

EVOLVING ICANN'S MULTISTAKEHOLDER MODEL
ICANN STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2025
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #2 – GOVERNANCE

FINAL ISSUES LIST
20 June 2019

This final Issues List is based on ICANN community inputs and comments. Inputs were received at ICANN63, ICANN64, through two webinars on 14 and 15 May 2019, respectively and through a public comment proceeding that was open from 20 April to 13 June 2019.

The inputs and comments helped define issues that are hampering the more effective and efficient functioning of ICANN's multistakeholder model (MSM). The issues describe an aspect of ICANN's culture, work processes or working methods that needs to be addressed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of ICANN's MSM.

What follows is the list of issues with community input and comments in quotes. Paraphrasing of community inputs and comments or questions raised by community input appear without quotes.

1. Prioritization of the Work

Who sets ICANN's priorities?

"Without prioritization, ICANN Org and the ICANN community will continue to try to do everything all at once, each valued with the same sense of urgency. This is not sustainable."

2. Precision in scoping the work

"[W]hen the scope of a project is too unwieldy, then the Work Processes become ineffective. This leads to problems around Timing of Decision-Making and Volunteer Burnout, which are consequences or symptoms, rather than independent issues."

"Poor scoping causes unreasonable drifting of issues...and endless discussions."

3. Costs

Need more transparency around the costs of policy-making and work of the community and ICANN org.

“The community does not understand the cost dimension of policy work. This is of concern.”

“Community teams are not going to know going in what the cost is. So to the extent that the cost of implementation is an important consideration, and it is, we can’t know that before the recommendations come over to you (the Board).”

4. Representativeness + Inclusiveness

Can participation in a process be representative and inclusive at the same time?

“One of the challenges with the MSM is that many equate inclusivity to mean that everyone can have a seat at the table on any given issue. Representativeness and Inclusivity have emerged as a false dichotomy.”

Inclusiveness should facilitate effective participation.

“Participation of new community members requires capacity-development measures that can empower new participants and participants from underrepresented regions and groups. This also implies that there is an effective diversity and rotation in key roles, otherwise newcomers can be crowded out by long standing community members.”

5. Consensus

“The biggest issue is the lack of incentives for stakeholders to compromise.”

“How do you get diverse groups of people, organizations, and governments to have the appropriate incentives as well as the authority to come to a consensus on highly contentious and complex issues which impact individual freedoms, commerce, political climates and organizational effectiveness on a global level?”

“How one establishes ‘consensus, as well as what definitions are to be used in the declaration(s) of any ‘degree’ of consensus needs to be clearly articulated, agreed upon and established with all participants in such processes.”

6. Terms

Community input informed the following questions:

Should there be term limits on participation in the ICANN Board or working groups?

Would term limits facilitate participation by new comers or other capable volunteers?

7. Recruitment + Demographics

“We are not bringing enough people in.”

“Many of the current volunteers have been devoting their time and hard work for a very long time, and regardless of the amazing results they are achieving, we can’t expect them to be here forever. It is very important to show a clear path for new participants to get engaged in the work of the different ICANN constituencies.”

“We need to recognise that there is often very different demographic in and between various parts of the ICANN Community as well as aspects of demography worthy of analysis ICANN wide.”

“Engagement programs such as the Fellowship...has been limited in its effectiveness” for certain stakeholders

8. Complexity

“ICANN today is a remarkably open and transparent organization that produces and publishes massive amounts of information about all aspects of its activities. But paradoxically, the sheer volume of information has turned into a problem for many stakeholders... And the more complex the substance matter in their details, the greater effort is needed to present relevant issues – in an understandable form.”

“On numerous occasions, newcomers are challenged to get involved by the complexity of the topics and the excessive use of acronyms. This has been an everlasting comment and is again expressed as a public comment made by newcomers at recent ICANN meetings.”

“Another important consideration to meaningful stakeholder participation - potentially adding another layer of complexity - is language. Imagine facing the wide array of ICANN matters and issues when English is your second or your third language.”

9. Efficient Use of Resources

“The MSM has difficulty producing timely results and outcomes because the community does not follow a disciplined approach in deciding on the types of work it takes on, how that work is scoped, and how it gets executed.”

