

# ICANN Strategic Plan

FOR FISCAL YEARS 2026–2030

March 2025

evolve  
strengthen

organizational excellence

inclusive

effective

collaborate



ICANN

One World, One Internet

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# Introduction

The ICANN Board of Directors is pleased to present the ICANN Strategic Plan for fiscal years (FY) 2026–30, an evolved and forward-looking road map designed to guide ICANN over the next five years.<sup>1</sup>

Amid a rapidly evolving digital landscape, ICANN stands at the forefront of ensuring the stability and security of the Internet’s unique identifier systems. ICANN’s Strategic Plan is not only a road map; it is also a commitment to adaptability, innovation, and collaboration. It presents a simplified yet comprehensive vision that balances clarity with depth and addresses the multifaceted needs of ICANN’s stakeholders. ICANN recognizes the Internet’s ever-expanding role in broadening global communication, commerce, and community. By embracing technological advancements and proactively tackling emerging challenges, ICANN safeguards the Internet’s unique identifier systems. ICANN’s dedication to stakeholder engagement and continuous improvement ensures that it not only meets the needs of today but also anticipates the demands of tomorrow.

This Strategic Plan builds on the foundation of the [FY21–25 Strategic Plan](#), which has been reviewed annually since its adoption. The [process](#) to develop this new Strategic Plan began with a thorough review of the FY21–25 plan, which served as the baseline to identify areas for continuity and growth. To inform this process, a comprehensive environmental scan was conducted, using the PESTLE technique to analyze external (political, economic, social, technological, legal, and ecological) factors, paired with insights and feedback on ICANN’s current and possible future circumstances from the ICANN community, organization, and the wider Internet ecosystem. This variety of perspectives informed our consideration of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that might affect ICANN over the next five years.

The Board then developed a vision statement that will endure through the end of FY2030. Next, we developed four Strategic Objectives that define how we will achieve this vision.

The importance of preserving an inclusive governance model, both within ICANN and in the broader Internet governance landscape, was identified as a key challenge. The Internet remains a globally shared resource, and its governance should continue to include all stakeholders. By ensuring that diverse voices and perspectives are represented in the decision-making processes, we can maintain a unified global Internet.

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<sup>1</sup>ICANN’s fiscal year starts 1 July and ends 30 June.

*Introduction continued*

Another critical factor is the need to pursue organizational excellence. Over the past 25 years, ICANN has grown and developed to respond to a variety of external forces. To continue fulfilling its mission, ICANN must further evolve the organization by improving its adaptability and agility, with operations that are resilient and flexible in the face of change. Additionally, ICANN is committed to advancing its environmental initiatives, promoting sustainable practices, and maintaining financial sustainability. This comprehensive approach to organizational excellence should ensure, with the available funding, that we remain able to fulfill our mission.

In the FY21–25 Strategic Plan, the “Targeted Outcomes” section included a mixture of strategies and progress indicators. The FY26–30 plan improves on this concept by clearly differentiating the strategies from the progress indicators for achieving those strategies, which results in a more structured and transparent approach. The Strategic Plan will undergo annual reviews, and updates as needed, to enable ICANN to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities while maintaining alignment with its long-term objectives.

This Strategic Plan highlights ICANN’s top priorities that support ICANN’s vision for 2030. The Plan is complemented by a five-year Operating Plan that details the activities required to execute the Strategic Plan. This comprehensive approach ensures that the Strategic Plan, while bold, is achievable and provides a clear path forward for ICANN’s continued growth and success in delivering on its mission.

In response to the rapidly evolving digital landscape and complex stakeholder needs, ICANN’s Strategic Plan is intended to steadfastly deliver on its mission, revitalize organizational excellence, and foster impactful innovation and collaboration within the ICANN community. It is imperative that in this challenging world order, the Internet’s unique identifier systems ensure *One World, One Internet*.



# Overview of Plan Structure



## MISSION

The core purpose and reason for existing.

## VISION

The long-term aspirational goal.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

A broad, overarching, significant area of focus that aligns with the mission and vision. Each strategic objective can include several strategic goals.

## STRATEGIC GOAL

A breakdown of the broad strategic objectives into more detailed and actionable components. Each strategic goal can include several strategies.

## STRATEGIES

Approaches that allow the achievement of the strategic goal. Each strategy has a set of progress indicators and associated strategic risks.

## PROGRESS INDICATORS

Specific indicators used to assess the effectiveness of a strategy and the progress towards a strategic goal.

## STRATEGIC RISKS

Potential threats or challenges that may impact the successful execution of a strategy, or potential consequences if the strategy is not achieved.

# ICANN's Mission<sup>\*</sup>

To ensure the stable and secure operation of the Internet's unique identifier systems.

# ICANN's 2030 Vision

As the trusted steward of the Internet's unique identifier systems, ICANN is dedicated to strengthening the single, globally interoperable Internet for all.

<sup>\*</sup>ICANN's mission is stated in the ICANN [Bylaws](#) Section 1.1.



# Strategic Objectives

## for Fiscal Years 2026–2030

Central to ICANN’s vision over the next five years is the commitment to fostering an inclusive governance model, where diverse voices from across the globe shape policies and decisions that impact the very essence of the Internet ecosystem.

