

Project Overview for the Internal Audit Services RFP

Request for Proposal

14 April 2025



1 Introduction

1.1 About this Document

This document provides an overview of the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) Internal Audit Services. It provides background and pertinent information regarding the requirements for the respondents. The RFP itself comprises this as well as other documents that are hosted in the ICANN sourcing tool (SciQuest/Jaggaer). Indications of interest are to be received by emailing Internal.Audit.Services-RFP@icann.org. Proposals should be electronically submitted by 23:59 UTC on 19 May 2025 using ICANN's sourcing tool, access to which may be requested via the same email address as above.

1.2 About the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)

ICANN's mission is to ensure the stable and secure operation of the Internet's unique identifier systems. To reach another person on the Internet, you have to type an address into your computer - a name or a number. That address has to be unique so computers know where to find each other. ICANN helps coordinate and support these unique identifiers across the world.

Established in 1998, ICANN brings together a diverse, global community of stakeholders, including technical experts, governments, civil society, businesses, and end users, to collaboratively develop policies and ensure the stability and reliability of the Internet's technical infrastructure.

ICANN is a California-based nonprofit public benefit corporation with tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. For FY24, which ended on June 30, 2024, ICANN reported operations funding of approximately \$150 million and total expenses around \$125 million. As of May 30, 2024, ICANN employed 452 staff members worldwide. While classified as a nonprofit, ICANN operates within the technology sector due to its role in the technical maintenance of Internet-related operations.

See www.icann.org for more information.

2 Scope

2.1 Project Objective

ICANN is soliciting proposals to identify provider(s) to deliver internal audit services in alignment with industry best practices and ICANN's organizational objectives. The selected provider(s) will be responsible for conducting independent, objective assessments of ICANN's risk management, control, and governance processes. These services will support ICANN's commitment to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement. The scope of work will be guided by ICANN's Internal Audit Plan, which will be developed, reviewed, and refined in collaboration with the necessary teams.

The objectives of this engagement include:

- **Delivery of services** in accordance with the established ICANN Internal Audit Plan (yet to be determined).
- **Providing expertise and recommendations**, if any, to ICANN's internal audit methodology, annual internal audit plan, and internal audit activities, as necessary.
- **Enhancing ICANN's internal audit function** by ensuring alignment with industry best practices, risk-based auditing principles, and governance standards.
- **Supporting continuous improvement** through insights that strengthen ICANN's internal controls, risk management, and governance framework.

2.2 Background

To further enhance governance and operational effectiveness, ICANN is seeking to establish an internal audit function. Historically, ICANN has not maintained an internal audit function and remains committed to continuously improving its processes.

On 13 November 2023, ICANN issued a [Request for Information \(RFI\)](#) to identify and learn about independent firms providing internal audit services. As stated in the RFI, the identification and selection of the internal audit provider(s) is a two-stage process, with the RFI serving as the first stage. The responses received informed the requirements and preparation for the second stage - this RFP.

Through this RFP, ICANN aims to engage a qualified service provider to:

- deliver internal audit services in accordance with ICANN Internal Audit Plan,
- support the development and execution of ICANN internal audit activities, and
- recommend enhancement and continuous improvement opportunities, if any, to ICANN's internal audit function and its framework.

2.3 Scope of Work

The third-party provider will deliver comprehensive internal audit services, focusing on governance, risk management, and internal controls, with the following responsibilities:

1. **Audit Planning and Execution:** Develop and execute an annual audit plan, conduct risk assessments, and perform audits across ICANN's functions to evaluate internal controls, compliance, and governance.
2. **Reporting and Recommendations:** Prepare audit reports with findings and actionable recommendations, ensuring clear communication to management and the Board Risk Committee (BRC).
3. **Adherence to Standards:** Align audit activities with global standards such as COSO, ISO 31000, NIST, and COBIT, ensuring best practices in risk management and internal

controls.

4. **Continuous Risk Monitoring:** Advise on improvements to ICANN's risk management framework, internal controls, and emerging risks to enhance overall risk maturity.
 5. **Special Projects:** Conduct special audits or investigations on fraud, misconduct, or non-compliance as directed by management or the BRC.
 6. **Board Risk Committee (BRC) Participation:** Attend and provide audit updates at Board Risk Committee meetings as requested and needed.
 7. **Audit Resource Management:** Ensure adequate staffing with the necessary expertise and provide training for ICANN staff involved in audit and risk management functions.
- **Annual Audit Report:** Deliver a yearly report summarizing audit results, assessing the internal audit function's effectiveness, and recommending continuous improvements.