“Just say...measure of our success is whether we get things done, and a lot of things will follow from that.”

10. Culture + Trust + Silos

Our organizational culture is reactive.

“There is a distinct ICANN culture or the DNS culture. ICANN participants are participants with a sense of commitment and belonging...”

“A lack of trust within the community makes it difficult to step out of silos and makes everyone feel the need to be part of everything.”

“Power inequities are incompatible with a decision-making process that depends on consensus building and widespread trust.”

“Participants of one AC / SO tend to group together and work in isolation to arrive at their positions and advance them, which limits the goodness of the ICANN culture and the effectiveness of the multistakeholder process.”

11. Roles and Responsibilities + Holistic View of ICANN

Community input and comments suggest that there is not a clear, shared understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of the community, org, and Board.

Examples of views and perceptions:

“Who should be responsible for changing the way the ICANN community approaches its work? Who is in charge of scoping and prioritizing individual work efforts?”

“It is incumbent upon community leaders to take on changing the way ICANN community approaches its work, but currently there is a lack of structure for leaders to work together across the community.”

“The Empowered Community’s role seems to have been diminishing due to non-utilization.”

“[T]he Board [should] take a more proactive role when an issue has (already) been thoroughly discussed within the community. This means that the Board also consider more actively engaging in facilitating policy development, including its finalization considering all inputs from all SO/ACs, without just taking a procedural role and remanding issues to the community in case of conflict. This could assist in mediating and resolving differences of views and/or give all parties an incentive to actively participate in the process before it comes before the Board.”

“The role of ICANN org under the ICANN Board should not be seen to interfere or suppress the GAC role.”

“We talk about reviewing the organization but there is no place where we have a holistic view of the organization, where we can have a global view.”

Other issues that are not part of the final Issues List

Other issues were raised through community input and comment. The purpose of developing the Issues List was to identify issues that were causing ineffectiveness and/or inefficiency in the ICANN MSM. The community was invited to describe the nature of the issue and how it caused ineffectiveness and inefficiencies. The Issues List was also developed respecting other, ongoing work and did not seek to unnecessarily duplicate work that is be addressed in other work streams (e.g. ATRT3, PDP3.0, WS2, streamlining organizational reviews, or other work). The following are not on the final Issues List and explanation is provided:

Timing of decision-making: Our processes take too long – descriptive of a “symptom” that reflects ineffectiveness and inefficiency in ICANN’s MSM processes. A number of specific process steps have been identified on the final Issues List that, if addressed, should positively impact the timing of decision-making and the length of processes.

Volunteer Burnout – descriptive of a “symptom” that reflects ineffectiveness and inefficiency in ICANN’s MSM processes. A number of specific process steps and other issues have been identified on the final Issues List that, if addressed, should positively impact and reduce volunteer burnout.

Accountability – already being addresses in other work streams. Accountability will be relevant to the development of solutions for issues on the final issues list and need not be a stand-alone issue that creates unnecessary duplicative work.

Transparency - already being addresses in other work streams. Transparency will be relevant to the development of solutions for issues on the final issues list and need not be a stand-alone issue that created unnecessary duplicative work.

Work Processes – descriptive of ICANN’s overall work processes. A number of specific process steps have been identified on the final Issues List that, if addressed, should positively impact ICANN’s overall work processes.

Next steps in the Evolving ICANN’s MSM

The issues in the final Issues List will be mapped to a Work Plan document. The Work Plan will be developed through conversation and engagement with the ICANN community and will become part of ICANN’s Five-Year Operating Plan supporting ICANN’s Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2021 – 2025. The Work Plan will assign owners (e.g. ICANN Community, Org and/or Board) to the issues in the final Issues List. Owners will then identify a date within the timeframe of the Strategic Plan, which covers ICANN’s fiscal years of 2021 – 2025, during which they will deliver a proposed solution or approach to an issue that is hampering the more effective and efficient working of ICANN’s MSM. Owners will also identify the resources they will need in order to deliver a solution or approach to an issue. These inputs will create a Work Plan that can be “costed” and become part of the Five-Year Operating Plan. A session will be held on Tuesday, 25 June 2019 at ICANN65, to identify issue owners and begin completing the Work Plan.