

# Enhancing the Effectiveness of ICANN's Multistakeholder Model

14 October 2020



---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>I. OVERVIEW</b>	<b>3</b>
Background	3
Summary of Findings	3
Next Steps	4
<b>II. WORK PLAN</b>	<b>6</b>
Prioritization of the Work & Efficient Use of Resources	7
Precision in Scoping the Work	12
Consensus, Representation, and Inclusivity	16
<b>III. REMAINING WORK AREAS</b>	<b>20</b>
Complexity of (A) the Tools to Access Information and Data and (B) Content	20
Culture, Trust, and Silos	21
Roles and Responsibilities of ICANN Board, Org, and Community	22
<b>IV. CONCLUSION</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>V. REFERENCES</b>	<b>24</b>

---

# Introduction

This paper, initially published for public comment from 4 June to 2 August 2020, identifies a path forward following community comments received on the draft Evolving ICANN's Multistakeholder Model Work Plan, which was included as Appendix C to ICANN's [Draft FY21-25 Operating & Financial Plan and Draft FY21 Operating Plan & Budget](#). The paper was updated to incorporate public comments from the public comment period that closed in August 2020, to finalize the FY21 Work Plan described in Section II, and to remove the subject "Seeking Community Input" as that task has been completed. The objective of this paper is to build upon existing work taking place across the ICANN community that may holistically address community-identified priority topics and enhance the effective and efficient functioning of ICANN's multistakeholder model. This paper describes the current work underway, identifies gaps in those efforts that would also benefit from inclusion in this effort, and suggests a path toward addressing each of those gaps, including proposed work processes or mechanisms, how they may be applied, and which groups may be best positioned to lead those efforts.

## I. Overview

### Background

One of the five objectives of ICANN's [Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2021-2025](#) is to improve the effectiveness of our multistakeholder model of governance – a model that grew to fit our needs. As ICANN continues to evolve, and as our environment becomes more complex, our governance must also evolve; without compromising our deeply valued bottom-up decision-making process. This project is not a stand-alone initiative, but instead is one piece of an overall holistic approach to evolving the multistakeholder model by encompassing existing work efforts with the needs for future improvement.

The [Enhancing the Effectiveness of ICANN's Multistakeholder Model](#) was initiated in early 2019. The ICANN Board solicited input from the ICANN community regarding this topic in discussions about the Draft ICANN Operating and Financial Plan for FY 2021-2025. To better facilitate these community discussions, the Board asked a neutral facilitator with knowledge of ICANN and its processes to lead the data collection phase of the project. Brian Cute, former Chair of the first and second Accountability and Transparency Review Team, filled this role. The community, Board, and org engaged in this [facilitated dialogue](#) over a nine-month period, which included six webinars, cross-community sessions at three ICANN meetings ([ICANN64](#), [65](#), and [66](#)), and three public comment proceedings.

### Summary of Findings

The facilitation resulted in six priority topics which the community identified as hampering the more effective and efficient functioning of ICANN's multistakeholder model. Those topics and the community feedback were used to construct a draft "Evolving ICANN's Multistakeholder Model Work Plan" (the Draft Work Plan), which was included as an annex to ICANN's FY21-25 Operating & Financial Plan and published for public comment in December 2019. Public comments received regarding the Draft Work Plan showed that the community agrees the

---

multistakeholder model needs to evolve and that there is a substantial amount of work, already underway, which targets this project's goal; to improve the effectiveness of our multistakeholder model of governance. Examples of existing work efforts that map to this project include but are not limited to: the GNSO's [Policy Development Process 3.0](#) (PDP 3.0), [Streamlining of Reviews](#), the [Third Accountability and Transparency Review](#) (ATR3), Cross-Community Working Group on Enhancing ICANN Accountability, Working Stream 2 (WS2) implementation, and the org's operational planning process, among many others.

Additionally, the community was asked to rank the six topics in priority order with one having the highest priority and six having the least priority. The six topics are listed below in the priority order suggested by the community comments received.<sup>1</sup>

1. Prioritization of the work & efficient use of resources
2. Precision in scoping the work
3. Consensus, representation, and inclusivity
4. Complexity of (A) the Tools to Access Information and Data and (B) Content
5. Culture, trust and silos
6. Roles and responsibilities

## Next Steps

As part of a broader effort to enhance ICANN's multistakeholder model, this paper lays out a path forward that encompasses existing work efforts and maps a course that can facilitate continuous improvement of ICANN's multistakeholder model. In line with comments from the community, a holistic approach to evolving the multistakeholder model must not duplicate work underway but rather harmonize with existing efforts.

The ICANN community, Board, and org all recognize that there is only so much bandwidth and resources available at any given time, but particularly during the challenges faced as the globe confronts the COVID-19 pandemic. As much of the world faces an uncertain future as a result of this global pandemic, it is even more essential for the community to commit our efforts to ensuring ICANN's multistakeholder model is effective for all. Further, it is critical not to burden the community given existing efforts and the already heavy day-to-day workload. Neither the community, Board, nor org can take on all the proposed priorities as outlined in the Draft Work Plan while balancing against ICANN's priorities and workload.

At the same time, investing in the future is key to ensuring we are able to address the current and future issues in a bottom-up multistakeholder way. With these considerations in mind, this paper seeks a balance between some extra effort now and more effectiveness in the future and proposes to focus this effort on the three priority topics for which the community expressed the most support in its public comments:

1. **Prioritization of the work & efficient use of resources:** Proper prioritization is critical to ensure the efficient use of resources and can have the most significant positive

---

<sup>1</sup> The Business Constituency, in its public comments regarding the work plan, suggested a seventh topic - Recruitment and Demographics. As there was no other support for the inclusion of this topic, it has not been fully explored as part of this project.

---

impact. Community input indicated the need to more efficiently prioritize the work in concert with ICANN org to efficiently use ICANN's resources as a pressing matter.

2. **Precision in scoping the work:** Community comment noted that scoping has been too wide in the past, and that the community does not follow a disciplined approach in deciding on the types of work it takes on, how that work is scoped, and how it gets executed. A common, disciplined approach to scoping work can lead to more efficient use of resources, improved decision-making and avoiding volunteer burnout.
3. **Consensus, representation, and inclusivity:** Community input indicated that the ICANN community has difficulty reaching consensus in policymaking and other work processes for a variety of reasons, primarily among which is a lack of incentives for stakeholders to compromise. Representation and inclusivity in ICANN's multistakeholder model are also essential to ensure that ICANN's policies are taken after consideration of all stakeholders' points of view. Public comments noted that representation and inclusivity have affected the ability to reach consensus, make decisions and deliver work on time.

