

## 2021 ICANN Org Contracted Parties Survey Overview of Results

### Background

On 1 November 2021, ICANN organization's Global Domains and Strategy (GDS) function commissioned a survey of the generic top-level domain (gTLD) registry operators and registrars (contracted parties) using an independent firm, eBallot.

GDS supports ICANN's contracted parties in fulfilling their contractual obligations with ICANN org for the benefit of the Internet community. GDS also leads the implementation of Consensus Policy, manages the day-to-day operations of services with contracted parties and the technical aspects of ICANN org systems used by these contracted parties.

The survey results help GDS recognize and improve the quality of its services to contracted parties, and align GDS' activities to better serve the DNS ecosystem.

### Methodology and Survey Structure

Survey invitations were sent to 949 contracted parties, with a response period from 1 to 23 November 2021. A total of 167 respondents provided their responses, which is a significant increase from the 2020 survey with 72 responses.

Most of the questions were in the 5-point scale format with a follow-up question. The non-mandatory follow-up question provided for an open-ended response to achieve a more specific understanding of the respondent's suggestions. A direct year-over-year comparison to previous results is not possible due to differing survey questions in 2021.

Respondents for the survey self-identified as 65 percent representing a registrar, 24 percent as representing a registry operator, and 11 percent as representing a registrar and registry operator.

The respondents indicated that their organizations do business in the following regions:

Regions Served	* Response Rate
Europe	38 percent
Asia/Australia/Pacific	35 percent
North America	19 percent
Africa	4 percent
Latin America and the Caribbean	4 percent

*\* Respondent could select more than one region*

Respondents were asked about their organization's involvement in the stakeholder groups and respondents identified their affiliation with the Registrar Stakeholder Group (48 percent), the Registries Stakeholder Group (29 percent), Brand Registry Group (13 percent), and geoTLD.group (10 percent), while 47 percent of respondents did not participate in any of the groups listed. Forty-seven percent is a significant point as it shows the survey captured the sentiments and opinions of contracted parties not represented elsewhere.

## Findings

The 2021 Contracted Parties Survey included a range of questions designed to understand contracted parties' opinions and experience toward a variety of areas where they interact with GDS on a regular basis.

The 2021 Contracted Parties Survey focused on 5 areas of GDS' performance:

1. Service improvements
2. Communication of useful information
3. Systems and tools
4. Support for mitigating DNS security threats
5. Knowledge, skills and capabilities

Overall, respondents indicated that they were generally satisfied with GDS' performance. Seventy-six percent of the respondents were confident that GDS has the knowledge, skills, and capabilities to support the ICANN community. They also offered some useful suggestions for improvement. The respondents not affiliated with a stakeholder group disproportionately rated "strongly agree" and "very satisfied" in the survey.

In terms of services, the vast majority of respondents were neutral or agreed that GDS has improved the services ICANN org provides to contracted parties to make contractual changes. GDS also received several written responses about strengthening simplicity and efficiency. This has been a consistent response in the past surveys as well. GDS could improve on having a heightened sensitivity to the business needs of contracted parties. On an ongoing basis, GDS is conducting reviews of the services and publicly available materials to offer better guidance and more predictability to contracted parties.

Another area of improvement suggested by the respondents is the quality of communication in terms of greater effectiveness and proactiveness. GDS also noted that some respondents do not know what GDS does.

The respondents have provided several helpful suggestions on how GDS can better support contracted parties in their efforts to combat Domain Name System (DNS) security threats. ICANN org takes an active role in supporting the community's discussion about how best to address DNS security threats. Its [DNS Security Mitigation Program webpage](#) is a centralized place to find DNS security threats related information. While ICANN org continues to develop tools such as Domain Abuse Activity Reporting (DAAR) to help understanding of the prevalence of DNS security threats, GDS could also do more targeted promotion of the tools and resources to contracted parties.

One of the ways GDS will use the survey findings is to evaluate whether the diverse suggestions are consistent with ICANN org's mission, remit, and objectives, and if so, whether they are both actionable and feasible. GDS will then develop a plan based on recommendations from the contracted parties and internal assessments of how to address key feedback from the survey. GDS will also collaborate with other functions within ICANN org as well as the Registrar Stakeholder Group, Registries Stakeholder Group, and its associated groups (the Brand Registry Group, geoTLD.group) in accomplishing some of the identified actions.

The contracted parties survey is one way for GDS to understand areas of improvement when working with contracted parties, and GDS welcomes the feedback and suggestions to improve. GDS values the inputs and sincerely thanks those who responded to the survey.