Concurrently, ICANN aims to continue build a culture of continuous improvement and commitment to excellence. This will enable ICANN to better serve the global Internet community.

In addition, ICANN’s commitment to evolving the Internet’s unique identifier systems underscores its dedication to adaptability, which ultimately ensures that the infrastructure that underpins the Internet remains responsive to the demands of innovation and expansion.

Last, but not least, as cyber threats continue to escalate in complexity and frequency, it is paramount to safeguard the integrity and stability of the Internet’s fundamental architecture through collaboration and coordination with stakeholders at all levels.

# 1

**Evolve and promote ICANN’s multistakeholder model to sustain its inclusive approach to Internet Governance.**

[CLICK FOR MORE >](#)

# 2

**Enhance organizational excellence.**

[CLICK FOR MORE >](#)

# 3

**Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to evolve the Internet’s unique identifier systems.**

[CLICK FOR MORE >](#)

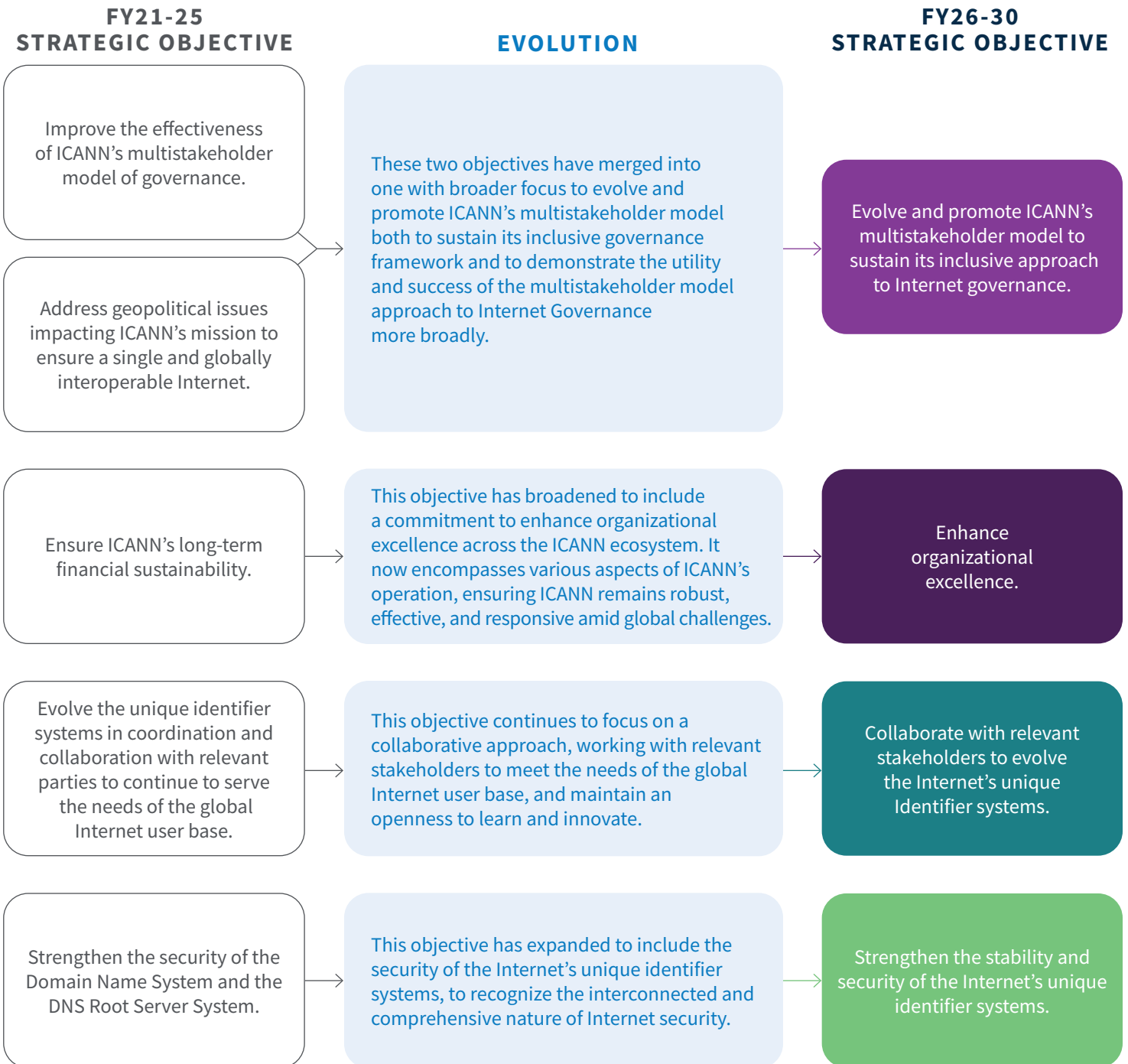
# 4

**Strengthen the stability and security of the Internet’s unique identifier systems.**

[CLICK FOR MORE >](#)

# Strategic Objectives Evolution

ICANN's strategic objectives have evolved from the FY21–25 Strategic Plan, reflecting a shift in focus and adaptation to the changing global internet landscape.