These three topics present ripe opportunities for building on existing work, with some added effort and greater coordination, to add the most value to the evolution of ICANN's multistakeholder model. The remaining three topics – the complexity of (A) tools to access information and data and (B) content; culture, trust and silos; and roles and responsibilities -- also represent important areas of community concern. However, with limited time and resources, the Board proposes that the community revisit these topics later in the Operating and Financial Plan's five-year time frame. Further, the three topics not included may also be more representative of symptoms of the higher priority topics and may not immediately lend themselves to tangible or practical solutions. In comparison, the three priority work areas speak to issues which may lend themselves to clearer and more implementable solutions.

The Work Plan outlined in Section II. is anticipated to stretch over the course of FY21-25 -- the time period for both ICANN's Strategic Plan and the five-year Operating & Financial Plan. To ensure progress is made in each of the three prioritized work areas, the Board and the community, as expressed in public comments, think it is critical to evaluate this work in a holistic fashion, considering both the elements of the projects and functions noted below as work underway, as well as the actions outlined to address the gaps. In addition, the Board recognizes that addressing the three prioritized work areas may be more of a matter of achieving incremental and continuing improvements rather than creating a comprehensive solution in a single step.

The Board proposes an ongoing evaluation method, which can be connected to the evaluation of one of the five objectives in ICANN's FY21-25 Strategic Plan: "Improve the effectiveness of ICANN's multistakeholder model of governance." The evaluation method used can be both objective and subjective. From an objective perspective, the evaluation method can be used to track and review progress of the actions being implemented, including those that are community driven. Further, the evaluation method used can also include more subjective metrics such as whether consensus is better understood because of new tools, such as PDP 3.0, and thus are more achievable. Further details on the evaluation method will be shared during the implementation process.

---

## II. Work Plan

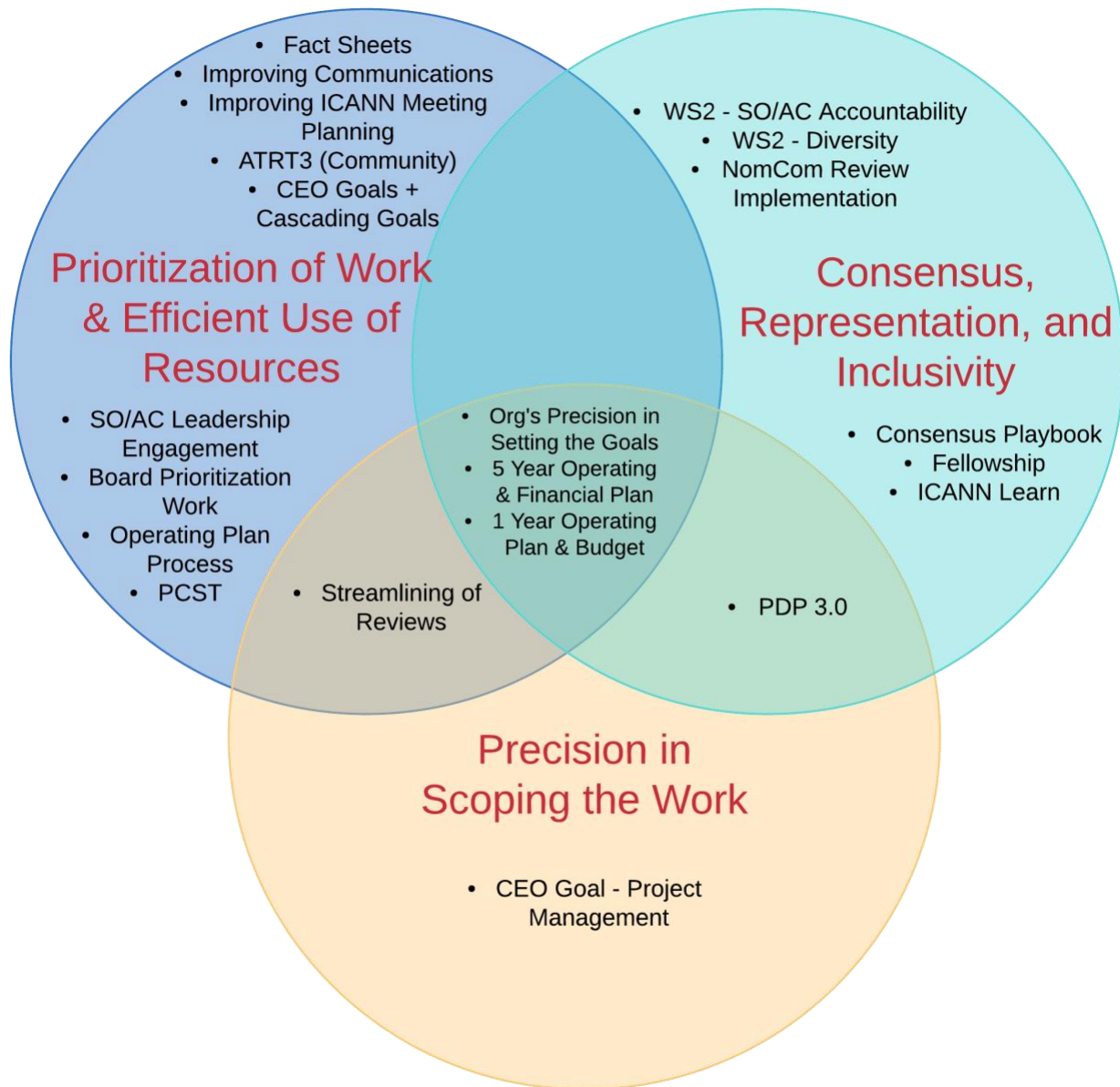
The following work plan describes the three priority work areas, projects and operational activities already underway including relevant milestones, as well as gaps that may be addressed. A previous iteration of the Work Plan identified owners for each of the work areas and asked for community input on the proposed owners. The Board heard the community's public comments and recognized the existing workload already undertaken by these groups. The Board also wants to strike a balance between overburdening stakeholders and achieving ICANN's strategic objective to improve the effectiveness of our multistakeholder model of governance. Consequently, the approach to the Work Plan was updated.

This Work Plan assumes that the relevant parties will continue to engage in their current work efforts, which holistically lend themselves to addressing each of the priorities. To that end, each work area includes:

- A description of the issue,
- Projects and operational activities already underway, and
- A description of the gaps in this work.
  - A table under each identified gap describes proposed work processes or mechanisms that could address the gap, a description of that process or mechanism, how it may be utilized in a specific action, and who may be involved in that action to address the gap.

By limiting the current effort to addressing the gaps in the three priority work areas, the Board believes we can achieve the necessary balance that will result in incremental enhancements to the multistakeholder model and will benefit everyone's future work with improved efficiencies. More importantly, much of the work already underway addresses the community-identified work areas. The Board believes that by fine-tuning the processes or mechanisms that support existing work streams, the identified gaps can be plugged. In this Work Plan, the Board is proposing modest actions, some are already planned, or anticipated activities and others are new suggestions, that would not unduly burden the community and could have a materially positive impact on evolving the multistakeholder model.

