

ICANN Strategic Plan

July 2007 – June 2010

Table of contents

Letter from the President and CEO....3
ICANN's Mission and Values....4
ICANN's Mission....5
ICANN's Core Values....6
Development of the July 2007 - June 2010 Strategic Plan....8
Key challenges and opportunities for ICANN....9
Key environmental challenges....9
Key organizational challenges....10
Strategic Objectives for the Next Three Years....11
1. Organizational excellence in Operations....14
2. Organizational excellence in Policy Development....19
3. Increase international participation in ICANN and the use of the Internet system of unique identifiers....21
4. Increase participation in and efficiency of the ICANN multi-stakeholder environment....23
5. Complete transition of technical coordination of the Internet's system of unique identifiers....25

Letter from the President and CEO

December 2006

To All Interested Parties:

Please accept my thanks to all those who contributed to this strategic plan. The development of this draft plan has been based on consultation with the community through workshops at ICANN meetings, and will continue through Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees and through public forums on the ICANN website. Members of the community have been very generous with their time and we appreciate the work that they have done.

Based on feedback that we received from the first Strategic Plan written two years ago, this July 2007 - June 2010 plan is a short, concise document. This year's draft plan continues with the three-year objectives set out in last year's plan, taking into account changes such as the progress realized by execution of the Joint Project Agreement and increased attention to process transparency.

The plan provides a description of challenges and opportunities that ICANN is likely to face in the next few years and then outlines five strategic objectives for the ICANN community. Each of those objectives is then described in more detail in the text of the plan. As in the past, the strategic objectives in this plan will form the framework around which the operational plan is constructed. I look forward to working with the community in the coming months to put the first year of this plan into effect through the 2007-2008 Operational Plan.

Sincerely,

Paul Twomey, President and CEO

ICANN's Mission and Values

The Internet requires a stable and secure system of unique identifiers if it is to serve its global community efficiently and reliably. ICANN has been established to serve the Internet community in maintaining the stability and security of the Internet's unique identifier systems, while fostering competition where appropriate to give Internet users greater choice at optimal cost. While the core functions were in the early years of the Internet (and its predecessors) performed under auspices of the US Government, ICANN marks the transition of these services from the responsibility of one national government to the global Internet community. In ICANN's self-governance model, the policies that create stable processes for IP address allocation and protocol parameter recordation, as well as a stable, competitive domain name system are able to be developed in a manageable, bottom-up, consensus-based process involving global, multi-stakeholder representation. In short, a key to accomplishing the strategic principles supporting ICANN's mission:

- ensuring the stability and security of the DNS,
- promoting competition and choice for users and registrants,
- facilitating the bottom-up, transparent policy development process, and
- engaging the participation of the global stakeholder community in the ICANN process

is the inter-relation among those principles. ICANN's work supporting bottom-up coordination involving global stakeholder interests also facilitates stability and competition. Similarly, facilitation of competition and practices promoting stability and security will attract global participants to the ICANN model and its policy development forums.

ICANN's Mission

Since its creation, the Internet community has vigorously discussed and reviewed the mission and values that guide ICANN's actions. This extensive, inclusive and bottom up discussion has been encapsulated in ICANN's Bylaws, its Mission and Core Values.

The limited and distinct mission of ICANN is clearly set out in Article I of its Bylaws.

The mission of The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers ("ICANN") is to coordinate, at the overall level, the global Internet's systems of unique identifiers, and in particular to ensure the stable and secure operation of the Internet's unique identifier systems. In particular, ICANN:

1. Coordinates the allocation and assignment of the three sets of unique identifiers for the Internet, which are:

    a. Domain names (forming a system referred to as "DNS");

    b. Internet protocol ("IP") addresses and autonomous system ("AS") numbers; and

    c. Protocol port and parameter numbers.

2. Coordinates the operation and evolution of the DNS root name server system.

3. Coordinates policy development reasonably and appropriately related to these technical functions.

ICANN is an international, non-profit, multi-stakeholder organisation. It has become the globally authoritative body on the technical and organisational means to ensure the stability and interoperability of the DNS, the continued equitable distribution of IP addresses, and accurate recordation of protocol parameters.