This strategic evolution demonstrates ICANN's adaptive approach to the dynamic environment of the Internet landscape, in order to continue to deliver on its mission to maintain the secure and stable operations of the Internet's unique identifier systems. This approach is vital in a world of continuous technological developments, emerging societal challenges, and geopolitical changes, where the Internet has become an essential resource.

# Strategic Objective 1:

## Evolve and Promote ICANN's Multistakeholder Model to Sustain Its Inclusive Approach to Internet Governance

In an era when the Internet is integral to nearly every aspect of life, it is essential that policies and standards are developed with input from diverse voices and interests worldwide, including academia, governments, businesses, civil society, technical experts, and individual users. The multistakeholder model of Internet governance ensures that decision-making processes regarding the Internet's infrastructure and policies are inclusive and representative.

ICANN's multistakeholder approach to consensus-based decision-making is a critical component of this broader Internet governance framework. ICANN supports the ongoing evolution of both its multistakeholder model and multistakeholderism more broadly in order to sustain this inclusive governance system. It is vital for fostering inclusivity, transparency, innovation, and equity in governing the technical aspects of the Internet. This commitment ultimately contributes to ICANN's vision: *As the trusted steward of the Internet's unique identifier systems, ICANN is dedicated to strengthening the single, globally interoperable Internet for all.*

The following strategic goals and associated strategies are designed to achieve this strategic objective:

### 1.1 Ensure Inclusive Stakeholder Representation and Enhance Collaboration.

- 1.1.1 Integrate new stakeholders into ICANN community groups as needed.
- 1.1.2 Enhance collaboration among community groups.
- 1.1.3 Foster an appealing environment for the next generation.
- 1.1.4 Develop a new generation of leaders.
- 1.1.5 Increase and broaden participation, particularly from underrepresented communities.

### 1.2 Enhance the Agility and Effectiveness of Policy and Advice Development.

- 1.2.1 Reduce complexity and create incentives to encourage active participation.
- 1.2.2 Establish a proactive framework to ensure early involvement and avoid unexpected outcomes.
- 1.2.3 Proactively engage with governments, regulators, intergovernmental organizations, and other public policy stakeholders.
- 1.2.4 Incorporate flexibility and agile methodologies into the policy and advice development and implementation life cycle.

### 1.3 Expand Strategic Alliances to Advocate for the Multistakeholder Model of Internet Governance.

- 1.3.1 Demonstrate that ICANN's multistakeholder model of governance remains the right model for delivering ICANN's mission.
- 1.3.2 Strengthen collaborative efforts to promote the multistakeholder model of Internet governance.

# 1.1 Ensure Inclusive Stakeholder Representation and Enhance Collaboration

## 1.1.1 Integrate new stakeholders into ICANN community groups as needed.

As the macro environment evolves, new stakeholder groups not yet represented in the ICANN's existing community structure may be essential. This strategy is to ensure that ICANN's model evolves and has the mechanisms to incorporate new stakeholders as needed.

## 1.1.2 Enhance collaboration among community groups.

As the ICANN community addresses more complex issues, seamless cross-community interactions and clear communications are vital. This strategy seeks to enhance collaboration and engagement channels within the ICANN community.

## 1.1.3 Foster an appealing environment for the next generation.

This strategy seeks to improve ICANN's ability to attract new and motivated community members using innovative methods to capture and retain the interest of next-generation volunteers.

## 1.1.4 Develop a new generation of leaders.

This strategy emphasizes succession planning; introducing new perspectives, ideas, and leadership approaches; offering leadership development opportunities; and demonstrating a commitment to the growth of community volunteers.

## 1.1.5 Increase and broaden participation, particularly from underrepresented communities.

By better understanding the changing demographics around the world, ICANN will be better able to encourage greater participation from stakeholders regardless of their region or location.

# 1.1 Ensure Inclusive Stakeholder Representation and Enhance Collaboration *(continued)*

## Progress Indicators

- Delivery of a framework or mechanism to identify and address any gaps in stakeholder representation.
- Satisfaction surveys for ICANN Supporting Organizations (SOs) and Advisory Committees (ACs) indicating positive trends.
- Volunteer retention rates improve.
- Leadership development programs and participation rates are found to be effective.
- Leadership competency assessments and 360-degree feedback ratings show positive trends.
- Participation barriers are identified and addressed.
- Data indicating positive participation trends from underrepresented communities, such as the number of volunteers and frequency and duration of participation.

