

Who Sets ICANN's Priorities?

ICANN74 Policy Forum

Plenary Session Briefing Paper



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Who Sets ICANN's Priorities?

Purpose

ICANN59 in June 2017 featured a [plenary session](#) on who sets ICANN's priorities. Its purpose was to secure agreement from across ICANN about how to establish priorities in the future. The plenary session aimed to identify a single set of priorities that could be documented, including the motivation for each priority.

Background

There was a growing concern in ICANN about the lack of clarity regarding who sets priorities and what entailed a priority. While ICANN community discussions with the ICANN Board and ICANN org were ongoing, there was a perceived risk that various ICANN community groups were asserting different priorities with different interpretations.

The ICANN Strategic and Operating Planning Framework provided an initial shared understanding about prioritization, but further work was needed on how to prioritize projects related to the strategic plan and how to meet evolving needs. The plenary session explored the likely benefits from future discussions about how to set priorities.

Observations from the ICANN59 Plenary Session:

1. There is a need to set priorities across ICANN.
2. The learning curve to participate in ICANN work must be reduced.
 - a. The Governmental Advisory Committee held a [session](#) during ICANN60 in October 2017 to discuss its participation in Generic Names Supporting Organization and Country Code Names Supporting Organization policy development.
3. Burnout continues to be an issue. ICANN community members have limited time and there is a need for training.
4. ICANN has multiple and competing priorities that include policy development, operations, and governance work.
5. Workload has not decreased.
6. Coordinated discussions among the ICANN President and CEO, ICANN Board chair, and Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committee (SO/AC) chairs are needed.

The *SO/AC Chairs Roundtable* began as a mechanism to share information and coordinate priorities.

Enhancing the Effectiveness of the Multistakeholder Model

Purpose

One of the five objectives of the ICANN [Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2021-2025](#) (FY21-25) is to improve the effectiveness of the multistakeholder model. This initiative is part of an overall approach to evolve the multistakeholder model by encompassing existing work efforts with the emerging needs and future improvement.

Background

In January 2019, the ICANN Board held a [workshop](#) which included sessions about strengthening the multistakeholder model. The ICANN Board solicited input from the ICANN community on this topic during the development of the ICANN Operating and Financial Plan for FY21-25. The ICANN community, Board, and org engaged in a facilitated dialogue over a nine-month period, which included six webinars; sessions during [ICANN64](#), [ICANN65](#), and [ICANN66](#); and three Public Comment proceedings.

The facilitation resulted in the identification of six topics hampering the multistakeholder model:

1. Prioritization of work and efficient use of resources.
2. Precision in scoping work.
3. Consensus, representation, and inclusivity.
4. Complexity of tools to access information and data.
5. Culture, trust, and silos.
6. Roles and responsibilities.

In 2020, ICANN org published a [paper](#) that focused on these six topics. The ICANN community identified the first topic as most pressing. This prompted the development of the ICANN Prioritization Framework and the recent pilot project.

Additional resources can be found on the [project webpage](#).

Third Accountability and Transparency Review

Purpose

The Accountability and Transparency Review is mandated by [ICANN Bylaws](#) to assess “ICANN’s execution of its commitment to maintain and improve robust mechanisms for public input, accountability, and transparency so as to ensure that the outcomes of its decision-making reflect the public interest and are accountable to the Internet community.”

Background

In June 2020, the Third Accountability and Transparency Review Team (ATRT3) submitted its [Final Report](#) to the ICANN Board. The Public Comment submissions highlighted diverse viewpoints on elements of the ATRT3 Final Report, in particular, the prioritization of recommendations from Organizational and Specific Reviews and Work Stream 2 (WS2) of the Cross-Community Working Group on Enhancing ICANN Accountability.

The ICANN Board approved five recommendations as specified in the “[ATRT3 Final Recommendations for ICANN Board Action](#)” scorecard. The ICANN Board directed ICANN org to implement actions within that scorecard, subject to the prioritization process.

Ongoing Work

Two pilot projects have been developed as outcomes of ATRT3:

1. *Holistic Review*

The [Holistic Review Pilot Project](#) is an unprecedented and experimental effort that may contribute to improving ICANN reviews and the multistakeholder model. As of April 2022, the team is developing Terms of Reference. The team will propose a limited number of recommendations to address the most critical gaps or issues. This includes:

- Identifying if any Supporting Organization or Advisory Committee is subject to the Holistic Review.
- Considering the roles and responsibilities of ICANN community groups.

In addition, the team is taking into account the relationship of this pilot project to activities from the Enhancing the Effectiveness of the Multistakeholder Model initiative.

2. *Continuous Improvement*

The Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) Council established a Committee for Overseeing and Implementing Continuous Improvement (CCOICI) [pilot project](#) to address process and procedural improvements. This includes ATRT3 recommendations and implementation of accountability recommendations from WS2.

