

Revised Draft ICANN Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2021-2025

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INTRODUCTION

The Internet is a globally shared resource with ever-increasing importance to and influence on society. The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN¹) acts, within the scope of its mission, in the global public interest as the trusted steward of the Internet's unique identifier systems. The ICANN Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2021 to 2025² builds upon ICANN's mission so that it may continue to effectively fulfill its aims and meet new and continuously evolving challenges and opportunities.

Since ICANN developed its last strategic plan for fiscal years 2016 to 2020, Internet use has grown. More than half of the world's population is now online. Cyberattacks and data breaches have increased in size and frequency. Regulatory and legislative activity related to Internet matters is growing. New technologies are introducing new challenges to the security and stability of the Internet infrastructure.

ICANN is an ecosystem made up of three components: the ICANN community, the ICANN Board of Directors, and the ICANN organization (ICANN org). Significant changes occurred across the ICANN ecosystem over the last five years, including the successful transition of the stewardship of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions from the U.S. government to ICANN. Through that process, ICANN cemented its mission and strengthened its governance model, as demonstrated through new bylaws and enhanced community powers.

ICANN's multistakeholder, bottom-up approach to policy development and strategic planning remains rooted in the continued belief that global representation, transparency, and

accountability are critical to fulfilling the shared goal of a single, globally interoperable Internet supported by stable, secure, and resilient unique identifier systems.

To prepare for the development of this plan, ICANN initiated a process to identify internal and external trends that impact ICANN's future, its mission, or operations. The ICANN community, Board, and ICANN org all provided extensive input to this effort. There were significant similarities that naturally converged into five primary trends: security; ICANN's governance; unique identifier systems; geopolitics; and financials.

During the ensuing months, the ICANN Board assessed the impacts of these five primary trends in relation to overarching strategic goals. The result of that work is reflected in this plan in the form of a renewed vision statement, and new strategic objectives and goals for the fiscal period 2021 to 2025. Targeted outcomes and strategic risks determine conditions for success of each goal. ICANN's mission as stated in its [bylaws](#) remains unchanged.

The new strategic objectives are directly correlated to the five primary trends identified by the ICANN community. They represent areas of challenge and opportunity for ICANN to shape its future successfully.

This strategic plan will be complemented by a fully costed five-year operating plan that will detail how and at what cost ICANN will implement its chosen strategy. It will include details of activities, dependencies, and phasing. Accountability indicators measure progress against ICANN's strategic objectives.

¹ The term "ICANN", throughout this document, refers to the ICANN ecosystem as a whole, that is ICANN Board, community and organization (org), unless otherwise specified.

² ICANN's fiscal years start 1 July and end 30 June.

VISION

ICANN's vision is

To be a champion of the single, open, and globally interoperable Internet, by being the independent, trusted, multistakeholder steward of the Internet's unique identifiers, and by providing an open and collaborative environment where diverse stakeholders come together in the global public interest to:

- Secure operational excellence in the stewardship of the IANA functions.
- Continuously improve the unique identifier systems.
- Strengthen the security of the Domain Name System (DNS) and the DNS Root Server System.
- Evolve ICANN's governance model to be increasingly effective, transparent, and accountable.
- Improve the effectiveness and inclusiveness of ICANN's multistakeholder policy development processes.
- Anticipate and manage the impact of legislation and regulation.
- Ensure that ICANN is technically robust and financially sustainable.

MISSION

ICANN’s mission was refined and incorporated into the bylaws, which were adopted in 2016, following the transition of the oversight of the IANA functions from the U.S. government to ICANN’s multistakeholder community. The mission as stated in the bylaws is:

Excerpt from ICANN Bylaws Section 1.1. MISSION

(a) The mission of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (“ICANN”) is to ensure the stable and secure operation of the Internet’s unique identifier systems as described in this Section 1.1(a) (the “Mission”).