## Strategic Risks

- Perceptions of exclusivity or insufficient inclusivity in stakeholder representation pose a risk to ICANN's reputation.
- Silos undermine the collective efficacy of multistakeholder collaboration efforts, leading to fragmented initiatives and decreasing the likelihood of achieving meaningful and sustainable results.
- The lack of appeal to younger generations may result in a gradual decline in community membership over time.
- A community predominantly composed of long-standing members may lack diversity in perspectives, experiences, and ideas, and impede creativity and problem-solving capabilities.
- As veteran community members, Board members, and org staff retire or leave ICANN, there is a risk of losing valuable knowledge, expertise, and institutional memory, which can impact the continuity and effectiveness of ICANN.
- Without a pipeline of younger community members, Board members, and org staff actively engaged and prepared to take on leadership roles, there is a risk of leadership gaps and future instability.
- Current community members frequently rotate between positions within SOs and ACs that could hinder new participants from ascending to leadership roles. This may discourage participation, particularly among newer members.
- Failing to adapt to evolving demographics and societal trends risks diminishing relevance within the broader Internet landscape, thereby reducing influence and impact.
- Failure to include stakeholders from underrepresented regions may make ICANN less effective in addressing the needs and concerns of the entire community or those regions.

# 1.2 Enhance the Agility and Effectiveness of Policy and Advice Development

## 1.2.1 Reduce complexity and create incentives to encourage active participation.

This strategy focuses on making the ICANN policy- and advice-development processes less complex, easier to understand, and more relevant to the needs and interests of the global Internet community.

## 1.2.2 Establish a proactive framework to ensure early involvement and avoid unexpected outcomes.

The system of checks and balances among the ICANN community, Board, and org is invaluable. This strategy seeks to improve the process and further clarify roles and responsibilities to ensure that the ICANN community, Board, and org can engage meaningfully in the community's policy- and advice-development processes, as appropriate.

## 1.2.3 Proactively engage with governments, regulators, intergovernmental organizations, and other public policy stakeholders.

Provide timely and accurate information to mitigate risks that threaten the interoperability of a single Internet.

## 1.2.4 Incorporate flexibility and agile methodologies into the policy and advice development and implementation life cycle.

This strategy underscores the importance of ensuring that the full policy life cycle, from scoping and initiation through development, adoption, and implementation, is flexible, adaptable, and agile, to expedite implementation and facilitate more effective outcomes.



# 1.2 Enhance the Agility and Effectiveness of Policy and Advice Development *(continued)*

## Progress Indicators

- The intricacies of policy scope continue to be refined and streamlined.
- Lead time for new volunteers to become actively engaged in tasks shows positive trends.
- The average timeline of each policy development process (PDP) from start to finish shows positive trends.
- Delivery of a mechanism to assess the extent to which policies address the issues identified and achieve their intended objectives.
- Delivery of a mechanism to assess the effectiveness of policy implementation, including the allocation of resources, compliance, and monitoring of outcomes.
- Surveys among the Board, org, and community at appropriate phases of the policy-development life cycle indicate positive trends.

## Strategic Risks

- Policy complexity and prolonged timelines hinder volunteer participation and retention.
- Prolonged PDP timelines impede ICANN's ability to keep pace with external events that may impact its mission.
- Limited or inconsistent participation from the Board and org during a PDP may result in recommendations that require additional or unnecessary work and increase the cost of implementation.
- Successfully adopting agile strategies, especially new working methods, depends on community bandwidth and willingness to adapt.
- Failure to anticipate legislative efforts may force ICANN into a reactive posture.
- National or regional regulations may cause unintended consequences that threaten the interoperability of the DNS.
- Adjustment delays during PDPs and decision-making contribute to doubts about ICANN's multistakeholder model's ability to address critical global issues in a timely manner.

# 1.3 Expand Strategic Alliances to Advocate for the Multistakeholder Model of Internet Governance

## 1.3.1 Demonstrate that ICANN’s multistakeholder model of governance remains the right model to deliver ICANN’s mission.

This strategy reflects the fundamental nature of ICANN’s governance model. It is critical to continue to reaffirm and consistently showcase how it provides the optimal framework to fulfill ICANN’s mission.

## 1.3.2 Strengthen collaborative efforts to promote the multistakeholder model of Internet governance.

Focus on enhancing collaborative initiatives to promote and advance the multistakeholder model of Internet governance.

### Progress Indicators

- Creation of additional documentation showcasing the evolution of ICANN’s multistakeholder model of governance.
- Availability of content to showcase the beneficial outcomes and the value of the ICANN’s multistakeholder model of governance.
- Annual surveys of the perception of ICANN’s governance model indicate positive trends.
- Number of joint projects undertaken and the number of relevant events covering Internet governance issues where ICANN participates.
- ICANN’s financial and other forms of contributions to support the multistakeholder model of Internet governance (including support for the Internet Governance Forum).
- Successful co-promotional activities advocating for the multistakeholder model of Internet governance.

### Strategic Risks

- ICANN’s inability to establish itself as a critical voice in Internet governance may result in increased potential external threats by other stakeholders to the multistakeholder model of Internet governance.
- Lack of understanding of ICANN’s remit may interfere with ICANN’s ability to participate in relevant arenas.
- Stronger control over the Internet by governments may change how the security and stability of the DNS is addressed.

# Strategic Objective 2:

## Enhance Organizational Excellence

Addressing and enhancing organizational excellence are crucial to navigating our rapidly changing world and to ensure long-term sustainability by promoting financial health, adaptability, and resilience, which ultimately enables ICANN to remain relevant and fulfill its mission. Enhancing organizational excellence will help foster a culture of continuous improvement, allowing ICANN to effectively meet evolving staff and community needs, and attract and retain top talent. Additionally, in today's global landscape, organizational excellence requires being ecologically responsible and globally minded. This approach boosts credibility and trust, and ensures compliance with international standards and expectations.