The figure below represents overlapping areas of existing work that address the three work areas.



## Prioritization of the Work & Efficient Use of Resources

### Description of Work Area:

Insufficient prioritization impacts the entire ICANN ecosystem and affects ICANN's ability to produce policies and complete other work in an efficient and timely manner. It also reinforces a silo mentality where stakeholders may not share the same sense of prioritization and common purpose about the overall work in ICANN. Proper prioritization of work is at the heart of the efficient use of resources. While insufficient prioritization of work is not the cause of all observed inefficiencies, if properly managed, prioritization can have the most significant positive impact on the efficient use of resources to address the issues identified by the ICANN community. Based

---

on community input, the need to more efficiently prioritize the work and efficiently use ICANN's resources is a pressing matter.

While the [ICANN Planning Process](#) does provide structure through the strategic plan, the 5-year Operating and Financial Plan, and the annual planning and budget cycles, the community has said that it believes that sufficient prioritization is lacking. When a question arises about initiating new work or deciding whether an existing workstream should be retired, there needs to be a process that more effectively engages the volunteer community and gives them tools to effectively prioritize work and make "trade-offs" where necessary. Community comments observed that sometimes even determining what is not a priority can be difficult and requires a thorough understanding of the issues. Without improved prioritization, ICANN org and the ICANN community will continue to try to do everything all at once, each valued with the same sense of urgency. This is not sustainable. There is clear agreement across the community that prioritization is vitally important and discussions continue as to how this can be accomplished both within each group as well as collectively. The Enhancing the Effectiveness of ICANN's Multistakeholder Model project can help to provide consistency and structure to these discussions to enable better prioritization of the work and efficient use of resources.

#### **Work Currently Underway:**

- **Streamlining of Reviews** (Org, Board, and Community)  
Estimated Completion Date - TBD based on Board Priorities and opportunity to engage with the community  
The streamlining of reviews, initiated by the Board and supported by the community, is focused on: the prioritizing and budgeting of community-issued recommendations, the cadence and timing of reviews, and all other streamlining efforts. A [Draft Paper](#) was published in October 2019, detailing these efforts. ATRT3 included this topic in its work (see the ATRT3 section below) and the Board provided input on the streamlining of reviews as part of its [public comment on ATRT3 Draft Report](#). The Board intends to work in alignment with ATRT3, toward a community-supported streamlining of reviews.
- **ATRT3** (Community)  
[Final report](#) issued - 1 June 2020  
The ATRT3 issued its Final Report in June 2020. The report contains five recommendations (each with multiple subparts) with regard to ICANN accountability and transparency in the following areas: prioritization of review and Cross-Community Working Group on Enhancing ICANN Accountability, Work Stream 2 (WS2) recommendations; amending Specific and Organizational Reviews; strategic and operational plans including reporting on metrics; public input; and assessment of the implementation of ATRT2 recommendations. The community provided public comments on the Final Report, to inform Board consideration. Per the ICANN Bylaws, the Board will take action within six months of receipt of the Final Report, i.e., by 1 December 2020. At that time, the Board will consider the Final Report alongside a feasibility analysis and impact assessment of the implementation of recommendations. The feasibility analysis and impact assessment will take into account initial cost and resource estimates, dependencies on other ongoing efforts, and the Report of Public Comments.  
The Board has engaged with the ATRT3 implementation shepherds and will continue this engagement to inform its upcoming action and the subsequent implementation planning phase.



---

- **Operational Planning Process (Org)**

Estimated Completion Date - Ongoing

ICANN org continuously seeks to improve its planning process. ICANN org's Draft FY21-25 Operating Plan includes descriptions of the major work ICANN org will undertake to achieve its strategic plan, operate the organization, and implement its mission. The plan includes operating initiatives and functional activities for the upcoming five-year period. Operating Initiatives are major initiatives ICANN org will undertake to achieve the objectives and goals set out in the Strategic Plan. Functional Activities are the day-to-day activities supporting the organization's mission. ICANN org updates its five-year Operating Plan annually to include the latest activities that ICANN org is responsible to implement. These planning efforts help facilitate prioritization and provide a useful roadmap for the organization, the community, and all stakeholders who seek to hold ICANN accountable to its mission.

One of the 15 operating initiatives in the FY21-25 Operating & Financial Plan, Planning at ICANN, will more particularly strive to improve the quantification of resources, evaluation of needs, prioritization, flexibility, and transparency of the management of ICANN's resources and activities over the FY21–25 period.

- **SO/AC Leadership Engagement (Community)**

Estimated Completion Date - Ongoing

For the past few years, the ICANN President and CEO and the Senior Vice President for Policy Development Support have held regular meetings with all the chairs of the various ICANN Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees. These include an in-person roundtable session prior to the commencement of each ICANN Public Meeting and a one-to-one call between the CEO and SVP with each SO, AC, Stakeholder Group and Constituency chair in between ICANN Public Meetings. One purpose of these meetings and calls is to encourage information exchange as to current workload, high-priority issues, upcoming work and other concerns between the community and ICANN org as well as encourage regular information sharing and collaboration among the community chairs. In January 2020, the SO and AC Chairs held a face-to-face meeting outside the ICANN meeting environment for the first time, where prioritization, collective governance and other topics of mutual interest were discussed, including with the Board leadership and senior ICANN executives.

- **Board Prioritization Work (Board)**

Estimated Completion Date - Ongoing

Since FY18, the Board has committed to set its Operational Priorities explicitly, on an ongoing basis, which allows the Board to focus its work planning, and enhances transparency of the Board's work. Board Operational Priorities are operational tasks, under the control of the Board, that help improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Board in fulfilling its five blocks of activities and operational priorities, as determined by the Board each year. In addition to the Board Operational Priorities, the Board is also actively engaged in a number of activities that are not driven by the Board, but by the community and/or ICANN org. Board Operational Priorities are reviewed by the Board each fiscal year, and are presented prior to the Annual General Meeting of that year.

- **CEO Goals + Cascading Goals (Org)**

Estimated Completion Date - Ongoing

---

Each fiscal year, the ICANN CEO works with the ICANN Board to set CEO goals for the next fiscal year. CEO goals include looking at challenges and new proposals with fresh eyes, as well as executing on existing projects. Together with the ICANN org Executive Team, the CEO prioritizes the steps toward these goals and measures progress, with goals cascading through the entire organization. The objective is for the entire ICANN org to be aligned, allowing all org employees to work together towards common priorities.