3 High Level Selection Criteria

The decision to select a provider as an outcome of this RFP will be based on, but not limited to, the following selection criteria:

1. **Alignment with ICANN's Mission and Objectives:** The provider's ability to demonstrate a deep understanding of ICANN's mission to ensure the stability and security of the Internet's unique identifier systems and their ability to support the domain name systems' (DNS') global operations.
2. **Experience and Expertise:** Proven experience in conducting audits for global organizations, particularly those with complex operations in the Internet governance and technology sectors, with specific expertise in governance, risk management, and compliance frameworks.
3. **Adherence to ICANN's Internal Audit Methodology:** The provider's ability to align its audit processes with ICANN's established methodology, ensuring consistency, transparency, and reliability in audit execution while incorporating a risk-based approach and efficient / effective data analytics techniques.
4. **Data Analytics Capabilities:** The ability to leverage data analytics in audit processes to enhance risk identification, detect anomalies, improve operational insights, and provide data-driven recommendations.
5. **Avoidance of Duplicated Efforts:** The provider should assess and coordinate audit activities to prevent redundancy, ensuring efficient use of resources by reviewing external audit scopes and independent review coverages.
6. **Deep Knowledge of Global Audit Standards and Leading Frameworks:** The provider must demonstrate deep knowledge and adherence to globally recognized audit standards and frameworks, such as the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations (COSO) Internal Control Framework, ISO 31000 (Risk Management), NIST guidelines, COBIT, and other

leading industry practices, ensuring that their audit processes align with best practices in governance, risk management, and internal controls.

7. **Certifications and Skillsets:** The qualifications of the provider's audit team, particularly certifications relevant to ICANN's industry, such as Certified Internal Auditor (CIA), Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA), Certified Information Security Manager (CISM), and others applicable to governance and risk in the technology sector.
8. **Financial Health:** The provider must demonstrate long-term financial stability and the ability to meet contractual obligations without risk of service disruption.
9. **Financial Value / Pricing:** The provider should offer competitive, transparent pricing by enabling cost-effective solutions that leverage remote audit capabilities without compromising audit quality.
10. **Reference Checks:** Positive reference checks from similar organizations should confirm the provider's ability to deliver quality, timely audits and effective collaboration, while confirming the ability to successfully address any pertinent issues.
11. **Independence and Mitigation of Any Conflicts of Interest:** The provider must demonstrate effective strategies for identifying and managing conflicts of interest, ensuring the independence and objectivity of their audit work.
12. **Value-added Services:** An opportunity to illustrate actionable insights beyond traditional recommendations in order to help the organization improve efficiency, effectiveness and overall business performance.

4 High Level Business Requirements

The provider must be able to adhere to the complete list of business requirements as listed in SciQuest/Jaggaer. A summary of the key business requirements is set out below:

1. **Purpose and Scope:** Internal audit services must align with ICANN's mission to ensure stability and secure operation of the Internet's unique identifier systems and be capable of auditing global operations across multiple time zones and regulatory environments.
2. **Audit Execution and Compliance:** Audits must strictly follow ICANN's internal audit methodology, incorporating a risk-based approach to prioritize high-impact areas, assess risk management frameworks, evaluate compliance with global standards, leverage data analytics, and coordinate with external audits to avoid redundancy.
3. **Vendor Qualifications and Expertise:** The provider must have experience with global organizations, particularly in Internet governance and complex operations, possess relevant GRC expertise, hold certifications (e.g., CIA, CISA), support internal audit function maturation, and provide advisory services, including KPI definition.
4. **Cost Efficiency and Travel Minimization:** Solutions should leverage remote audit technologies to reduce costs, regionalize audits when travel is required, and ensure efficient travel and audit scheduling.