The following strategic goals and associated strategies are designed to achieve this strategic objective:

### 2.1

#### Pursue a Sustainable Future.

2.1.1 Improve institutional agility and adaptability.

2.1.2 Preserve ICANN's financial sustainability.

### 2.2

#### Enhance ICANN's Global Presence and Impact.

2.2.1 Evolve the hybrid workforce model and optimize regional office utilization.

2.2.2 Embed ecological responsibility into ICANN's operations.



# 2.1 Pursue a Sustainable Future

## 2.1.1 Improve institutional agility and adaptability.

Identify and address ways to enhance policy development processes, operations, and governance.

## 2.1.2 Preserve ICANN's financial sustainability.

Re-evaluate ICANN's funding structure to ensure it adapts effectively and responsibly as the domain name industry continues to change.

### Progress Indicators

- Survey results indicating the Board, community, and org's perception of demonstrated agility and adaptability.
- Delivery of mechanisms and processes to evaluate the funding structure and sources, as the unique identifier industry evolves.
- Accuracy and reliability of funding projections.
- Metrics showing responsible management of expenses.
- ICANN maintains that its Reserve Fund minimum target level is equivalent to one year's worth of operating expenses.

### Strategic Risks

- Lack of institutional agility may make ICANN more vulnerable to unexpected events or crises.
- Rigidity impedes decision-making processes, which may cause delays and poor strategic choices that affect ICANN's performance in delivering its mission, leading to reputational damage.
- The cost of implementing the multistakeholder model may become unaffordable.
- If funding projections are not accurate and reliable, the organization may face financial shortfalls or misallocate resources.
- Without metrics demonstrating conservative and responsible management of expenses, the organization risks overspending or the inefficient use of funds.

# 2.2 Enhance ICANN's Global Presence and Impact

## 2.2.1 Evolve the hybrid workforce model and optimize regional office utilization.

Strengthen ICANN's operations by leveraging a hybrid workforce model and maximizing the use of regional offices to meet the needs of the community, Board, and org. Embrace tools that enhance collaboration and employee satisfaction across diverse geographical locations.

## 2.2.2 Embed ecological responsibility into ICANN's operations.

This strategy aims to reduce ICANN's ecological footprint, achieve a balance between multistakeholder effectiveness and ecological impact, and lead by example in the industry. This initiative underscores ICANN's dedication to enhancing its sustainability while continuing to fulfill its mission.

### Progress Indicators

- Employee satisfaction surveys show positive trends.
- Surveys of the Board and community's perception of ICANN org operations show positive trends.
- Metrics tracking regional office usage, such as hosted events at each regional office.
- Measurement of ICANN's ecological footprint and the reduction in its carbon footprint.
- Survey results indicating the Board, community, and org's perception of the success in embedding ecological responsibilities and the perceived impact.

### Strategic Risks

- Failure to evolve the hybrid workforce may lead to dissatisfaction among org employees, loss of vital talent, and reduced productivity.
- Failure to optimize regional office utilization may limit ICANN's ability to establish a strong presence worldwide and cause it to be perceived as U.S.-centric.
- Lack of ecological responsibility may threaten ICANN's reputation.
- Measures taken to enhance ecological responsibility may negatively impact community and organizational processes (such as meeting modalities).

# Strategic Objective 3:

## Collaborate with Relevant Stakeholders to Evolve the Internet's Unique Identifier Systems

The digital landscape is constantly evolving, with new technologies emerging regularly. ICANN, alongside other stakeholders, plays a pivotal role in safeguarding and evolving the functionality and accessibility of the DNS. Therefore, it is critical that ICANN continuously progress its assessment of and responsiveness to technological developments. Through collaborative efforts, ICANN and relevant stakeholders can proactively identify potential opportunities, jointly develop solutions, mitigate risks, and ensure the stability and security of the Internet's unique identifier systems. Furthermore, central to ICANN's vision over the next five years is facilitating digital inclusion, ensuring that the DNS is accessible and beneficial to all.

The following strategic goals and associated strategies are designed to achieve this strategic objective:

### 3.1 Facilitate Digital Inclusion.

- 3.1.1 Promote the advancement of Universal Acceptance and Internationalized Domain Names.
- 3.1.2 Proactively collaborate with all relevant external parties to promote Universal Acceptance.
- 3.1.3 Cultivate consumer choice, competition, inclusivity, and innovation.

### 3.2 Evolve the Assessment of, and Responsiveness to, Technological Developments.

- 3.2.1 Evolve ICANN's understanding of the identifier systems landscape, and adapt as needed.
- 3.2.2 Collaborate with technical community entities, such as the Internet Engineering Task Force, Regional Internet Registries, and root server operators, to understand new technologies.

### 3.3 Deliver and Enhance the IANA Functions to Meet Evolving Community Needs.

- 3.3.1 Continue to reliably deliver the IANA functions.
- 3.3.2 Ensure that the IANA functions are properly resourced.

