Plan for Organization of ICANN Staff

22 May 2003

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To the ICANN Community:

Since I became ICANN's President in March, ICANN has been undertaking an analysis of the best staff structure to achieve its mission while further improving responsiveness to stakeholders. This analysis has benefited greatly from contributions from many of you. The following paper describes the resulting future structure of ICANN's staff which we plan to implement over the next four to six months.

Paul D. Twomey
President

Organization of ICANN's Office

Building on successes and lessons learned since its founding, ICANN is embarking on the next phase of its maturation as an organization. From its beginnings with just two people, ICANN's office has grown to more than twenty employees. Increasing demand for and complexity of the work that the organization undertakes to support the ICANN community and to implement the mandate of the ICANN reforms means that further growth is necessary in the short term. As with any organization, growth brings additional management challenges. It is therefore appropriate that a key part of this next stage of evolution will be advances to the organizational structure. The new organizational structure is part of the first stage of a review of the operations of ICANN with a view to further improving responsiveness to stakeholders and streamlining management processes.
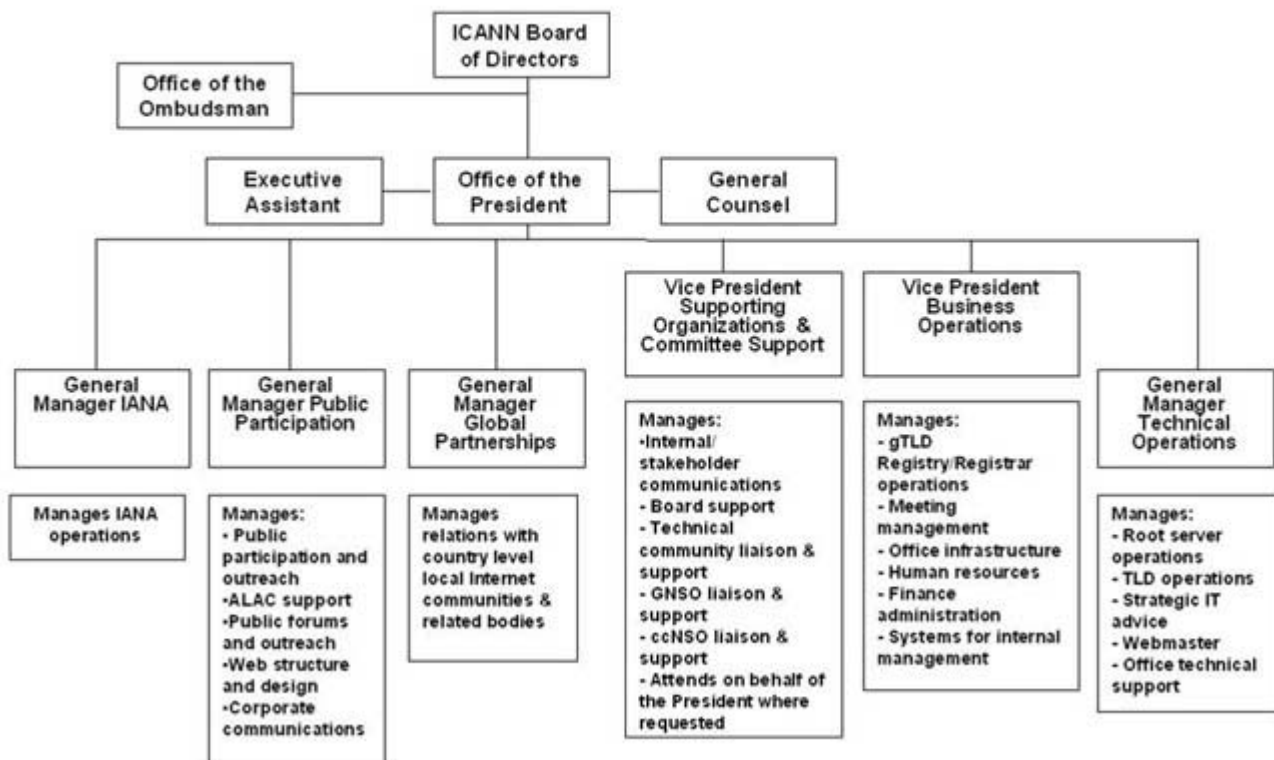
An important contribution to the new organizational structure is a management philosophy that the ICANN community, as represented by the Supporting Organizations, Advisory Committees and the Board, makes policy; the staff does not make policy. The role of the ICANN staff is to execute the settled policy. Of course, in the carrying out of the everyday tasks of implementation, the staff will identify policy issues. But the new organizational structure is, in part, directed to ensuring that such policy issues are effectively passed back to the ICANN community's policy development processes for resolution.