5. **Global Approach:** The provider must be capable of conducting remote audits across multiple time zones and supporting audits in multiple languages, and must have access to local expertise in key regions.
6. **Audit Methodology and Approach:** Audits should strictly adhere to ICANN's internal audit methodology, employ a collaborative approach, offer tailored audit plans, and provide training to ICANN staff on the audit process.
7. **Reporting and Recommendations:** The provider should offer clear, actionable reports aligned with ICANN's goals, consider global compliance standards, and ensure a structured post-audit follow-up process to track the implementation of recommendations.
8. **Timeline and Deliverables:** Proposals should include a detailed audit timeline with milestones, offer flexible scheduling to accommodate ICANN's global operations, and align with ICANN's operational needs.
9. **Sustainability and Environmental Impact:** Strategies should minimize the environmental impact, including virtual audits and regional collaboration to reduce travel-related carbon footprints.
10. **Confidentiality and Data Security:** The provider must adhere to strict confidentiality agreements and ensure data security, complying with data privacy regulations (e.g., GDPR, CCPA) and protecting sensitive audit data throughout the process.

5 Project Timeline

The following dates have been established as milestones for this RFP. ICANN reserves the right to modify or change this timeline at any time as necessary.

Activity	Estimated Dates
RFP Published	14 April 2025
Deadline for Participants to Indicate Interest	28 April 2025 by 23:59 UTC
Deadline for Participants to Submit Questions	1 May 2025 by 23:59 UTC
ICANN Responds to Participant Questions	7 May 2025
Proposal Submission Deadline	19 May 2025 by 23:59 UTC
Evaluation of Responses	May – July 2025
Final Evaluations and Negotiations	July - August 2025
Contracting, Award and Onboarding	By end August 2025

6 Terms and Conditions

General Terms and Conditions

1. Submission of a proposal shall constitute each respondent's acknowledgment and acceptance of all the specifications, requirements and terms and conditions in this RFP.

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2. All costs of preparing and submitting its proposal, responding to or providing any other assistance to ICANN in connection with this RFP will be borne by the respondent.
 3. All submitted proposals including any supporting materials or documentation will become the property of ICANN. If the respondent's proposal contains any proprietary information that respondent does not want ICANN to disclose or use other than for the purposes of evaluating the proposal, that information should be marked with appropriate confidentiality markings.

Discrepancies, Omissions and Additional Information

1. Respondent is responsible for examining this RFP and all addenda. Failure to do so will be at the sole risk of the respondent. Should respondent find discrepancies, omissions, unclear or ambiguous intent or meaning, or should any question arise concerning this RFP, respondent must notify ICANN of such findings immediately in writing via email no later than ten (10) days prior to the deadline for bid submissions. Should such matters remain unresolved by ICANN, in writing, prior to respondent's preparation of its proposal, such matters must be addressed in respondent's proposal.
2. ICANN is not responsible for oral statements made by its employees, agents, or representatives concerning this RFP. If respondent requires additional information, respondent must request that the issuer of this RFP furnish such information in writing.
3. A respondent's proposal is presumed to represent its best efforts to respond to the RFP. Any significant inconsistency, if unexplained, raises a fundamental issue of the respondent's understanding of the nature and scope of the work required and of its ability to perform the contract as proposed and may be cause for rejection of the proposal. The burden of proof as to cost credibility rests with the respondent.
4. If necessary, supplemental information to this RFP will be provided to all prospective respondents receiving this RFP. All supplemental information issued by ICANN will form part of this RFP. ICANN is not responsible for any failure by prospective respondents to receive supplemental information.

Assessment and Award

1. ICANN reserves the right, without penalty and at its discretion, to accept or reject any proposal, withdraw this RFP, make no award, to waive or permit the correction of any informality or irregularity and to disregard any non-conforming or conditional proposal.
2. ICANN may request a respondent to provide further information or documentation to support respondent's proposal and its ability to provide the products and/or services contemplated by this RFP.
3. ICANN is not obliged to accept the lowest priced proposal. Price is only one of the determining factors for the successful award.
4. ICANN will assess proposals based on compliant responses to the requirements set out in this RFP, responses to questions related to those requirements, any further issued

clarifications (if any) and consideration of any other issues or evidence relevant to the respondent's ability to successfully provide and implement the products and/or services contemplated by this RFP and in the best interests of ICANN.

5. ICANN reserves the right to enter into contractual negotiations and if necessary, modify any terms and conditions of a final contract with the respondent whose proposal offers the best value to ICANN.