Specifically, ICANN:

(i) Coordinates the allocation and assignment of names in the root zone of the Domain Name System (“DNS”) and coordinates the development and implementation of policies concerning the registration of second-level domain names in generic top-level domains (“gTLDs”). In this role, ICANN’s scope is to coordinate the development and implementation of policies:

- For which uniform or coordinated resolution is reasonably necessary to facilitate the openness, interoperability, resilience, security and/or stability of the DNS including, with respect to gTLD registrars and registries, policies in the areas described in Annex G-1 and Annex G-2 (of the Bylaws); and
- That are developed through a bottom-up consensus-based multistakeholder process and designed to ensure the stable and secure operation of the Internet’s unique names systems.

The issues, policies, procedures, and principles addressed in Annex G-1 and Annex G-2 (of the Bylaws) with respect to gTLD registrars and registries shall be deemed to be within ICANN’s Mission.

(ii) Facilitates the coordination of the operation and evolution of the DNS root name server system.

(iii) Coordinates the allocation and assignment at the top-most level of Internet Protocol numbers and Autonomous System numbers. In service of its Mission, ICANN (A) provides registration services and open access for global number registries as requested by the Internet Engineering Task Force (“IETF”) and the Regional Internet Registries (“RIRs”) and (B) facilitates the development of global number registry policies by the affected community and other related tasks as agreed with the RIRs.

(iv) Collaborates with other bodies as appropriate to provide registries needed for the functioning of the Internet as specified by Internet protocol standards development organizations. In service of its Mission, ICANN’s scope is to provide registration services and open access for registries in the public domain requested by Internet protocol development organizations.

(b) ICANN shall not act outside its Mission.

(c) ICANN shall not regulate (i.e., impose rules and restrictions on) services that use the Internet's unique identifiers or the content that such services carry or provide, outside the express scope of Section 1.1(a). For the avoidance of doubt, ICANN does not hold any governmentally authorized regulatory authority.

(d) For the avoidance of doubt and notwithstanding the foregoing:

(i) the foregoing prohibitions are not intended to limit ICANN's authority or ability to adopt or implement policies or procedures that take into account the use of domain names as natural-language identifiers;

(ii) Notwithstanding any provision of the Bylaws to the contrary, the terms and conditions of the documents listed in subsections (A) through (C) below, and ICANN's performance of its obligations or duties thereunder, may not be challenged by any party in any proceeding against, or process involving, ICANN (including a request for reconsideration or an independent review process pursuant to Article 4) on the basis that such terms and conditions conflict with, or are in violation of, ICANN's Mission or otherwise exceed the scope of ICANN's authority or powers pursuant to these Bylaws ("Bylaws") or ICANN's Articles of Incorporation ("Articles of Incorporation"):

(A)

(1) all registry agreements and registrar accreditation agreements between ICANN and registry operators or registrars in force on 1 October 2016 [1], including, in each case, any terms or conditions therein that are not contained in the underlying form of registry agreement and registrar accreditation agreement;

(2) any registry agreement or registrar accreditation agreement not encompassed by (1) above to the extent its terms do not vary materially from the form of registry agreement or registrar accreditation agreement that existed on 1 October 2016;

(B) any renewals of agreements described in subsection (A) pursuant to their terms and conditions for renewal; and

(C) ICANN's Five-Year Strategic Plan and Five-Year Operating Plan existing on 10 March 2016.

(iii) Section 1.1(d)(ii) does not limit the ability of a party to any agreement described therein to challenge any provision of such agreement on any other basis, including the other party's interpretation of the provision, in any proceeding or process involving ICANN.