- **Project Cost Support Team (Org)**

Estimated Completion Date - Ongoing

A Project Cost Support Team (PCST) is a cost controlling mechanism, which empowers community leaders to manage the costs of cross-community projects, by providing a support team to efficiently track, monitor and control costs of an initiative during its lifecycle. The objective of a PCST is to gain clarity on past and future expenditures of a community-led initiative, provide better control on costs through its duration, as well as develop more reliable estimates for future similar activities. A PCST was set up on a pilot basis in March 2016, in agreement with the leaders of the SO/AC chartering organizations and the co-chairs of the IANA stewardship transition working groups, to develop reliable estimates of the cost of the IANA Stewardship Transition and Accountability work and to gain clarity on past and future expenditures. Since then, similar mechanisms have been used to manage the costs of major community-led initiatives such as the Expedited Policy Development Process on the Temporary Specification for gTLD Registration Data and the second Review Team on Security, Stability and Resiliency.

- **Fact Sheets (Org)**

Estimated Completion Date - Ongoing

To ensure transparency for the community on progress and resources related to specific reviews, review team fact sheets capture attendance of review team members, costs associated with professional services, and travel to attend face-to-face meetings, and milestones. Fact sheets are updated and posted on their respective wiki pages on a quarterly basis. See [ATRT3](#), [CCT](#), [RDS-WHOIS2](#), and [SSR2](#).

- **Improving Communications between ICANN Org and the Community (Org)**

Estimated Completion Date - Ongoing

ICANN org has implemented several efforts to continue to streamline and enhance communications between the organization and the community, such as: (1) a twice-weekly Community Leadership Digest that contains current requests and information sharing from ICANN org and the Board, including upcoming deadlines and open Public Comment Proceedings; and (2) improvements to the format and staff guidelines for conducting Public Comment Proceedings.

- **Improving ICANN Public Meeting Planning to Enhance Effectiveness and Efficiency of Community Work (Org & Community)**

Estimated Completion Date - Ongoing

Based on consultations with the ICANN Public Meeting community planning group, ICANN org has implemented incremental improvements to the meeting planning process. These include: (1) an ICANN Prep Week, held prior to each ICANN Public Meeting, which relieve pressure on meeting session scheduling through ICANN org, review teams and other groups providing informational updates in advance of meeting

week; (2) the publication of a Pre- and Post-Meeting Policy Briefing to summarize hot topics and important milestones for community policy work; (3) streamlining the submission and approval process for plenary sessions; and (4) continuing discussions with the community planning group on additional improvements to Public Meeting objectives.

**Addressing the gap(s):**

**Gap in community-developed processes for prioritization and retiring work** - As outlined above, several concurrent streams of Board, community, and org work may address many of the concerns regarding this work area. However, some gaps remain and may require new or different approaches to address them. Individual community structures are currently discussing prioritization of their own work. It will be important for these community structures and groups to reach cross-community agreement on how to prioritize those projects and programs that affect multiple groups. The progress on such cross-community agreement will determine the degree to which this issue and gap are addressed. Relatedly, not all community groups have clear processes for retiring completed work. More broadly, the community may wish to consider how to extrapolate and apply principles and processes for prioritization that can be found in specific community groups or individual reviews, such as the GNSO’s PDP 3.0 initiative and the ATRT3 recommendation regarding prioritization of review recommendations.

Work Process or Mechanism	Description	Action	Involved Participants
Regularly scheduled meetings amongst the SO/AC Chairs and meetings, as needed, with ICANN org and Board leadership	A predictable cadence of discussions to collaboratively prioritize, de-prioritize, and retire work that will produce a community-wide work prioritization catalogue	<p>Each community structure creates a yearly priority list and work plan, to share across all community groups.</p> <p>Schedule periodic touchpoints for SO/AC/SG/Constituency Chairs, ICANN org and Board, and collectively decide what topics should be prioritized, deprioritized, or retired, including working within the available budget and with a view toward building these touchpoints into the annual planning and budgeting process.</p> <p>These are existing actions with proposed enhancements. Examples of existing actions include the SO/AC Chair Roundtables held between ICANN Public Meetings, and the regular 1:1 CEO calls held with each SO/AC, Regional At -Large Organization, Stakeholder Group, and Constituency chairs.</p>	<p>Community, SO/AC Chairs</p> <p>SO/AC/SG/ Constituency Chairs, ICANN org, ICANN Board</p>

### Gap in community alignment on cost management and budget allocations -

In addition, while many community groups and members regularly submit public comments on ICANN’s draft annual budgets, it is not clear that there is agreement and alignment across the community as to what the priority projects and programs are for which substantial resources should be allocated. It may be helpful for the community to look into ways in which it can engage with one another and ICANN org early in the budget and planning process, to facilitate a common understanding of needs and priorities.

Work Process or Mechanism	Description	Action	Involved Community Participants
Regularly scheduled meetings between SO/AC/SG/ Constituency leaders and with ICANN executives	A predictable cadence of discussions about ICANN’s annual planning and budget process	<p>Develop a community agreed upon engagement mechanism or process that will facilitate early involvement of SO/AC/SG/Constituency Chairs to collaboratively prioritize the community’s work within the constraints of the available budget.</p> <p>Begin SO/AC/SG/Constituency Chair and ICANN org discussions regarding the ICANN budget and planning process earlier to allow more time for collaboration and agreement.</p> <p>These are existing actions with proposed enhancements. This may require additional formalization in the form of agreeing on meeting cadence, documentation and follow-up, to integrate outcomes into ICANN org’s strategic planning and budgeting cycles.</p>	<p>SO/AC/SG/ Constituency Chairs, ICANN org</p> <p>SO/AC/SG/ Constituency Chairs</p>

## Precision in Scoping the Work

### Description of Work Area:

Precision in scoping work is a critical work process step that supports the efficient use of resources, proper planning, timely decision-making and the delivery of policies and other work product on time. Failure to properly scope work has led to delays in delivering work, duplication of work, and implementation issues that arise after the fact.

Community comment noted that scoping has been too wide in the past, leading to endless discussions. It was also observed that the community does not follow a disciplined approach in deciding on the types of work it takes on, how that work is scoped, and how it gets executed. Volunteers are tempted to put everything into one project in order to not have to revisit the work again in the future. In the ICANN ecosystem, there is no current common, disciplined approach to scoping work. This contributes to inefficient use of resources, delayed decision-making and

---

volunteer burnout. The Enhancing the Effectiveness of ICANN's Multistakeholder Model project can facilitate the creation of a consistent process for scoping, by building on the work already underway and considering its impact together with the actions suggested as part of addressing the gaps.