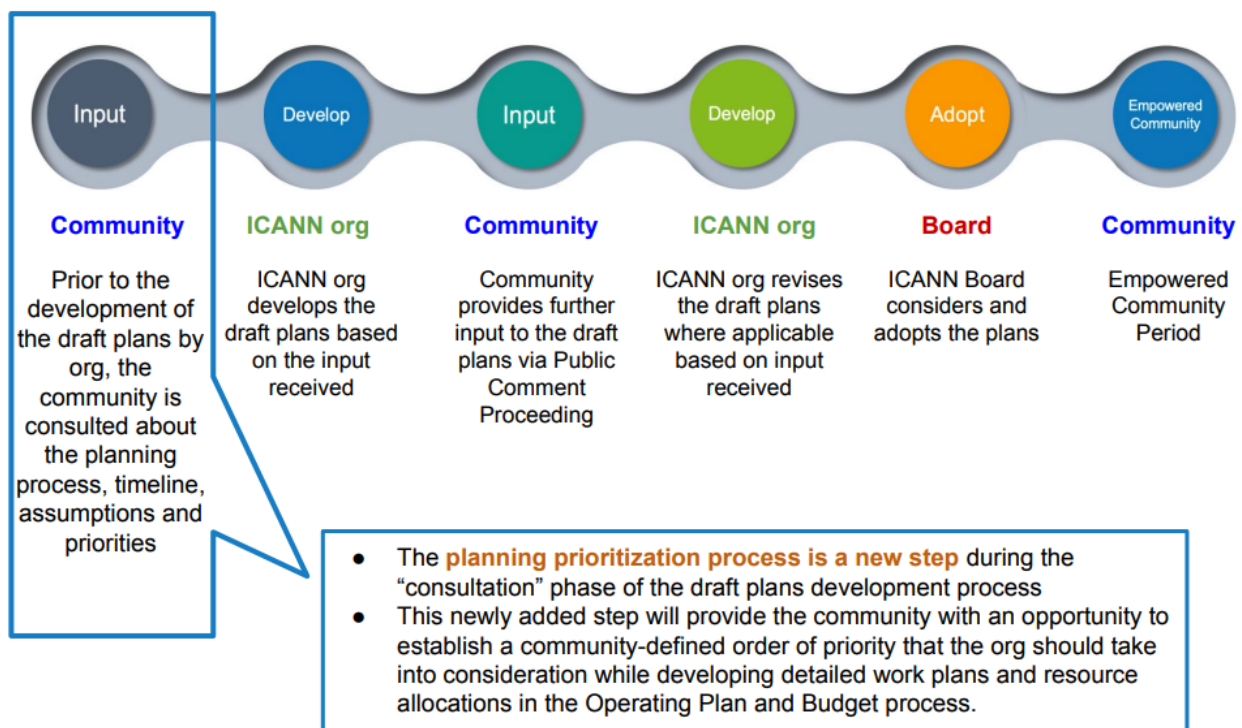
The CCOICI is currently considering possible improvements to the GNSO Statement of Interest [form](#). Future implementation efforts related to the Enhancing the Effectiveness of the Multistakeholder Model initiative may also be incorporated into this pilot project.

ICANN Prioritization Framework

Purpose

Planning at ICANN is one of the Operating Initiatives included in the ICANN [Five-Year Operating and Financial Plan](#). The ICANN Prioritization Framework (“framework”) strives to enable ICANN org, with input from the ICANN community, to prioritize its work and deliver its mission efficiently and in a cost effective way. The final framework will be incorporated into the annual planning process.

Planning Process Roles and Responsibilities



Background

The framework emerged, in part, from the Enhancing the Effectiveness of the Multistakeholder Model initiative. The [ATRT3 Final Report](#) also reinforced the need for prioritization through a recommendation for the creation of an ICANN community-led process to prioritize policy and review recommendations that were approved for implementation by the ICANN Board.

In 2021, ICANN org [developed](#) a draft framework version 1. The final framework will cover ICANN community-driven work, such as implementation work resulting from policy development, advice, and reviews.

In early 2022, ICANN org conducted a pilot project to test the processes and methodologies developed in the draft framework and to identify gaps for further development. In May 2022, ICANN org concluded a series of teleconferences for the pilot project, which focused on the implementation work of Board approved recommendations from [Specific Reviews](#).

The output of the Pilot is a list of prioritized Board-approved Specific Review recommendations to be published as a resource document for the Proposed for Adoption FY23-27 Operating and Financial Plan presented to the ICANN Board for Adoption in May 2022.

A lessons-learned document is to be produced that will provide feedback to enable the org to further refine and improve the Planning Prioritization Framework. The Planning Prioritization Framework V2 will be shared and implemented during the FY24 Annual Planning Process.

Further information can be found on the [workspace](#).



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