(iv) ICANN shall have the ability to negotiate, enter into and enforce agreements, including public interest commitments, with any party in service of its Mission.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Strategic Objectives for Fiscal Years 2021-2025

Taking into account the external impacts on the global growth and evolution of the Internet, the DNS, and other unique identifier systems ICANN helps coordinate, the following five strategic objectives are identified for the fiscal years 2021–2025 to enable ICANN to continue to fulfill its mission and achieve its new vision:

- **Strengthen the security of the Domain Name System and the DNS Root Server System.**
- **Improve the effectiveness of ICANN’s multistakeholder model of governance.**
- **Evolve the unique identifier systems in coordination and collaboration with relevant parties to continue to serve the needs of the global Internet user base.**
- **Address geopolitical issues impacting ICANN’s mission to ensure a single and globally interoperable Internet.**
- **Ensure ICANN’s long-term financial sustainability.**

Security

Strategic Objective: Strengthen the security of the Domain Name System and the DNS Root Server System.

The Internet's importance to the world's economic, social, and political systems is growing in conjunction with the expansion of its user base, content, and applications. Internet connectivity continues to increase worldwide, particularly in developing countries. This growth brings with it increased pressures on the infrastructure of the Internet, and thus an increasing need for reliability, stability, and security of the DNS and Internet infrastructure.

Levels of security across the different sectors of the global economy vary widely. Vulnerabilities in systems and processes are numerous. For example, distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks using the DNS and other vulnerabilities like malicious software distribution, phishing, and the coordination of compromised machines into "botnets" compromise various aspects of the Internet's infrastructure.

These growing threats also present opportunity. ICANN will strengthen the coordination of the DNS and DNS Root Server Systems, in partnership with the DNS root server operators, authoritative and resolution server operators, and other DNS stakeholders. ICANN can help improve the awareness of these threats and foster greater diversity of thought to best anticipate and respond to these challenges.

Seizing these opportunities requires action. A coordinated approach is necessary to effectively identify and mitigate DNS security threats and combat DNS abuse. Promoting greater adoption of global open Internet standards and enhancing awareness of security threats among stakeholders are two necessary steps that can be taken to strengthen the security and stability of the Internet's infrastructure. All actors have a collective responsibility to ensure that the DNS remains robust.

TO ACHIEVE THIS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE, ICANN SEEKS TO:

- 1.1 Improve the shared responsibility for upholding the security and stability of the DNS by strengthening DNS coordination in partnership with relevant stakeholders.**
- 1.2 Strengthen DNS root server operations governance in coordination with the DNS root server operators.**
- 1.3 Identify and mitigate security threats to the DNS through greater engagement with relevant hardware, software, and service vendors.**
- 1.4 Increase the robustness of the DNS root zone key signing and distribution services and processes.**

Strategic goal 1.1: Improve the shared responsibility for upholding the security and stability of the DNS by strengthening DNS coordination in partnership with relevant stakeholders.

TARGETED OUTCOMES

- ICANN, in partnership with relevant stakeholders, establishes and promotes a coordinated approach to effectively identify and mitigate DNS security threats and combat DNS abuse.
- ICANN continues to provide a trusted forum that effectively convenes relevant parties for discussions on the security, stability, evolution, and interoperability of the DNS.
- ICANN maintains a reputation as the source of unbiased, reliable, and factual information on DNS health.

STRATEGIC RISKS

- Successful cyberattacks and information warfare undermine trust in the DNS.
- Stronger control over the Internet and cybersecurity by governments changes how security and stability of the DNS can be addressed.

Strategic goal 1.2: Strengthen DNS root server operations governance in coordination with the DNS root server operators.

TARGETED OUTCOMES

- Working with DNS root server operators and other relevant parties, ICANN continues to enhance the governance and technical evolution of DNS root server operations and services.
- ICANN, in collaboration with DNS root server operators and other relevant parties, develops a coordinated emergency plan to address DNS Root Server System attacks.

STRATEGIC RISKS

- Stronger control over the Internet and cybersecurity by governments could influence DNS root server governance structures.
- Creation of alternative DNS root infrastructures could facilitate the creation of alternative DNS root name spaces.
- The lack of an accountable governance structure could impact DNS root service delivery and reduce trust in the root server operators and the DNS more generally.

Strategic goal 1.3: Identify and mitigate security threats to the DNS through greater engagement with relevant hardware, software, and service vendors.