ICANN's Core Values

ICANN's Bylaws detail ICANN's core values as part of its Mission. In performing its mission, the following core values should guide the decisions and actions of ICANN:

1	Preserving and enhancing the operational stability, reliability, security, and global interoperability of the Internet.
2	Respecting the creativity, innovation, and flow of information made possible by the Internet by limiting ICANN's activities to those matters within ICANN's mission requiring or significantly benefiting from global coordination.
3	To the extent feasible and appropriate, delegating coordination functions to or recognising the policy role of other responsible entities that reflect the interests of affected parties.
4	Seeking and supporting broad, informed participation reflecting the functional, geographic, and cultural diversity of the Internet at all levels of policy development and decision-making.
5	Where feasible and appropriate, depending on market mechanisms to promote and sustain a competitive environment.
6	Introducing and promoting competition in the registration of domain names where practicable and beneficial in the public interest.
7	Employing open and transparent policy development mechanisms that (i) promote well-informed decisions based on expert advice, and (ii) ensure that those entities most affected can assist in the policy development process.
8	Making decisions by applying documented policies neutrally and objectively, with integrity and fairness.
9	Acting with a speed that is responsive to the needs of the Internet while, as part of the decision-making process, obtaining informed input from those entities most affected.
10	Remaining accountable to the Internet community through mechanisms that enhance ICANN's effectiveness.
11	While remaining rooted in the private sector, recognising that governments and public authorities are responsible for public policy and duly taking into account governments' or public authorities' recommendations.

Development of the July 2007 - June 2010 Strategic Plan

This initial draft of the plan is based on a bottom up, multi-phase consultation with the ICANN community. It attempts to set out the community's views of the priorities that face ICANN in the next three years as it continues to evolve as a global organisation serving the Internet community in maintaining the stability and security of the Internet's unique identifier systems.

Development of this strategic plan began at the ICANN meeting in Marrakech in July 2006. Extensive consultation with the community was undertaken in workshops with the Supporting Organisations and Advisory Committees, and also in general sessions conducted in Arabic, English, French and Spanish.

Input from the public forum and the Marrakech sessions was collated into an issues paper which was published in September 2006. Comments were sought through a public forum on the ICANN website. From this input, this draft version of the plan was written.

Telephone consultations were conducted on the first draft of the plan. Based on feedback received from the community, a revised draft was published for discussion at the Sao Paulo meeting. In Sao Paulo, consultation sessions were conducted with stakeholder groups and in general sessions in English, Spanish and French.

This final version of the plan reflects the input received from the community throughout the process. The plan was adopted by the ICANN Board in December 2006 at the Sao Paulo meeting.

Key challenges and opportunities for ICANN

This strategic plan sets out priorities for ICANN over the next three years. These priorities have been set in consultation with the community in response to what the community believes are the major challenges and opportunities that will face the organization. These challenges and opportunities are summarized here.

Key environmental challenges

i. The continued rise of the Internet as a truly global means of communication and the need for ICANN to meet the needs of a truly global stakeholder base.
ii. Ensuring stability and security of the Internet's system of unique identifiers in an environment of increased threats.
iii. The increasing importance of the infrastructure of the DNS for a broad range of critical commercial and communication applications.
iv. Managing a wide range of abusive behaviours in the Internet environment that may be placed at ICANN's doorstep although they are not part of ICANN's remit.
v. Maintaining stability given expected increases in scale driven by the number of devices using the Internet and the number of users.
vi. Multiple complicated changes to Internet operations or protocols that need to be managed in parallel, including possible paradigm changes not yet anticipated.
vii. Managing the continuous evolution of commercial applications and business models that use the Internet.
viii. Avoiding possible fracturing of the DNS, perhaps brought about by some users becoming dissatisfied with perceived restrictions imposed by technical protocols or by actions of a government or governments.
ix. ICANN taking an appropriate role in the broad group of international entities involved in Internet functions.
x. Dealing effectively with widely differing levels of understanding among key stakeholders of technical aspects of the Internet's system of unique identifiers and the implications for Internet users.

Key organizational challenges

i. Significant increases in the volume of policy, policy development support, operations and client delivery work that needs to be done
ii. Developing reliable, stable sources of revenue and building adequate cash reserves
iii. An ongoing obligation to review and renew ICANN processes and performance in order to operate most effectively
iv. Maintaining effective communication with a global audience of ICANN stakeholders with different levels of knowledge about how the DNS works.

