costs and run services primarily on a cost recovery basis

6.2.2 **ISSUE B:** Assuming that RIPE NCC should regularly seek members' views on services and service standards, from your experience with other organisations, what is the most effective way(s) to carry this out?

No additional suggestions were made in this section which would increase the range of suggestions already made by members.

6.2.3 **ISSUE C:** In addition to views about services, what are the best ways for organisations such as the RIPE NCC to receive input from members and the Internet community? From what you may know, do you feel that the present structure facilitates input, especially from other interested stakeholders?

A number of respondents indicated that they believed changes in this area were necessary.

- Hold meetings in locations that facilitate representative member attendance
- Adopt procedures that ensure no fear of retribution when a complaint is made
- Transfer R and D work to research institution
- Overcome the perception that RIPE NCC is "set in its ways" and provide strong leadership
- Improve the information structure and make information easier to find
- Consider "summit" meetings within each country which encourage discussion and establishment of a representative view. These should have technical means to encourage remote participation

6.2.4 ISSUE D: Should the RIPE NCC regularly seek members' view on new services and their views on the standards of existing services provided? If so, what are the most effective means?

Once again, respondents raised no ideas which had not already been raised by members. Issues which each received support from a number of respondents were:

- Service level agreements with members
- More resources given to, and a better structure for, working groups
- Telephone access to hostmasters in languages other than English, including a hotline service in the most common RIPE NCC region languages.

6.2.5 ISSUE E: This issue is deliberately left blank in the Stakeholder analysis as Issue E invited *members* to indicate whether *their views* were adequately represented under the current structure.

Blank – not applicable

6.2.6 ISSUE F: Compared to other essential services that you receive such as gas, electricity, telephone and car registration, from what you know of the RIPE NCC, how would you rate their service standards?

This question is perhaps somewhat unfair. Stakeholder respondents are not directly in receipt of RIPE NCC services; therefore their knowledge is obviously gained at venues such as RIPE meetings where members make critical comments and good services rarely receive equal mention.

6.2.7 ISSUE G: If you had to identify your own or your organisation's top service provider of any type of service you receive, what is it that makes them stand out?

The main features mentioned were that outstanding service providers had:-

- Customer service focus
 - Professional, competent staff who understand customer needs

- Simple interfaces
- Invisible internal rules and structures
- A willingness to listen to and act on customer feedback
- Responsiveness in a timely, friendly and relevant fashion
- Willingness to make obligations a legal and financial commitment.

6.2.8 **ISSUE H: RIPE NCC Future structure and operation.**

A range of suggestions was made which respondents believed would improve RIPE NCC operations. The main ones were:

- Investment in improving the customer service focus
- Hiving off the technical research function
- A clearer separation between RIPE and RIPE NCC with different names
- Introducing a service contract for customers which adequately took account of commercial and legislative requirements in the countries where members operated
- Basing charges in proportion to IP resources held
- Staff rotation within NCC and to other relevant organisations
- Having a "policy" subtrack at meetings
- Establishing three "desks" reporting directly to CEO for the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Western Europe. Appointees to be based at NCC HQ, travel frequently in their respective areas and be fluent in the main area language.

6.2.9 **ISSUE I: External Relationships**

Stakeholders reinforced members' views on the importance of a proactive policy on external relationships but did not raise any new topics.