TARGETED OUTCOMES

- The inherent security of the DNS and unique identifiers system measurably increases, due to higher adoption of global open Internet standards and greater awareness of security threats among stakeholders.
- ICANN, in collaboration with relevant hardware, software, and service vendors, enhances knowledge about DNS safety and security.
- Security threats leveraging the DNS measurably decline as a result of encouraging relevant hardware, software, and service vendors to incorporate key security measures.

STRATEGIC RISKS

- National or regional regulations cause unintended consequences, which threaten the security and stability of the single, interoperable Internet.
- Inability to mitigate security threats undermines confidence in institutions responsible for the security and stability of the DNS.
- Competing priorities -- such as public safety, personal security, privacy, and socioeconomic concerns -- raise challenges in mitigating DNS security threats.
- Domain name abuse continues to grow.

Strategic goal 1.4: Increase the robustness of the DNS root zone key signing and distribution services and processes.

TARGETED OUTCOMES

- The reliable, resilient, and interoperable DNS remains the leading trusted platform for the Internet’s naming system.
- Increased availability of root zone data enables greater decentralization and distribution of DNS root service.
- The Internet community’s trust in ICANN to provide resilient, scalable, and accountable Key Signing Key (KSK) management -- as an adjunct to existing public key infrastructures -- increases, facilitating improved security technologies and greater use of the DNS.

STRATEGIC RISKS

- Successful cyberattacks and information warfare undermine trust in the DNS.
- Failure of the DNS root key signing service would threaten Internet operations.
- Lack of improved root zone distribution service could lead to the overloading of the existing root zone distribution mechanisms.

ICANN's Governance

Strategic Objective: Improve the effectiveness of ICANN's multistakeholder model of governance.

As the Internet expands and evolves, ICANN's multistakeholder model of governance faces challenges including: increased community responsibilities leading to stakeholder burnout; pressure to accelerate effective cross-community efforts and policy development; concerns about achieving consensus on increasingly complex issues; and stress on the organization's ability to support a larger, open, and engaged multistakeholder community.

ICANN's unique model of governance will continue to be challenged, and those challenges must be addressed in a timely manner for ICANN to remain relevant and successful. ICANN must make its model stronger and more effective.

Ongoing improvement of the decision-making process benefits from ICANN stakeholders collaborating and engaging in consensus building processes. By enhancing stakeholder participation and helping participation become more active and informed, the

workload can be more equitably distributed across the pool of stakeholders. ICANN also will continue to increase diversity and capacity across all parts of its ecosystem. Stronger decision-making systems and more consistent procedures will help improve the efficacy of ICANN's cross-community efforts.

The transition of the coordination and management of the Internet's unique identifiers to the global Internet community reaffirmed the importance of transparency and accountability for ICANN. The organization will continue to address the opportunities and challenges associated with these requirements, while striving for operational effectiveness and fiscal responsibility.

As ICANN seeks to become more effective, it will also continue to meet its commitments, abide by its core values, and honor its bottom-up, consensus-based decision-making model.

TO ACHIEVE THIS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE, ICANN SEEKS TO:

- 2.1. Strengthen ICANN's bottom-up multistakeholder decision-making process and ensure that work gets done and policies are developed in an effective and timely manner.**
- 2.2 Support and grow active, informed, and effective stakeholder participation.**
- 2.3 Sustain and improve openness, inclusivity, accountability, and transparency.**

Strategic goal 2.1: Strengthen ICANN's bottom-up multistakeholder decision-making process and ensure that work gets done and policies are developed in an effective and timely manner.

TARGETED OUTCOMES

- Processes and tools are in place and consistently utilized to reach consensus, resolve impasses, and make timely, informed, and effective decisions that are in the global public interest, take policy advice into account, and ensure consistency with ICANN's mission and bylaws.
- Decision-making processes ensure that input from all stakeholders is considered.
- Improved multistakeholder model processes, such as Policy Development Process (PDP) 3.0 or streamlined Organizational and Specific Reviews, and other evolutions of ICANN's governance and cross-community working methods help produce timely and relevant results.
- ICANN stakeholders collaborate to define prioritization mechanisms, which ensure that cumulative workload is reasonable at any one time, and that ICANN priorities reflect the community's collective needs.