**Work Currently Underway:**

- **PDP 3.0**

Estimated Completion Date - In implementation

As part of the [GNSO's PDP 3.0](#) project, the GNSO Council approved several recommendations that were aimed at improving the Council's effectiveness in managing future GNSO PDPs, such as: (1) requiring regular resource reporting; (2) implementing and reviewing specific project management tools such as project plans, change requests and Gantt charts to demonstrate timelines and progress. Coupled with existing flexibilities in the GNSO PDP rules, such as the use of charter drafting teams at the outset to clearly scope the work, the addition of these tools should facilitate greater precision, oversight and course correction when needed. These improvements are currently being integrated into existing PDPs and will be deployed in future PDPs.

- **Streamlining of Reviews (Org, Board, and Community)**

Estimated Completion Date - TBD based on Board Priorities and opportunity to engage with the community following conclusion of ATRT3.

The Board has observed that several specific review teams have been challenged in setting a precise scope and keeping to it during their work. Bylaws-stated review scope is broad and open to interpretation; this often leads to debates within the review team and difficulty in developing a focused scope of work. Currently, there is no incentive to limit the scope to pressing issues leading to repercussions for workload, number of recommendations issued, and the need to prioritize sizable inventory of implementation work. Additionally, the community leadership responsible for the appointment of review team members does not have the benefit of knowing which specific skills would be needed to perform the work defined during scope-setting -- the assembled review team sets its own scope after it has been appointed.

ATRT3 recommendations on streamlining reviews address some of these issues, for example time limits on the duration of community-led review work and requiring that terms of reference and work plans are established at the start of community's work. While the ATRT3 did not recommend that the scope be set prior to assembling the review team, the existing Operating Standards include guidance on supplementing review team skills during the review, should the review team find a skills gap as it conducts its work.

The Board, through the Organizational Effectiveness Committee (OEC), has held discussions on how to improve the precision of scope setting within specific reviews, while ensuring that the review team has sufficient skills to perform the analysis defined by the scope of work. The Board notes that the Operating Standards for Specific Reviews provide a useful road map for conducting reviews, which includes guidance on setting the scope along with other relevant processes. Since the adoption of these Operating Standards in June 2019, there has not been an opportunity to test the guidance on scope-setting for the specific reviews currently underway.

Regardless of when the scope is determined, there is an opportunity for community-led review teams to exercise stronger discipline in managing the scope of their work in line with the Bylaws and in keeping with the guidance in the Operating Standards, by considering the significance/potential impact relative to available time and resources. Project management best practices offer valuable tools and solutions, provided the review team is committed to use them. Additionally, the Bylaws-mandated scope for organizational reviews is broadly framed and may contribute to confusion and inconsistency in how these reviews are conducted. Both the assessment and action on the ATRT3 recommendations, as well as the ongoing conversation on streamlining of reviews will be important areas to monitor to progress this issue.

- **CEO Goal: Project Management (Org)**

Estimated Completion Date – Ongoing

Enhanced project management tools and processes can lead to more focused discussions about resources and needs, resulting in more precisely scoped projects. One of the President and CEO’s cascading goals for Fiscal Year 2020 is to improve project management at ICANN org. The goal is to set up a network of project managers within ICANN org, to write a project management handbook, identify the tools ICANN should use for project management across the org, and develop a framework for the project management process. This work began in late 2019.

**Addressing the gap(s):**

**Gap in maintaining appropriate scope of work:** Community work is guided by the scope of the effort, derived from the group’s mandate or purpose. However, ensuring appropriate resources (community time, ICANN org support and funding) are available can be challenged if the scope of the work itself is not managed by all involved. Project management best practices, including a disciplined approach to managing scope of work based on available time and resources is critical to ensure effective use of resources and accountable outcomes. Well-managed scope of work translates into eventual recommendations that are anchored in the group’s mandate and provide a clear path toward addressing a significant issue area. The Board plans to streamline the way reviews will be conducted in the future, in alignment with the [recommendations from the ATRT3](#) and community input, and guided by the existing Operating Standards for Specific Reviews. This is expected to include a process for collaborative prioritization of community recommendations.

While the exact process of review streamlining is not yet determined, the eventual outcome, especially on scoping will likely inform a more precise and disciplined scoping for other cross-community efforts, too.

Work Process or Mechanism	Description	Action	Involved Participants
Streamlining of Reviews	A community wide project with the goal to improve the timing and cadence of all ICANN	Fully leverage and implement the Bylaws-mandated, Board-approved Operating Standards that require terms of reference, timelines, work plans, and scope to be established at the outset of	ICANN org, Review teams

	<p>Bylaws-mandated Reviews with the goal of operating more efficiently and effectively, while considering the availability of the community and ICANN resources.</p>	<p>the review. This includes establishing regular reporting cycles to update SO/ACs and the Board on progress of the work, including milestones and resource utilization actuals compared to budgeted amounts.</p> <p>Develop a standard process to enable the SO/ACs to monitor the progress of the review team, as required in 3.7 of the Operating Procedures. This would also provide an opportunity for the SO/ACs to ask questions and/or provide input on the work as it develops, rather than later in the process.</p> <p>Review teams to categorize recommendations by high, medium, or low priority, as encouraged in 4.1 of the Operating Standards.</p> <p>ICANN org Multistakeholder Strategy &amp; Strategic Initiatives team to include a briefing on the Operating Standards to the review team as part of its project management support and facilitation duties, at the start of the review.</p> <p>These are existing actions with proposed enhancements.</p>	<p>ICANN org, Review teams, SO/ACs</p> <p>Review team members</p> <p>ICANN org</p>
Operating Standards for Specific Reviews	<p>A set of ICANN Bylaws-mandated, and Board-adopted, standards that ensures Reviews are conducted in a transparent, consistent, efficient, and predictable manner, while supporting the community's work to derive the expected benefit and value from review processes</p>	<p>Formally document acknowledgement by review team members that they are in receipt of, understand, and agree to be held accountable to the Bylaws mandated Operating Standards.</p> <p>Create a standard process for documenting and acknowledging when the review team has shared its defined scope of work, or any amendments to it, with the SO/AC leadership that appointed them.</p> <p>These are existing actions with proposed enhancements.</p>	<p>ICANN org, Review team members</p> <p>ICANN org, Review team members, SO/ACs</p>

---

## Consensus, Representation, and Inclusivity

Consensus is a process for group decision-making and a work method by which people can come to agreement. Achieving consensus is a critical process step in ICANN's multistakeholder model to produce policies and other work in an effective, efficient and timely manner. Community input indicated that the ICANN community has difficulty reaching consensus in policymaking and other work processes for a variety of reasons. Primary among them is a lack of incentives for stakeholders to compromise. Other factors include participants not having authorization to compromise, a lack of understanding of consensus, the skills of working group chairs and their ability to address capture tactics as well as a "zero-sum" game approach to policy making and other work. Winning by delay or maintaining the status quo are also noted in community comment as obstacles to achieving consensus, which may also be hampered by a lack of sufficient tools to effectively facilitate compromise.

