

ICANN BOARD PAPER NO. 2013.11.21.1h

TITLE: **Digital Platform Contract**

PROPOSED ACTION: **Board Approval**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

New digital tools are necessary to broaden the reach, diversity, and number of participants joining and engaging with the ICANN community and ICANN's policy development process. New digital tools are also necessary to an easier access to information by all ICANN participants. To offer these new tools, ICANN is engaged in a project with Neo Innovations, Inc. to enhance ICANN's web platform and redesign our web presence using best practices and standards as well as the new technologies available to us. The outcome of this project will be a new web presence that enables innovative engagement capabilities and addresses long-standing issues of accessibility and information relevance. The current estimate of total costs for this project is not to exceed \$950k. Neither ICANN staff nor members of the ICANN Board have a financial interest in this contract.

BOARD FINANCE COMMITTEE (BFC) RECOMMENDATION:

The BFC recommends that the Board consider the below resolution in light of the BFC's determination that the costs of this item are reasonable and within budget.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

Whereas, ICANN recognizes the need to broaden the reach, diversity, and number of participants joining and engaging with the ICANN community and in ICANN's policy development process.

Whereas, ICANN recognizes the need for easier access to information by all ICANN participants.

Whereas, ICANN is engaged in a project to enhance its web platform and redesign its web presence using best practices and standards as well as new technologies available.

Whereas, the ICANNlabs initiative has produced significant learning and potential solution ideas.

Whereas, the staff has used this experience to layout the requirements for the development of a new digital platform to allow better engagement of current and future users, and is now ready to launch the project.

Whereas, although all of the activities involved in this project fall squarely within the purview of ICANN management, since the investment will be more than \$500,000, the Board is required to authorize the funding of this project.

Resolved (2013.11.21.xx), the Board authorizes the President and CEO, or his designee(s), to take all actions necessary to contract with NEO Innovations, Inc. to facilitate the development of the new digital platform and the ICANN.org website update, and to make all disbursements called for under that contract in an amount not to exceed *[amount redacted for negotiation purposes]*.

PROPOSED RATIONALE:

ICANN understands that in order to fulfill its mission, it must expand the depth and breadth of its community and increase engagement.

That means better engaging with existing participants and newcomers to the organization, and building tools that effectively onboard all the groups including new group of community members. The tools matter, but more importantly, the way we build these tools. It is important to collaborate with our target users to gain a deeper understanding of the problems that we are trying to solve. That way, ICANN is efficient in our approach to increasing engagement and building things that newcomers and actual users will actually use. In this spirit, ICANN has run several experiments over the last few months (that have been written about on [ICANN Labs](#)) and spoken to a broad spectrum of the ICANN community.

The early work centered on the following themes: [communication](#), [education](#), [conversation](#) and [discovery](#). Essentially, how newcomers to ICANN can learn more about the organization's work, process, and communities; how they can contribute; and how they can stay engaged over time.

We have shared, [in blog posts](#) and on [Twitter](#), what we've learned in meetings, through the [Digital Engagement Advisory Board](#). We are now applying what we have learned from this testing toward the development of a new [ICANN.org](#) website.

Continuing this process and theme of community involvement in the project to ensure that we build the right solutions, ICANN intends to launch a public beta of a re-designed [ICANN.org](#) website. Ultimately, the re-design will focus on software and design solutions, but also on process. And the process, which we have used and will continue to use, relies on complete community involvement and thorough testing of all features.

Beyond these broad strategic goals noted above, ICANN also knows that it is important to continue to update the [ICANN.org](#) technology and to enhance the design of the website. The last update to the website consisted mainly in layout changes, restructuring contents display and some technical updates, and was conducted over two years ago, with an approximate cost of \$300,000. We are committed to improving our ability to publish information and content, and build applications that help facilitate complex editorial and policy workflows -- all critical to the entire community's operations. This core investment of building new tools under which the ICANN.org website may operate lays out the foundation and infrastructure for a more extensible technology platform to help ICANN achieve its future organizational goals.

While all of these activities fall squarely within the purview of ICANN management, since the investment will be more than \$500,000, the Board is required to authorize management to undertake this financial obligation. This project shall not exceed a total amount of *[amount redacted for negotiation purposes]*.

We note that given the value of this project, absent an exception, Section 3.2 of ICANN's Procurement Guidelines would require a broad solicitation through a public Request for Proposal (see <http://www.icann.org/en/about/financials/procurement-guidelines-21feb10-en.pdf>.) However, section 3.3 of the Procurement Guidelines provide for exceptions to this requirement when appropriate. At least two of those exceptions apply in this case and are the reasons why ICANN chose not to issue a broad solicitation. Those reasons include: (i) "[w]hen there is a natural continuation of

previous work carried out by the vendor or service provider, and in which competitive bidding would not improve value to ICANN;” and (ii) “[w]hen the incumbent provider demonstrates a clear historic pattern of charging reasonable prices and providing consistently good quality service.” The selected vendor satisfies both of these criteria. Further, neither ICANN staff nor members of the ICANN Board have a financial interest in this contract. This action will have a financial impact on the organization, but this impact was budgeted for and anticipated to occur in FY14. This action will not have an impact on the security, stability or resiliency of the domain name system.

This is an Organizational Administrative Function that does not require public comment.

Submitted By:	Xavier Calvez, Chief Financial Officer
Date Noted:	21 November 2013
Email:	xavier.calvez@icann.org