STRATEGIC RISKS

- Unclear community and organizational priorities compete for scarce resources.
- The cost to implement ICANN's multistakeholder model becomes unaffordable.
- Polarized positions or agendas that do not represent the collective interest impede progress and waste resources.
- Increased workload for the ICANN community, Board, and org impact the ability to effectively support ongoing work, resulting in community fatigue or stakeholder disengagement.
- Process complexity impedes ICANN's ability to keep pace with the speed of external events that impact its future.
- Perceived or actual delays in decision-making fuel doubts about ICANN's ability to address serious global issues in a timely fashion.

Strategic goal 2.2: Support and grow active, informed, and effective stakeholder participation.

TARGETED OUTCOMES

- Meaningful stakeholder participation increases, demonstrated by community members effectively engaged in multistakeholder model processes and committed to cooperating toward an agreed-upon global public interest.
- The knowledge and skill levels across the stakeholder community and organization increase, demonstrated by community members and staff equipped with basic knowledge of the DNS as well as ICANN policy and advisory processes.
- The ICANN community establishes mechanisms, such as an accurate measure of community participation, to equitably distribute workload among the pool of stakeholder representatives.

STRATEGIC RISKS

- Limited resources could impact the ability for stakeholders to participate, which could compromise the credibility and integrity of the multistakeholder model.
- Polarized positions or agendas that do not represent the collective interest impede progress and waste resources.

Strategic goal 2.3: Sustain and improve openness, inclusivity, accountability, and transparency.

TARGETED OUTCOMES

- Representation across all stakeholders continues to reflect the evolving functional, geographic, and cultural diversity of the Internet.
- ICANN org’s geographical presence and international strategy continue to effectively support ICANN’s global community.
- Widespread understanding of the ICANN multistakeholder model is established through increased communication with relevant organizations and institutions.
- ICANN Board and org continue enhancing transparency initiatives and upholding accountability.
- ICANN community enhances their transparency practices to increase cross-community accountability and trust.
- Continued efforts of ICANN Board, community, and org facilitate the inclusion and participation of all stakeholders.

STRATEGIC RISKS

- Trends toward multilateralism, as well as changing economic, societal, and governmental interests, result in increased pressures on the ICANN multistakeholder model.
- Stakeholder-specific interests preempt Internet policy or governance discussions, impairing the ICANN multistakeholder model.
- Divergence of interests inherent to the multistakeholder model and a perceived lack of global representation fuel doubts about ICANN’s effectiveness.

Unique Identifier Systems

Strategic Objective: Evolve the unique identifier systems in coordination and collaboration with relevant parties to continue to serve the needs of the global Internet user base.

More than half of the world's population uses the Internet. The majority of new Internet users are expected to come from Asia and Africa. The next chapter in the Internet's growth will increasingly impact the global Internet community as it evolves to include more of the world.

With a forecast of exponential growth, the number of Internet-connected devices is increasing at an even greater pace than the user base.

ICANN will continue to play a crucial role in ensuring a single, stable, interoperable infrastructure, including delivering the IANA functions.

Promoting and improving Universal Acceptance and the implementation of Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) are necessary to reach a more diverse Internet user base.

In addition, embracing the rapid evolution of emerging technologies, business, and security models will allow ICANN to maintain agility as the Internet evolves.

These strategies will ensure that ICANN improves the Internet's unique identifier systems to better serve a broader and more diverse global user base and is able to safeguard an open Internet for all.