Representation and inclusivity in ICANN's multistakeholder model are also essential to ensure that ICANN's policies are taken after consideration of all stakeholders' points of view. Inclusivity may face even greater challenges as the ICANN community tries to engage at a time of curtailed travel and face-to-face meetings due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Further, many who want to participate may also be challenged by competing priorities in their homes, families, and workplaces.

More broadly, community comment reflects differing views about how to appropriately apply these concepts in policy making and other work streams. Public comments noted that representation and inclusivity have affected the ability to reach consensus, make decisions and deliver work on time. The community has struggled with the concept of representation and inclusiveness and allowing "all voices" to be heard in a process while advancing the work in a timely manner.

Both the "representation model" and the "open and inclusive" model have support amongst the community as an effective mechanism to ensure that all voices are heard in consensus-based decision making. The development of an approach or solution to clarify how representation and inclusivity can be effectively applied and how consensus can be more effectively facilitated is critical to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of ICANN's multistakeholder model. The Enhancing the Effectiveness of ICANN's Multistakeholder Model project should help to facilitate addressing many of the concerns regarding consensus, representation, and inclusivity

### Examples of Work Currently Underway:

- **WS2 - SO/AC Accountability** (Community)  
Estimated Completion Date - TBD based on community bandwidth  
The [final report](#) of Workstream 2 of the Cross Community Working Group on Enhancing ICANN Accountability (CCWG-Accountability WS2) includes a set of Good Practices for SO/AC/Groups to implement, to the extent that these practices are applicable and an improvement over present practices. These practices include, for example, documenting decision-making methods, outlining rules of eligibility and other criteria for membership, considering term limits for officers, organizing outreach efforts, including a strategy for outreach to parts of their targeted community that may be underrepresented, ensuring overall diversity. Implementation of these recommendations shall contribute to improve decision-making processes and participation, and to foster inclusivity. These recommendations were [approved by the Board](#) in November 2019, and ICANN org is currently developing an implementation plan, though implementation of the SO/AC



---

facing recommendations such as this will require SO/AC effort and is left to the discretion of each SO/AC Group (see [WS2 Implementation Assessment Report](#))

- **WS2 - Diversity** (Community/Org)

Estimated Completion Date - TBD based on community bandwidth and guided by the budgeting and planning process.

The final report of the CCWG-Accountability WS2 proposes a number of recommendations by which ICANN may define, measure, report, support, and promote diversity. The CCWG-Accountability WS2 specifies that “diversity within ICANN refers to: the creation/existence of an inclusive environment in various aspects of stakeholder representation and engagement throughout all levels of the staff, community, and Board.” As such, improvements to ICANN’s diversity shall contribute to addressing the issue of representation and inclusivity identified above. These recommendations have been approved by the Board. ICANN org is responsible for some portions of implementation, and though implementation of the SO/AC facing recommendations will require SO/AC effort (see [WS2 Implementation Assessment Report](#)).

- **PDP 3.0** (Community)

Estimated Completion Date - In implementation

In 2018, the GNSO Council [adopted a number of recommendations](#) to improve the effectiveness of its policy development processes. The GNSO is currently integrating some recommendations into its existing PDPs and intends to deploy the recommendations in future PDPs. Some specific recommendations that may be relevant to the issues identified during the community’s discussions over the evolution of the multistakeholder model include: (1) the development of a Skills Guide for working group members; (2) greater clarity over the role of working group chairs; (3) exploration of alternative participation models in addition to the traditional open model; and (4) more robust project status reports and change management requirements. In particular, the GNSO acknowledged that there are challenges with building consensus when open participation in PDPs results in a large number of members with disparate skill sets, subject matter expertise and knowledge of the applicable process rules.

- **Consensus Playbook** (Community)

Estimated Completion Date - Completed in April 2020

Through the FY20 Additional Budget Request (ABR) process, the GNSO Council requested funding for professional assistance to develop a Capture vs Consensus Playbook. Funding was approved for a Playbook that can be applicable to the entirety of the ICANN community and not limited to the GNSO PDP. The Consensus Building Institute (CBI), which has had experience facilitating a GNSO PDP, completed the [Playbook](#) in April 2020. The Playbook is premised on the assumption that consensus building is a process that does not just take place at the end of a group’s deliberations. It includes practical tools and best practices for building consensus, bridging differences, and breaking deadlocks within ICANN processes beyond just GNSO working groups. In developing the Playbook, CBI interviewed 14 ICANN community leaders across ICANN’s SOs and ACs and developed 15 recommended “plays” that can be applied to different phases of a group’s work.

- **NomCom Review Implementation** (Community)

Estimated Completion Date - November 2021

---

The independent examiner conducting the NomCom Review produced a [final report](#), submitted in June 2018. Based on its detailed review of the independent examiner's findings and recommendations, the NomCom Implementation Planning Team prepared a Feasibility Assessment, adopted with full consensus on 14 December 2018. Then, the NomCom Review Implementation Working Group was created in March 2019 and this group submitted a [Detailed Implementation Plan](#) in September. This report was subsequently adopted by the Board. The implementation of all 27 recommendations will affect the entire community, especially those bodies that receive NomCom appointees, including the ICANN Board and the PTI Board, as well as those groups that appoint members to the NomCom itself. The implementation is expected to advance the NomCom's, and by extension, ICANN's accountability, transparency, and effectiveness.

- **Fellowship Program (Org)**  
Estimated Completion Time - Ongoing  
Following a community consultation, ICANN org implemented updates to its [Fellowship Program](#), effective as of ICANN65 (June 2019). Although the objectives of the program remain unchanged, for example, facilitating participation from under-developed and under-served regions in ICANN policy and technical activities, the selection criteria were updated and the community's role in selection and mentoring was increased. In addition, the diversity metrics recommended by the CCWG-Accountability WS2 are now being used as part of the selection process.
- **ICANN Learn (Org)**  
Estimated Completion Date - Ongoing  
ICANN org's online learning platform, [ICANN Learn](#), is undergoing a formatting update, as well as offering new courses. In FY20, two new courses aimed at newcomers to the ICANN community and policy processes were launched: DNS Fundamentals and Policy Fundamentals. The aim is to encourage all newcomers to take these two basic courses initially, followed by more specific coursework depending on the policy area and/or community groups they will join. In that regard, ICANN org is developing updated materials for a number of course modules as well as working on new courses to supplement the existing curriculum.

### **Addressing the gap(s):**

**Gap in resolving areas of impasse** - While each of the work streams identified above represent an opportunity to enhance consensus, representation, and inclusivity in ICANN's work, it remains unclear how the community can collaborate to resolve impasses in these existing, or unforeseen challenges. The broader topics of incentives to consensus, and clarity on representation of interests should continue to be considered both within specific group processes and at an overall level in order to continue the evolution of ICANN's multistakeholder model. Addressing this gap would help the work progress more efficiently which leads to improved morale among volunteers and creates space for additional work to be addressed.