Strategic Objectives for the Next Three Years

Having considered the challenges and opportunities that are most likely to present themselves over the next three years, the following objectives have been identified by the ICANN community for the ICANN community. The objectives are broad and ambitious. Specific targets to be accomplished in the near term will be set out in the one-year operating plan that follows this strategic plan.

1. **Organizational excellence in Operations:** If ICANN is to continue to serve a growing and increasingly international stakeholder base effectively, it must strive to further improve its basic operational functions. Given expected increases in activities related to meeting the core mission and continuing attention to stability and security of the Internet's system of unique identifiers, operational excellence is critical to ICANN's success. Accordingly, ICANN will continue to pursue adequate, diverse forms of funding models to ensure ICANN can meet the objectives set out in this plan.

2. **Organizational excellence in Policy Development:** The continued evolution of the Internet, especially the DNS, brings with it an increasing number and depth of policy issues that need to be decided through the ICANN process. Given this growth, the ICANN community needs to further improve its policy development processes and the support that it provides to these processes.

3. **Increase international participation in ICANN and the use of the Internet system of unique identifiers:** ICANN is a global forum for the discussion of issues affecting the stability and security of the Internet's unique identifier systems. At this stage of the evolution of the Internet and of ICANN's own evolution as an organization, it is appropriate to review and improve ICANN practices and procedures to ensure that they are designed to serve and support a global audience as effectively as possible. In addition, ICANN needs to continue to work with other organizations to build capability in developing countries.

4. **Increase participation in and efficiency of the ICANN multi-stakeholder environment:** One of ICANN's great strengths is the multi-stakeholder environment in which issues are debated and resolved. ICANN needs to continue to build on that strength by improving participation by key stakeholders in the process. As one of a number of organizations that are concerned with Internet governance, ICANN must clearly communicate its unique role and engage other organisations in dialogue on matters of common concern.

5. **Complete transition of technical coordination of the Internet's system of unique identifiers:** In September 2006, ICANN signed a Joint Project Agreement with the United States Department of Commerce "for the purpose of the joint development of the mechanisms, methods and procedures necessary to effect the transition of Internet domain name and addressing system (DNS) to the private sector". As part of this agreement, ICANN committed to a number of actions and principles outlined in the Affirmation of Responsibilities adopted by the ICANN Board. ICANN must now deliver on the actions described in these documents.

The key priorities within these objectives

The Strategic Plan sets the direction for ICANN for the next three years by outlining the work that needs to be done under the objectives described above. Members of the community have suggested that it is worthwhile to identify the specific areas or projects that are most important (ie the key priorities) for the ICANN community over the next three years.

Those key priorities are:

- Continued improvement and automation of IANA operations.
- Implementation of those objectives that continue to ensure the stability and security of the Internet's systems of unique identifiers.
- The deployment of Internationalized Domain Names as TLDs.
- The creation of a process for the designation of new gTLDs.
- The implementation of best practice in accountability, transparency and governance.
- The implementation of a proactive contractual compliance program.
- Improvement of cooperation and coordination of the activities of the GAC with the ICANN Board and with other constituencies.
- The implementation of independent reviews of Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees and other ICANN bodies and the carrying out of those improvements that are deemed to be appropriate as determined through community consultation.
- Addressing the challenges of significant growth, especially the increased demand on ICANN operations and policy processes.

1. Organizational excellence in Operations

1. Operational performance targets for IANA

    1. Collaborate with customers (e.g. through working groups) to establish acceptable year-by-year performance targets and meet all of those targets; continue to improve so those targets can be reset by mutual agreement as new performance levels are achieved.

    2. Automate IANA processes where appropriate to enhance productivity and efficiency.

    3. Collaborate with customers to augment IANA operations to include security services to customers in accordance with evolving community standards.

    4. Publish IANA processes and practices and engage with customers to introduce revisions and adaptations where appropriate.

    5. Provide public statistical information on IANA performance, and provide access to individual request status in a secure and confidential manner.

2. Operational performance targets for gTLD Registry tasks

    1. Address new registry services requests in accordance with the consensus policy implementation, and provide information to the GNSO council to lead to improvements in the policy based upon experiences.

    2. Develop and implement effective feedback reporting methodologies on all implemented consensus policies to enable the GNSO to improve the effectiveness of .consensus policies.

    3. Implement Board approved consensus policies in a timely, effective manner.

    4. Develop a methodology to negotiate and execute new gTLD contracts and the renewal of existing gTLD contracts in a timely, predictable, standard way.