# 3.1 Facilitate Digital Inclusion

## 3.1.1 Promote the advancement of Universal Acceptance and Internationalized Domain Names.

Highlighting the ICANN org and community's efforts to advance Universal Acceptance (UA) and Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs). This strategy aims to ensure ICANN's systems are UA-ready and sets a precedent, as well as ensuring sufficient representation within ICANN's stakeholder groups to advocate for UA and IDN initiatives.

## 3.1.2 Proactively collaborate with all relevant external parties to promote UA.

Emphasizing collaboration with external parties to advance UA and IDNs, and endeavoring to bridge the digital inclusion gap.

## 3.1.3 Cultivate consumer choice, competition, inclusivity, and innovation.

Ensuring the continuity of the New Generic Top-Level Domain (gTLD) Program, the availability of new gTLDs, and other aspects that aim to create an ecosystem that benefits consumer choice, competition, inclusivity, diversity, and innovation.

### Progress Indicators

- Increase in the number or proportion of ICANN systems demonstrating UA-readiness.
- Growth in the number of ICANN-accredited registrars and registries that are UA-ready.
- Increase in the adoption and standard treatment of IDNs and UA by software vendors.
- Survey results demonstrating increased new gTLD awareness among end users.
- Increase the number of gTLDs in the root.
- Data demonstrating the rise of domain name registrations for new gTLDs.
- Positive financial performance metrics for the New gTLD Program.

### Strategic Risks

- The reputational risk of being unable to make ICANN's systems UA-ready may cause a loss of credibility while promoting UA.
- There's a significant reputational risk for ICANN if IDNs and UA fail to meet Internet users' expectations of proper functionality in their local languages, such as issues with low adoption rates of IDNs and internationalized email addresses.
- The New gTLD Program may not achieve its objectives.
- Technical failure related to expanding the domain name space may affect the stability of the unique identifier systems and underlying infrastructure.
- Root Zone Management System security and stability concerns related to the ongoing delegation of new gTLDs may lead to disruptions in the Internet's unique identifier systems, compromising the reliability and security of global DNS operations.

## 3.2 Evolve the Assessment of, and Responsiveness to, Technological Developments

### 3.2.1 Evolve ICANN's understanding of the identifier systems landscape, and adapt as needed.

Enhancing ICANN's understanding of the identifier systems landscape to inform decision-making and strategic planning is crucial for navigating the evolving digital ecosystem effectively and ensuring alignment with emerging trends and user needs.

### 3.2.2 Collaborate with technical community entities, such as the Internet Engineering Task Force, Regional Internet Registries, and root server operators, to understand new technologies.

Collaborating with the protocols parameters, the numbers community, and the root server operators, supporting their development and evolution to effectively understand and address emerging technologies that may impact the identifier systems.

#### Progress Indicators

- Number of in-depth research, analysis, and assessment reports published on the identifier systems landscape, providing valuable insights for decision-making and planning purposes.
- Implementation and evolution of robust data collection and monitoring mechanisms to track changes and trends in identifier systems usage, adoption, and evolution.
- Survey results indicate that the DNS remains the leading trusted platform for the Internet's naming system.
- Survey results demonstrate enhanced satisfaction with partnerships and collaboration with the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), the numbers community, and root server operators, focusing on knowledge exchange, best practices, and thought leadership.

#### Strategic Risks

- ICANN may be unable to adjust to changes in the identifiers landscape, and domain names may become less relevant.
- Adoption of alternative name resolution methods that bypass the DNS, undermining IANA's role and the global DNS infrastructure that determines the unique global root.
- ICANN may be unable to adjust to market changes, diminishing its relevance and jeopardizing its funding.
- New layers added to the DNS core technology and the growing viability of alternate DNS roots and alternative infrastructures add more complexity to the Internet ecosystem.
- ICANN may miss the opportunity to enable the DNS to coexist or support new technologies and protocols.
- ICANN may be seen as resistant to change and less relevant to technical community participants.

## 3.3 Deliver and Enhance the IANA Functions to Meet Evolving Community Needs

### 3.3.1 Continue to reliably deliver the IANA functions.

Maintaining the consistent and dependable delivery of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions consistent with community service-level agreements are critical to the stability and functionality of the DNS root zone operations. This work relies on conducting continuous-improvement activities to enhance the IANA functions over time.

### 3.3.2 Ensure that the IANA functions are properly resourced.

ICANN prioritizes funding and resourcing for the activities to carry out the IANA functions, including through the funding of its affiliate, Public Technical Identifiers (PTI), which performs the IANA functions on ICANN's behalf through a series of contracts.

#### Progress Indicators

- IANA activities are in alignment with the PTI Strategic Plan for FY26–30.
- IANA function operations are in compliance with service-level agreements.
- Consistent high customer satisfaction.
- IANA functions' operational needs are successfully met.

#### Strategic Risks

- Failure in delivery of the IANA functions may impact global availability of the Internet.
- IANA functions may not be delivered in a manner that keeps pace with the needs of evolving customer requirements.
- Insufficient resourcing of or failure in delivery on committed IANA functions may invite others to seek responsibilities for these core technical functions.