The three work processes outlined below have either been recently developed by the community or were already in existence. However, each may be used in new ways and taken together as a unified toolkit may help address this gap.

Work Process or Mechanism	Description	Action	Involved Participants
Consensus Playbook	A document, requested by the GNSO and prepared by a professional facilitator for broad community use	<p>Introductory webinar by the GNSO Council to explain the objective and utility of the Playbook, followed by community discussions facilitated by ICANN org, to determine whether aspects of the Playbook can be usefully deployed elsewhere in the community. ICANN org’s support role specific to these webinars will be discussed with the GNSO so the org can provide the appropriate level of support.</p> <p>This is a suggested new action, building on work done recently by the GNSO.</p>	GNSO Council, ICANN org
PDP 3.0	An initiative by the GNSO Council to improve the effectiveness of the policy development process in specific, identified areas	<p>Community-led webinars by the GNSO Council and facilitated by ICANN org to familiarize the broader community with the various improvements with a view toward determining if the improvements can be applied to their internal processes. ICANN org’s support role specific to these webinars will be discussed with the GNSO so the org can provide the appropriate level of support.</p> <p>This is a suggested new action, building on work done recently by the GNSO.</p>	GNSO Council, ICANN org
ICANN Learn, ICANN org Communications	A free online learning platform for the ICANN community	<p>Increase awareness of the platform and course contents, including awareness campaigns, widespread publication of updated course catalogs, and suggested learning plans.</p> <p>This is an existing action with proposed enhancements.</p>	ICANN org
ICANN Fellowship and NextGen@ICANN Programs	Programs for participants that are new to ICANN, including those from the next generation, to	Evaluate additional engagement opportunities for Fellows and NextGen alumni such as: leveraging existing and new mentorship activities as a “bridge” mechanism into the wider ICANN community, and periodic meetups (virtual or otherwise) for alumni.	ICANN org, ICANN Fellows and NextGen Alumni

	understand what ICANN is and how it works	This is an existing action with proposed enhancements.	
--	---	--	--

### III. Remaining Work Areas

The draft Work Plan included three additional work areas for community input. Given the priority assigned to the three work areas included in Section II, Work Plan, the remaining three issues are included here to note the previous community input on these work areas and to ensure the progress on this work is captured as part of the larger effort to ensure the continued evolution of the multistakeholder model. These issues may be revisited in the future, as progress on the three priority issues is considered. In addition, progress made on the three priority areas may also deliver benefits to the three areas outlined below. For example, community efforts to address prioritization may have an impact on culture, trust, and silos. Finally, as some community groups expressed an interest in leading efforts on these remaining work areas, the Board welcomes that work, should those groups wish to engage on those topics.

#### Complexity of (A) the Tools to Access Information and Data and (B) Content

In the facilitated conversation on this issue, community comments described certain complexities that challenge the more effective and efficient functioning of ICANN’s multistakeholder model. These focused predominantly on the internal ICANN work environment in two particular areas: The accessibility to and the ease of use of information and data; and the complexity of ICANN’s Bylaws, processes, and procedures.

Examples of Work Currently Underway:

- **ICANN Learn (Org)** - ICANN org’s online learning platform, ICANN Learn, is being updated in terms of format as well as course offerings. In FY20, two new courses aimed at newcomers to the ICANN community and policy processes were launched: DNS Fundamentals and Policy Fundamentals. Both may help newcomers and other community members better understand complex topics.
- **Information Transparency Platform (ITP) (Org)** - ITP is focused on improving access to and findability of ICANN’s published information through the implementation of a document management system (DMS) and the enforcement of content governance.
- **Open Data Platform (ODP) (Org)** - This platform offers machine readable data sets for people and organizations to consume and manipulate as needed.
- **Process Documentation Initiative 2.0 (Org)** - As a result of this initiative, “flowcharts” and corresponding “handbooks” were developed that now serve as easy-to-follow introductions to the key processes conducted across ICANN’s multistakeholder model. The documented processes include: Reviews, Advice and Correspondence, Supporting Organizations, Advisory Committees, and Empowered Community Powers.

- 
- **Streamlining of Reports (Org)** - The Report@ICANN project was initiated in 2017 with the objective to derive opportunities to improve resources and cost management, reduce complexity of content, while still maintaining ICANN's core value of accountability and transparency. As a result, ICANN org eliminated multiple reports, reduced reporting frequencies, and eliminated unnecessary translations where feasible.
  - **Implementation of WS2: Diversity (Org)** - The diversity recommendations from WS2 acknowledged both the importance of language diversity as well as the need to improve the balance in usage of the six official United Nations languages. One recommendation is that the availability and usage of translation and interpretation services be measured and documented.
  - **Improving Public Comment Proceedings and Other Staff Publications (Org)** - In 2019, ICANN org adopted internal staff guidelines for conducting Public Comment Proceedings that aimed to clarify when and how staff should request community input on policy proposals, operational initiatives and other consultations. In 2018, the Board adopted the GAC's and ALAC's joint statement on "Enabling Inclusive, Informed and Meaningful Participation at ICANN" and indicated its intent to encourage ICANN org to produce materials toward this goal while balancing available resources. The ATRT3 Draft Report also includes discussions of improvements to public comments, and any recommendations delivered in the Final Report and adopted by the Board will be coordinated with the other ongoing work.

## Culture, Trust, and Silos

Community sentiment gathered during the facilitated discussion about this issue indicated multiple and different cultures across the ICANN community, paired with a silo mentality, have challenged ICANN's ability to work more cohesively and deliver policy and other work in a timely fashion. Similarly, a lack of trust or perceived lack of trust challenges the community to work past preconceptions and hampers effective and efficient discussions and decision-making.

### Examples of Work Currently Underway:

- **NomCom Review Implementation** - See description under "Consensus, Representation, and Inclusivity" above.
- **SO/AC Leadership Engagement (Community)** - As noted under Prioritization of the Work & Efficient Use of Resources work area (above), efforts have been made to increase opportunities for interaction and collaboration between and among the various SO and AC leaders. For example, there are dedicated mailing lists that the current set of leaders use regularly to communicate. In January 2020, the SO/AC chairs met in person (for the first time outside an ICANN Public Meeting) to discuss prioritization and greater engagement opportunities, and for meetings with members of the ICANN Board and Executive Team.
- **Action Request Register & Correspondence (Org)** - ICANN org is examining how to further integrate work trackers, such as Action Request Register and Correspondence, to improve reporting, planning, and internal work coordination.