In arriving at the new organizational structure, a careful analysis has been undertaken of the tasks and functions that the organization currently performs. Consideration has also been given to the way that these functions may need to grow or change in the future. Furthermore, feedback has been obtained from a wide range of stakeholders both in terms of current work and future needs. The proposed structure has been designed to take ICANN into the future in a way that allows the organization to continue to achieve its mission, improve its performance, and meet stakeholder needs. These include becoming more operationally efficient, providing better support for new issues and policies to be discussed by the ICANN community, and continuing to partner with local internet communities and related bodies in promoting effective local administration of key technical aspects of the Internet.

The key elements of the new structure are: a new management team with seven direct reports to the president (two Vice Presidents, four General Managers and General Counsel); the clear delineation of internal and external operations; the recognition of important relationships that the ICANN office has with the community; and clear lines of accountability for key operational and strategic functions.

(Click here for full chart.)

ICANN ORGANIZATION CHART

The two Vice Presidents in the new structure will be the Vice President Supporting Organization & Committee Support and the Vice President Business Operations.

The creation of the Vice President Supporting Organization & Committee Support recognizes the importance of the technical community and other supporting groups to ICANN. The Vice President will provide high-level oversight of the liaison and staff support between the various ICANN Supporting Organizations (and their constituencies), the advisory committees and the technical community. The role will ensure that appropriate support is provided for these organizations and committees. There is also an important communication aspect to this role. The Vice President will be tasked with ensuring that issues, processes and messages are being regularly and smoothly communicated among the various Supporting Organizations and Committees of the ICANN policy forum, including the President and Board. This is consistent with the intent of the ICANN evolution and reform process to overcome "silos" and to promote consultative, bottom-up policy development.

The Vice President Business Operations will be accountable for all ICANN support functions other than legal and IT. It will absorb the finance role and will therefore have responsibility for controlling and reporting on the organization's finances, including the development and application of appropriate strategies in matters ranging from taxation to cash management. The Vice President Business Operations will also design and provide metrics to monitor and assess the productivity of ICANN operations, and as such will have a key role in the improving the organization's planning capability and delivery standards. Another part of the role will be oversight of the gTLD Registry and Registrar operations, as well as other operational areas of the organization such as meeting management and office infrastructure. To optimize the performance of the organization as a whole, the Vice President will work with other members of the management team to coordinate resources across the various functions to ensure progress is made on key objectives. As part of this, the Vice President will be accountable for improving the organization's human resource management. This is clearly a critical task as the organization enters the next phase of its development.

There are four General Manager roles in the new structure: GM IANA, GM Public Participation & Communications, GM Global Partnerships and GM Technical Operations.

The appointment of a GM IANA is recognition of the importance of IANA to the internet community. Oversight of IANA has been assigned to a dedicated general manager to increase focus on meeting the requirements of key stakeholders. The GM IANA will manage the relationships and communication between IANA and the relevant communities, as well as taking accountability for the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the IANA function.

The GM of Public Participation & Communications is a position called for under the new ICANN bylaws. It will be accountable for the relationship with another key stakeholder group, the wider Internet user community. It will work closely with the At Large Advisory Committee. This role will assist in communications with public stakeholders external to ICANN, including facilitation and coordination of public forums and outreach for end users. Through this process ICANN will be able to obtain community views on a variety of areas of concern and encourage the discussion of critical issues within the broader Internet community.

The GM Global Partnerships will be responsible for maintaining the important relationships that ICANN has with country level local Internet communities and related bodies. The GM will ensure that ICANN facilitates an outreach to local Internet communities, especially in the developing world, to promote effective local administration of key technical aspects of the Internet.

The GM Technical Operations will be accountable for all ICANN technology functions. Externally, this will involve engagement of the Internet technical community from a technical and networking perspective. Within ICANN, the GM will provide strategic IT support and research for use within the organization as well as managing IT infrastructure and day-to-day support.

In addition to the Vice Presidents and General Manager roles, the General Counsel remains an important member of the management team. This recognizes the importance and complexities of legal relationships between ICANN and its stakeholders. The General Counsel will continue to support the President and the Board in understanding, advancing and protecting the organization in matters of law.

This structure is the goal towards which the President will be working over the next four to six months. Recruitment is already underway for the Vice President Business Operations and General Counsel. Other positions will be phased in after the Montreal meeting in a way allows the organization to grow and change in a stable manner.

In addition to these changes to the management team, the organization is undertaking an analysis of the work performed at other levels. This analysis and the planning that will flow from it aim to ensure that as the organization grows, alignment is maintained with the direction set by the changes at the top level.

It is recognized that the success of this transition is dependent on good planning, strong commitment and regular communication. All of these elements have been catered for in the organization's restructuring program.

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President and CEO
22 May 2003

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Page Updated 23-May-2003