TO ACHIEVE THIS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE, ICANN SEEKS TO:

- 3.1 Foster competition, consumer choice, and innovation in the Internet space by increasing awareness of, and encouraging readiness for Universal Acceptance, IDN implementation, and IPv6.**
- 3.2 Improve assessment of, and responsiveness to, new technologies which impact the security, stability, and resiliency of the Internet's unique identifier systems by greater engagement with relevant parties.**
- 3.3 Continue to deliver and enhance the IANA functions with operational excellence.**
- 3.4 Support the continued evolution of the Internet's unique identifier systems with a new round of gTLDs that is responsibly funded, managed, risk-evaluated, and consistent with ICANN processes.**

Strategic goal 3.1: Foster competition, consumer choice, and innovation in the Internet space by increasing awareness and encouraging readiness for Universal Acceptance, IDN implementation, and IPv6.

TARGETED OUTCOMES

- ICANN engages in greater cooperation locally, regionally, and globally, with stakeholder groups and different policy and standards development bodies to raise awareness about Universal Acceptance, IDN implementation, and IPv6.
- Universal Acceptance readiness measurably increases.
- IDNs are increasingly adopted and treated in a standard fashion by software vendors.
- New gTLD awareness increases, as measured in surveys of Internet users.
- IPv6 usage measurably increases.

STRATEGIC RISKS

- Insufficient readiness for Universal Acceptance, IDN implementation, and IPv6 could result in a failure to serve Internet users' needs.
- Lack of coordination among technical bodies on policy development and standard-setting processes could impact use and adoption of IDNs.

Strategic goal 3.2: Improve assessment of and responsiveness to new technologies which impact the security, stability, and resiliency of the Internet’s unique identifier systems by greater engagement with relevant parties.

TARGETED OUTCOMES

- Enhanced engagement with contracted parties creates more robust industry relationships, dynamic participation, and improved responsiveness to emerging technologies.
- Mechanisms are established with which ICANN assesses new technologies and, when appropriate, embraces them.
- ICANN collaborates with relevant parties and effectively leverages partnerships in the IETF, Regional Internet Registries, and naming communities to develop and integrate new technologies with existing Internet protocol structures, including the DNS.

STRATEGIC RISKS

- Failure of the DNS to evolve threatens the single, interoperable Internet, and technical coordination becomes more complex.
- New layers added to a stagnant DNS core technology and the growing viability of alternate DNS roots and alternative infrastructures add more complexity to the Internet ecosystem.
- The complexity of the Internet ecosystem makes technological change difficult.

Strategic goal 3.3: Continue to deliver and enhance the IANA functions with operational excellence.

TARGETED OUTCOMES

- ICANN org continues to provide reliable delivery and continuous improvement of the IANA functions, consistent with community service level agreements.
- ICANN promotes and supports awareness of the IANA functions, including among stakeholders, to successfully maintain the broad array of Internet unique identifiers and deliver effective DNS root zone operations.
- New stakeholder services are defined, delivered, and effectively supported.

STRATEGIC RISKS

- Unsuccessful delivery of the IANA functions undermines ICANN's ability to fulfill its mission.
- Increase in security threats raises concerns about the stability of the DNS root and erodes confidence in its dependability.

Strategic goal 3.4: Support the continued evolution of the Internet’s unique identifier systems with a new round of gTLDs that is responsibly funded, managed, risk-evaluated, and consistent with ICANN processes.

TARGETED OUTCOMES

- The expansion of the DNS root attracts continued investment and innovation, as indicated by market developments and new registry services.
- Interest and participation in the New gTLD Program measurably increase, as indicated by inquiries and new entrants in the round.
- Consumer confidence in the evolving domain name marketplace remains strong, as measured by increasing domain name registrations and other indicators.
- Good stewardship of the New gTLD Program continues to be demonstrated, as shown by financial reporting, good risk management, and the availability of measures to support sustained operations of new gTLDs in the namespace.

STRATEGIC RISKS

- A new gTLD round may not achieve its objectives.
- Technical failures within the domain name space expansion could affect the stability of the unique identifier systems and underlying infrastructure.

Geopolitics

Strategic Objective: Address geopolitical issues impacting ICANN’s mission to ensure a single, globally interoperable Internet.