- 
- **Complaints Office** (Org) - The [Complaints Office](#) is a function within ICANN org that: provides a centralized location to submit complaints regarding the ICANN org; receives complaints, researches them, collects facts, reviews, analyzes, and resolves issues as openly as possible; helps the ICANN org build on its effectiveness, and contributes to increased transparency from the org; and aggregates the data from complaints to identify and solve for operational trends that should be improved.
  - **Ombudsman** (Org) - [The ICANN Ombudsman](#) is independent, impartial and neutral. The Ombudsman's function is to act as an informal dispute resolution office for the ICANN community, who may wish to lodge a complaint about ICANN staff, board or problems in supporting organizations. The purpose of the office is to ensure that the members of the ICANN community have been treated fairly.
  - **WS2: Accountability & Transparency** - CCWG-Accountability WS2 recommendations were developed to improve ICANN's overall accountability and transparency practices. Their implementation should result in improved accountability and transparency, ultimately contributing to raising trust levels. The WS2 recommendations have been adopted by the Board and implementation planning work is underway.
  - **ATRT3** - The ATRT3 Review Team published its [Final Report](#) in May 2020. The areas of culture, trust, and silos were not specifically mentioned in the report. See the broader description under "Prioritization of the Work & Efficient Use of Resources" above.
  - **Expected Standards of Behavior** – ICANN has [expected standards of behavior](#) that apply to all who participate in the ICANN processes, whether ICANN Board, org, or community. These expected standards of behavior are an essential anchor to addressing this issue.
  - **ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy** – The [ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy](#) was developed after consideration of public comments received on the expected standards of behavior referenced above. The Community Anti-Harassment policy was developed in consultation with the ICANN community and gives participants recourse if they identify or are victims of inappropriate behavior or harassment.

## Roles and Responsibilities of ICANN Board, Org, and Community

The facilitated community conversation made clear there remains a need for a clear, shared understanding of the distinct roles and responsibilities of the ICANN community, ICANN org and Board in order to evolve ICANN's multistakeholder model. For example, there are a range of views in the community about whether the Board should be more proactive in facilitating policymaking. With divergent views about these roles, it will be a challenge to ensure common goals are achieved as the multistakeholder model grows and evolves.

### Examples of Work Currently Underway:

- **SO/AC Leadership Engagement** (Community) - See description under "Prioritization of the Work & Efficient Use of Resources" above.

- 
- **Process Documentation Initiative 2.0** (Org) - See description under “Complexity of (A) the Tools to Access Information and Data and (B) Content” above.
  - **CEO Report** (Org) - Ahead of each Board workshop, the ICANN org Executive Team compiles a brief report for the Board that summarizes each department’s highlights, milestones and provides an overview of recent activity. These reports are then shared with the community to provide transparency into the work of the organization.
  - **Delegation of Authority Guidelines** (ICANN Board resolution & document) - In November 2016, the Board adopted the “ICANN Delegation of Authority Guidelines” to provide clear guidance and clarification of roles between the ICANN Board and the ICANN CEO/Management. This document identifies the respective key roles of the Board and the CEO and the delegation of authority from the Board to the CEO and key staff. It also identifies the key interdependencies in those relationships.
  - **WS2: Staff Accountability** (Org) - The final report of the CCWG-Accountability WS2 includes a description of the roles and responsibilities of ICANN’s Board, staff, and community members and the links between them, and a recommendation that these descriptions be posted on icann.org. The CCWG-Accountability WS2 recommendations were adopted by the Board and implementation planning is underway.
  - **Operating Standards** (Org) - The ICANN Board [adopted](#) the [Operating Standards for Specific Reviews](#) on 23 May 2019; see also the relevant [blog post](#). Section 3.1.9 details the roles and responsibilities of review team members, review team leadership, SO/ACs, SO/AC Chairs, ICANN Board, and ICANN org for the conduct of specific reviews.
  - **Complaints Office** (Org) - See description under Culture, Trust, and Silos above.
  - **Ombudsman** (Org) - See description under Culture, Trust, and Silos above.

## IV. Conclusion

The ICANN Board recognizes the broad range of work already underway in the community that will have an impact on the efficient and effective functioning of ICANN’s multistakeholder model. With the modest addition of some new actions, as outlined in the “Addressing the Gap(s)” section under each area of the work plan, the ICANN Board believes the community’s added work can make a tangible difference in how our model effectively serves our community. Further, by establishing an evaluation method that is tied to ICANN’s Strategic Plan, the ICANN Board, community, and org can periodically review the impact the Work Plan has on projects that are underway, as well as assess whether the actions outlined above address the gaps. Recognizing that the community already has much work to do -- and with a sensitivity for overloading already-taxed community groups with new, complex projects -- the Board appreciates the community’s input on the steps outlined in this document.

---

## V. References

ALAC-GAC [Joint Statement on Inclusive, Informed & Meaningful Participation](#) and [Board response](#)

Cross Community Working Group on Accountability Workstream 2 [Final Report](#)

Evolving ICANN's Multistakeholder Model, see [Appendix C of the Draft FY21-25 Operating & Financial Plan](#)

[Work to Improve the Effectiveness of ICANN's Multistakeholder Model of Governance \(ICANN.org page\)](#)

[Feasibility Assessment](#) and Initial Implementation Plan (FAIP) by the NomCom2 Review Implementation Planning Team (IPT)

GNSO Policy Development Process 3.0: [How to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the GNSO Policy Development Process](#)

ICANN Board Resolution: [ICANN's Delegation of Authority Guidelines](#) (adopted 8 November 2016)

[ICANN Community Leadership Digest](#) archived publications

ICANN [Fellowship Program](#)

[ICANN Learn](#)

ICANN's [Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2021-2025](#)

[ICANN President & CEO Goals for Fiscal Year 2020](#)

ICANN's [Process Documentation Initiative](#)

Independent Review of the ICANN Nominating Committee: [Final Report](#)

NomCom Review [Detailed Implementation Plan](#)

[Public Comment Guidelines](#) for the ICANN Organization

[Public Comment Proceeding for ICANN's Draft FY21-25 Operating & Financial Plan](#)

Resourcing and Prioritization of Community Recommendation: [Draft Proposal for Community Discussion](#)

Role of the Board, ICANN Board's [five blocks of responsibilities](#) (as of August 2019)





One World, One Internet

Visit us at [icann.org](http://icann.org)



[@icann](https://twitter.com/icann)



[facebook.com/icannorg](https://facebook.com/icannorg)



[youtube.com/icannnews](https://youtube.com/icannnews)



[flickr.com/icann](https://flickr.com/icann)



[linkedin/company/icann](https://linkedin/company/icann)



[slideshare/icannpresentations](https://slideshare/icannpresentations)



[soundcloud/icann](https://soundcloud/icann)



[instagram.com/icannorg](https://instagram.com/icannorg)