# Strategic Objective 4:

## Strengthen the Stability and Security of the Internet's Unique Identifier Systems

Given the Internet's pivotal role in communication, commerce, and collaboration, strengthening the security of the Internet's identifier systems is paramount in preserving trust in the DNS. ICANN aims to enhance coordination with DNS stakeholders to raise awareness of threats and promote innovative approaches to address challenges effectively. Taking action requires coordinated efforts to identify and mitigate security threats and combat abuse. Promoting global adoption of open Internet standards and increasing security threat awareness among stakeholders are crucial steps toward strengthening the security and stability of Internet infrastructure. It is a collective responsibility for all stakeholders to ensure the Internet's unique identifier systems remain robust.

The following strategic goals and associated strategies are designed to achieve this strategic objective:

### 4.1

#### **Strengthen Partnerships with Relevant Stakeholders to Reinforce the Shared Responsibility of Ensuring Secure and Stable Internet's Unique Identifier Systems.**

- 4.1.1 Continue to provide and participate in trusted forums that convene relevant stakeholders.
- 4.1.2 Identify and mitigate security threats to the Internet's unique identifier systems.
- 4.1.3 Increase ICANN's coordination and collaboration with the numbers community for secure, stable, and resilient numbering and routing systems.

### 4.2

#### **Strengthen DNS Root Server System.**

- 4.2.1 Continue to enhance the governance and technical evolution of DNS root server operations and services.
- 4.2.2 Increase the robustness of the root zone generation, distribution services, and processes.
- 4.2.3 Support coordinated plans to address DNS Root Server System attacks.

# 4.1 Strengthen Partnerships with Relevant Stakeholders to Reinforce the Shared Responsibility of Ensuring Secure and Stable Internet's Unique Identifier Systems

## 4.1.1 Continue to provide and participate in trusted forums that convene relevant stakeholders.

Reputable and trusted forums, such as ICANN's DNS Symposium, ICANN's regional DNS Forums, and IETF events serve as platforms for collaboration, information exchange, and decision-making on matters relevant to the DNS. By continuing to organize and actively participate in these forums, ICANN can stay informed, share insights, build relationships, and contribute to collective efforts aimed at addressing the identifier systems security and stability challenges.

## 4.1.2 Identify and mitigate security threats to the Internet's unique identifier systems.

Proactively identify potential security risks that could compromise the Internet's unique identifier systems and take measures to address or minimize these threats.

## 4.1.3 Increase ICANN's coordination and collaboration with the numbers community for secure, stable, and resilient numbering and routing systems.

By fostering stronger partnerships with key stakeholders in the numbers community, ICANN can ensure that these critical systems remain robust, reliable, and capable of supporting the ever-evolving demands of the Internet and its security. This strategy underscores ICANN's commitment to maintaining an interoperable Internet infrastructure.

### Progress Indicators

- Survey results illustrate that ICANN maintains its reputation as the source of unbiased, reliable, and factual information on the Internet's unique identifier systems security and stability.
- Increased adoption of DNS operation best practices by DNS infrastructure operators.
- Refine and expand the metrics and metadata to provide the ICANN community with actionable insights that drive strategic, data-informed decision-making.
- Number of joint projects undertaken and the number of relevant events covering numbering and routing systems where ICANN participated.

### Strategic Risks

- ICANN's inability to mitigate security threats may undermine confidence in the DNS.
- Domain name abuse continues to grow.
- ICANN's inability to mitigate security threats on the numbers side of the unique identifier systems may impact its ability to fulfill its mission and erode confidence in multistakeholder models across the Internet ecosystem.

## 4.2 Strengthen DNS Root Server System

### 4.2.1 Continue to enhance the governance and technical evolution of DNS root server operations and services.

Continue to participate in community-driven efforts to evolve governance of the Root Server System (RSS), such as the RSS Governance Working Group. Continue to collaborate with the other root server operators on operational topics. Support the Root Zone Evolution Review Committee.

### 4.2.2 Increase the robustness of the root zone generation, distribution services, and processes.

Research and implement improvements to the process of generating and distributing the root zone, including additional distribution mechanisms.

### 4.2.3 Support coordinated plans to address DNS Root Server System attacks.

Emphasizing the support for the continuous improvement of the root server emergency coordination plan to counter or respond to attacks targeting the RSS, ensuring it remains at the highest level of effectiveness.

### Progress Indicators

- Delivery of the RSS governance model recommendations.
- Adoption of the RSS governance model recommendations in support of ICANN's mission.
- Implementation of the RSS governance model as adopted.
- Redundancy in the Root Zone Management System.
- Increased availability of root zone data, enabling greater decentralization and distribution of the DNS root service.
- Continue to coordinate with other root server operators to conduct regular testing and review of the root server emergency coordination plan, with documented outcomes, including corrective measures when necessary.

### Strategic Risks

- The lack of an accountable governance structure may impact DNS root service delivery and reduce trust in the root server operators and the DNS more broadly.
- The lack of improved root zone distribution services may cause the existing root zone distribution mechanisms to become overloaded.