3. Operational performance targets for gTLD Registrar tasks:

    1. Facilitate the activities of the registration market to promote competition and choice for consumers in all regions of the world; foster innovation to develop additional markets.

    2. Develop tools for registrars so that they can readily

- interact with ICANN as required by agreement,
- provide performance metrics to and receive the same from ICANN, and
- have access to information and data meaningful to the operation of the registration business.

3. In consultation with relevant stakeholders (including registrants), identify and implement improvements in the accreditation process, including developing appropriate criteria for registrar accreditation and improving processing times for applications.

4. Conduct outreach efforts to enhance relations with the global community of gTLD registrars to improve understanding of their unique concerns and circumstances while also improving their understanding of ICANN and ICANN policies.

4. Contractual compliance:

    1. Continue to improve contractual compliance through the development of the compliance function, expanding the staffing and developing of a proactive compliance program.

    2. Collaborate with gTLD registrars, gTLD registries, registrants and end users to identify compliance program elements that best serves ICANN's mission and challenges.

    3. Develop appropriate feedback mechanisms into the accreditation process and relevant policy processes.

5. Making use of the contacts made to ICANN by registrants and end-users, establish processes and collect data in order to effectively provide complainants with proper direction, collect and analyse data to recognize trends and identify potential problems areas associated with ICANN's technical coordination role, and inform the community of this information.

6. Continue to facilitate the deployment of Internationalised Domain Names (IDNs) by creating forums for exchange of information, integrating the technical, policy, government-related and communications aspects into a program plan, and through collaboration, execute according to the plan objectives.

7. Continue the execution of the strategy to designate new gTLDs. Complete the policy development process and implement the resulting policy.

8. Build on previous hardening of the L-root server. Establish performance targets and measure performance against them to ensure ongoing stable operations; encourage geographical diversity of the L-root server in regional areas.

9. Continue to implement best practice project management processes to:

    1. Identify project milestones and deliverables,

    2. Improve project delivery,

    3. Budget and measure project spending, and

    4. Improve transparency.

10. Procedures for dealing with emergency situations and potential business failure of key operational entities:

    1. Fully implement contingency plans and study the effect of registry and registrar failover in order to appropriately protect registrants and report on this to the community in ways that do not compromise security.

    2. Implement an emergency response plan for ICANN, i.e., responses for different emergency situations (internal and external), ensuring agreed processes with key partners, ensuring full operational redundancy, preparing messaging strategies; reporting on these plans to the community in ways that do not compromise security.

11. Further improve accountability of the operating planning and the budget process and ensure a level of revenue appropriate for ICANN mission and objectives:

    1. Further refine project based budgets and measurement and reporting of performance against those budgets.

    2. Ensure there is sufficient budget to accomplish the objectives set out in this plan. In accordance with sound business practice, continue to establish diverse, consistent sources for revenue. This includes developing new sources for revenue presently not included in the ICANN budget.

12. Improve response to requests for technical advice:

    1. Build capability to respond to requests in developing countries and undertake comprehensive study as required to provide understanding, and establishing service metrics (such as turnaround times).

    2. Facilitate ICANN processes (such as requests to the IANA function) with appropriate expert advice.

13. Maintain and improve internal Information Technology infrastructure used to support critical ICANN operations (eg ICANN staff, meetings, publishing services).

14. Develop and implement a workforce planning methodology for ICANN staff to attract and retain high quality staff. Implement a workforce planning

methodology, develop and improve recruitment and retention processes, improve performance metrics, monitor against turnover targets.

15. The challenges posed by growth are significant. They must be given high priority if ICANN is to remain effective while facing the organization and operation issues posed by the managing this great amount of change. Monitor workloads, and analyse implications of increased demand on ICANN operations and policy processes. Identify and develop ways of improving scalability and achieving or deriving economies of scale for operations and policy development support. Use previous experience to develop staff requirements.

2. Organizational excellence in Policy Development

1. Undertake research and publish papers (with translations where appropriate) to help the community better understand technical issues, economic issues, user and registrant needs, market expectations and behaviour, business models and the implications of these factors on ICANN policy development, and also the implications of ICANN policies on Internet users

2. Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees, including:

    1. Conducting independent reviews and working with the community to implement improvements in the processes of Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees.

    2. Working with the community to identify and implement improvements in policy support and policy processes, including the Policy Development Process.