Geopolitical and technical risks threaten the interoperability of a single Internet. Governmental policies, like so-called cyber sovereignty strategies, already have impacted Internet operations. For example, the trend toward forced data localization policies and regulations surrounding cross-border data flows create challenges for a single, interoperable Internet. Global tensions and protectionism threaten potential alliances in the Internet ecosystem.

Information and communications technologies have increasing impact on global trade and development. As global reliance on the Internet grows, ICANN’s role as the single coordinator of the Internet’s unique identifier systems is increasingly important.

To ensure its position as the recognized hub for facilitating discussions about the Internet and the DNS among all of its global

stakeholders, ICANN will continue to increase awareness that the Internet ecosystem does not exist in a vacuum. In addition, ICANN will continue to partner with others in the Internet ecosystem and beyond to support initiatives that are relevant to addressing geopolitical issues and maintaining a single, interoperable Internet.

With an established reputation as a central forum to address issues as they relate to the unique identifier systems, ICANN will also consider how best to position itself to respond to emerging regulatory and legislative matters that may impact its mission and the operation of the Internet’s unique identifiers. A range of issues could threaten a single, interoperable Internet. For example, different jurisdictions could require changes to ICANN’s contracts or technical standards, or override ICANN’s processes.

TO ACHIEVE THIS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE, ICANN SEEKS TO:

4.1 Identify and address global challenges and opportunities within its remit by further developing early warning systems, such as ICANN org’s Legislative and Regulatory Development Reports.

4.2 Continue to build alliances in the Internet ecosystem and beyond to raise awareness of and engage with global stakeholders about ICANN’s mission and policy making.

Strategic goal 4.1: Identify and address global challenges and opportunities within its remit by further developing early warning systems, such as ICANN org’s Legislative and Regulatory Development Reports.

TARGETED OUTCOMES

- ICANN org continues to develop and mature systems to detect and monitor legislative initiatives and other governmental or intergovernmental actions or initiatives that could impact ICANN’s mission or operations.
- ICANN org proactively engages with the community to develop common awareness of ICANN’s contribution to early warning systems.
- ICANN has effective processes in place to receive and act on input from the community.
- ICANN effectively convenes and facilitates discussions with relevant parties to help address relevant global challenges and opportunities.

STRATEGIC RISKS

- ICANN’s inability to establish itself as a key player in Internet governance results in increased external interventions by nation states or other entities.
- Failure to anticipate legislative efforts force ICANN into a reactive mode.

Strategic goal 4.2: Continue to build alliances in the Internet ecosystem and beyond to raise awareness of and engage with global stakeholders about ICANN’s mission and policymaking.

TARGETED OUTCOMES

- ICANN fosters successful and mutually beneficial relationships with local, regional, and global partners to ensure knowledge building about ICANN and its mission continues.
- ICANN is engaged, its role acknowledged, and its presence valued in the arenas where topics within its remit are discussed.
- ICANN plays an important role in raising awareness among legislators, regulators, and stakeholders about its mission and the effect of various regulatory and other proposals on the Internet ecosystem

STRATEGIC RISKS

- Lack of understanding of ICANN’s remit interferes with ICANN’s ability to participate in relevant arenas.
- Internet infrastructure, security, and government control continue to vary by region or nation.
- Threats to a single, interoperable Internet – such as alternative DNS roots or diminished commonality within networks – fuel doubt in ICANN’s ability to serve a global Internet.

Financials

Strategic Objective: Ensure ICANN’s long-term financial sustainability.

The evolution of the DNS over more than 30 years has resulted in unprecedented growth in the adoption of domain names. In the past, this trend of rapid growth produced the funding necessary to meet the increasing demands on ICANN’s services. That trend is now shifting.

Today, the domain name industry is in a phase of consolidation and reduced growth. While funding stabilizes, demands continue to grow, including: demands for support from stakeholders; the increased cost of globalization; and cost of inclusiveness, transparency, and accountability.