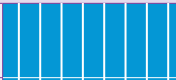










## Appendix A:

# Phasing of the Strategies



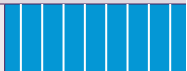

Phasing is a structured approach to guide the planning and prioritization of activities, categorized by the level of attention and resources required for each strategy. This appendix provides an overview of the strategic objectives, strategic goals, strategies and their associated phasing. This is intended to allow readers to quickly understand the level of attention required to execute the strategy, and help readers grasp the priority at a glance.

## Strategic Objective 1:

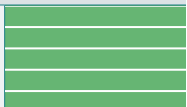

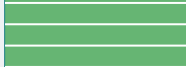




### Evolve and Promote ICANN’s Multistakeholder Model to Sustain Its Inclusive Approach to Internet Governance

STRATEGIC GOAL / STRATEGIES	PHASING
<b>1.1 Ensure Inclusive Stakeholder Representation and Enhance Collaboration.</b>	
1.1.1 Integrate new stakeholders into ICANN community groups as needed.	
1.1.2 Enhance collaboration among community groups.	
1.1.3 Foster an appealing environment for the next generation.	
1.1.4 Develop a new generation of leaders.	
1.1.5 Increase and broaden participation, particularly from underrepresented communities.	
<b>1.2 Enhance the Agility and Effectiveness of Policy and Advice Development.</b>	
1.2.1 Reduce complexity and create incentives to encourage active participation.	
1.2.2 Establish a proactive framework to ensure early involvement and avoid unexpected outcomes.	
1.2.3 Proactively engage with governments, regulators, intergovernmental organizations, and other public policy stakeholders.	
1.2.4 Incorporate flexibility and agile methodologies into the policy and advice development and implementation life cycle.	
<b>1.3 Expand Strategic Alliances to Advocate for the Multistakeholder Model of Internet Governance.</b>	
1.3.1 Demonstrate that ICANN’s multistakeholder model of governance remains the right model for delivering ICANN’s mission.	
1.3.2 Strengthen collaborative efforts to promote the multistakeholder model of Internet governance.	

## Strategic Objective 2: Enhance Organizational Excellence

STRATEGIC GOAL / STRATEGIES	PHASING
<b>2.1 Pursue a Sustainable Future.</b>	
2.1.1 Improve institutional agility and adaptability.	
2.1.2 Preserve ICANN's financial sustainability.	
<b>2.2 Enhance ICANN's Global Presence and Impact.</b>	
2.2.1 Evolve the hybrid workforce model and optimize regional office utilization.	
2.2.2 Embed ecological responsibility into ICANN's operations.	

## Strategic Objective 3: Collaborate with Relevant Stakeholders to Evolve the Internet's Unique Identifier Systems

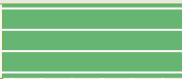

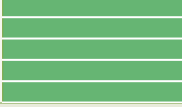



STRATEGIC GOAL / STRATEGIES	PHASING
<b>3.1 Facilitate Digital Inclusion.</b>	
3.1.1 Promote the advancement of Universal Acceptance and Internationalized Domain Names.	
3.1.2 Proactively collaborate with all relevant external parties to promote Universal Acceptance.	
3.1.3 Cultivate consumer choice, competition, inclusivity, and innovation.	
<b>3.2 Evolve the Assessment of, and Responsiveness to, Technological Developments.</b>	
3.2.1 Evolve ICANN's understanding of the identifier systems landscape, and adapt as needed.	
3.2.2 Collaborate with technical community entities, such as the Internet Engineering Task Force, Regional Internet Registries, and root server operators, to understand new technologies.	
<b>3.3 Deliver and Enhance the IANA Functions to Meet Evolving Community Needs.</b>	
3.3.1 Continue to reliably deliver the IANA functions.	
3.3.2 Ensure that the IANA functions are properly resourced.	

 ONGOING COMMITMENT,  
NO CHANGE

 INCREMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS,  
MODERATE ATTENTION

 STRATEGIC INTENSITY,  
HEIGHTENED ATTENTION

## Strategic Objective 4: Strengthen the Stability and Security of the Internet’s Unique Identifier Systems

STRATEGIC GOAL / STRATEGIES	PHASING
<b>4.1 Strengthen Partnership with Relevant Stakeholders to Reinforce the Shared Responsibility of Ensuring a Secure and Stable Internet’s Unique Identifier Systems.</b>	
4.1.1 Continue to provide and participate in trusted forums that convene relevant stakeholders.	
4.1.2 Identify and mitigate security threats to the Internet’s unique identifier systems.	
4.1.3 Increase ICANN’s coordination and collaboration with the numbers community for secure, stable, and resilient numbering and routing systems.	
<b>4.2 Strengthen DNS Root Server System.</b>	
4.2.1 Continue to enhance the governance and technical evolution of DNS root server operations and services.	
4.2.2 Increase the robustness of the root zone generation, distribution services, and processes.	
4.2.3 Support coordinated plans to address DNS Root Server System attacks.	

## Appendix B:

# Strategic Planning Process