    3. Developing and implementing an evaluation and review process for all ICANN consensus policy work, including development, implementation and impact.

    4. Broadening and deepening capability for policy development work in Supporting Organizations to enable distribution of tasks across a greater number of parties.

    5. Supporting regular planning to assist effective resource management for policy work.

    6. Provide Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees with the correct level of staff and other support to facilitate efficient and effective policy development.

    7. Improve cooperation and coordination of the activities of the GAC with the ICANN Board and with other constituencies, especially so as to facilitate effective engagement of the GAC in processes and consideration of GAC advice on policy issues.

3. Increase international participation in ICANN and the use of the Internet system of unique identifiers

1. Improve the ability of stakeholders to participate in ICANN processes, including participation in languages other than English:

    1. Implement a translation policy designed to effectively meet the objectives of the organisation that takes into account stakeholder requirements, the need for effective and economic programs, and the goal of raising participation levels.

    2. Work with the ICANN stakeholder community to develop and implement an attendance program and other programs to improve stakeholder participation, particularly to encourage potential participants in least developed countries Establish and monitor metrics for participation by region.

2. Work with the community to redesign ICANN business and policy development support practices and processes to meet the needs of a global audience:

3. In each region, work with country code TLD managers and operators, local Internet communities (including governments, private sector and civil society) and regional organizations to develop and monitor outreach programs for their region to improve capabilities in IP address, domain name and root management services:

    1. Implement a plan for each region (to include active ongoing liaison with regional organizations and declaration of intent for programs in each region).

    2. Working with the ccNSO, develop recommended best practices for technical aspects of DNS management in ccTLDs.

    3. Monitor and report against plan.

    4. Leverage the skills embedded in ccTLDs to facilitate communications in languages familiar to participants.

4. Conduct outreach and education regarding the planned deployment of IDN TLDs. Support ccNSO policy development efforts so that ccTLDs can realize benefits of this development.

5. Encourage ccTLD participation in the ccNSO.

4. Increase participation in and efficiency of the ICANN multi-stakeholder environment

1. Improve and deepen participation in the ICANN process by stakeholders:

    1. In partnership with constituency groups, develop and implement plans to increase participation for each stakeholder group, and measure results against targets.

    2. Provide education and engage business and technical experts to inform the new participants.

    3. Undertake an ongoing review of ICANN's meetings program to ensure they facilitate achievement of ICANN's mission and encourage participation in the ICANN process, including support for remote participation.

2. Conduct a review of the Nominating Committee and implement recommendations to improve ICANN's ability to recruit for key leadership positions.

3. Implement and refine a communications plan that clearly explains ICANN's mission and communicates ICANN's activities and achievements.

4. Implement a program to enhance and develop relevant skills and knowledge in existing participants and in the next generation of ICANN leadership.

5. Develop and implement a knowledge management program to institutionalize corporate memory and communicate core ICANN values.

6. Strengthen relationships with key partners as needed to assist ICANN in carrying out its mission, including through existing mechanisms and forums. Specifically acknowledge and identify the role of technical, policy making, advisory, governmental, regional, service and educational groups with whom ICANN partners as the first step toward increasing participation in the ICANN model.

7. Identify key forums with which ICANN should interact to:

    1. Assist in dealing with issues that are related to but not in ICANN's ambit

    2. Facilitate ICANN's mission by engaging those not typically involved in ICANN-related forums

5. Complete transition of technical coordination of the Internet's system of unique identifiers

1. Perform ICANN's obligations described in the Joint Project Agreement and continue to perform ICANN's mission as originally defined, taking account of the aspirations of the developing world.

2. Through the GAC, involve governments in the transition planning.

3. Formalize relationships with ICANN stakeholder groups.

4. Maintain close contact with key stakeholders to define progress steps to transition to private sector management of the Internet system of unique identifiers.

5. Implement mechanisms to report on ICANN's openness, transparency, inclusiveness and its multilateral and multi-stakeholder environment:

    1. Produce annual reports to the community.

    2. Embed management operating principles that include governance best practices.

    3. Benchmark or audit ICANN accountability and transparency and implement best practice in accountability and transparency.

    4. Ensure effective accountability to ICANN stakeholders and the community.

6. As required by the Board resolution of 29 September 2006, conduct a review of appropriate administrative structure for ICANN. Such a review should consider the recommendations and observations of the President's Strategy Committee.