The slowing growth will require both discipline and innovation to ensure ICANN has the sustained ability to support the growing needs and demands of its global community.

ICANN will continue to replenish its Reserve Fund, which has been reduced through the strategic investments necessary to successfully

execute the transition from the contractual relationship with the U.S. government.

ICANN will also continue to fund necessary investments to address essential technology and security requirements.

There are efficiencies and improvements to be made by strengthening cost management and financial accountability mechanisms, without jeopardizing the efficacy of the multistakeholder model or lowering the quality of ICANN’s efforts and achievements.

At the same time, ICANN will increase its understanding of industry changes and market trends. ICANN will also be proactive in its financial planning model to improve responsiveness to changing industry dynamics.

TO ACHIEVE THIS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE, ICANN SEEKS TO:

5.1 Implement a five-year Financial Plan that supports the five-year Operating Plan.

5.2 Develop reliable and predictable funding projections.

5.3 Manage operations and their costs to optimize the effectiveness and efficiency of ICANN’s activities.

5.4 Ensure that the level of ICANN reserves is continuously set, reached, and maintained consistent with the complexity and risks of the ICANN environment.

Strategic goal 5.1: Implement a five-year Financial Plan that supports the five-year Operating Plan.

TARGETED OUTCOMES

- ICANN Strategic Plan is supported by a five-year Operating and Financial Plan. All plans are updated as and when necessary to take into account relevant changes in ICANN's environment.
- Evolution to five-year rolling financial planning allows ICANN to appropriately address changes that impact ICANN's budget, operating and financial plan, or strategic plan.
- ICANN has processes and tools in place to effectively prioritize and periodically reprioritize its work.
- Community's engagement in prioritization and decisions about affordability measurably increases.
- Funding, expenses, and reserves are addressed in each plan in a manner consistent with policies, Board decisions, strict financial responsibility, and conservatism.

STRATEGIC RISKS

- ICANN is unable to adjust to changes in the domain name marketplace that impact funding, and becomes unable to fulfill its mission.
- Inefficient financial planning results in an inability to address essential requirements of ICANN's mission.

Strategic goal 5.2: Develop reliable and predictable funding projections.

TARGETED OUTCOMES

- ICANN has reliable and predictable five-year funding projections, based on a sound understanding of the evolution in the domain name marketplace and realistic assumptions.
- ICANN utilizes data about the directions and trends in the market to effectively guide the organization.

STRATEGIC RISKS

- The DNS industry evolves in a manner or at a speed that makes it difficult for ICANN to make reliable predictions about the future of the marketplace.
- The relevance and reliability of ICANN org's funding projections could be affected by a lack of understanding about the evolution of the DNS and how it may impact the perceived or actual value of domain names to the public, therefore impacting the domain name registrations.

Strategic goal 5.3: Manage operations and their costs to optimize the effectiveness and efficiency of ICANN's activities.

TARGETED OUTCOMES

- ICANN prioritizes its activities to deliver its mission in the global public interest in the most cost-effective way.
- ICANN has processes and tools in place to effectively manage and control costs.
- Financial accountability and responsibility guide how decisions are made prior to committing ICANN's resources; and how expenses are managed once approved, to not exceed those commitments.
- Key cost drivers are clearly defined and understood.

STRATEGIC RISKS

- Lack of alignment or consensus on priorities and goals among ICANN stakeholders results in conflicts about resource allocation.
- Expenditures grow faster than funding, eroding ICANN's reserves.

Strategic goal 5.4: Ensure that the level of ICANN reserves is continuously set, reached, and maintained consistent with the complexity and risks of the ICANN environment.

TARGETED OUTCOMES

- Replenishment strategy for ICANN’s Reserve Fund is adhered to and implemented successfully.
- Risk assessments are periodically reviewed to determine the adequacy of ICANN’s Reserve Fund level to address potential mitigation needs.

STRATEGIC RISKS

- Expenditures grow faster than funding, eroding ICANN’s reserves.

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