

12 May 2026

ICANN BOARD SUBMISSION No. 2026.06.07.1a

TITLE: Singapore Office Lease Renewal

PROPOSED ACTION: For Board Consideration and Approval

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Confidential Negotiation Information

THE BOARD FINANCE COMMITTEE (BFC) RECOMMENDATIONS:

The BFC recommends that the Board authorizes the President and CEO, or his designee(s), to enter into, and make disbursements in furtherance of, a Confidential Negotiation Information lease effective October 2026 for the Singapore office with Confidential Negotiation Information

PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

Whereas, ICANN's Singapore office lease is expiring in September 2026;

Whereas, ICANN staff has evaluated the options in the Singapore market and recommends Confidential Negotiation Information entering into a new Confidential Negotiation lease.

Whereas, the Board Finance Committee has reviewed the financial implication of the Confidential Negotiation Information lease.

12 May 2026

Whereas, the Board Finance Committee has recommended that the Board pass the below resolution.

Resolved (2026.06.07.xx) the Board authorizes the President and CEO, or his designee(s), to enter into, and make disbursements in furtherance of, a new lease effective October 2026 for the Singapore office with

Resolved (2026.06.07.xx), specific items within this resolution shall remain confidential for negotiation purposes pursuant to Article 3, section 3.5(b) of the ICANN Bylaws until the President and CEO determines that the confidential information may be released.

PROPOSED RATIONALE:

ICANN has occupied
Contact Information Redacted
Confidential Negotiation Information

Confidential Negotiation Information
That lease is expiring in September 2026. After
collaborating with a local broker, surveying other properties, and negotiating rental rates, ICANN staff recommended
Confidential Negotiation Information
Confidential Negotiation Information
Confidential Negotiation Information

Privileged and Confidential

The size of the space is sufficient because there are no plans to materially increase headcount at the Singapore office and it fully supports hybrid working needs. After a
Confidential Negotiation Information
, ICANN staff recommended
Confidential Negotiation Information
achieve favorable rental terms, for the Singapore staff as well as to maintain flexibility to support future hybrid working needs. Over the past year, ICANN staff engaged a local broker and evaluated multiple alternative office configurations and locations, including reduced-footprint and relocation options, determined the proposed lease provided the most cost-effective and operationally suitable outcome. Rental costs at comparable properties are substantially above those reflected in the new lease
Confidential Negotiation Information

12 May 2026

Confidential Negotiation Information

This action is within ICANN's Mission and is in the public interest as it is important to ensure that, in carrying out its Mission, ICANN utilizes available funding in the most effective and efficient manner to maintain an office in Singapore and ICANN presence in the APAC region, including the ability to host meetings and collaborate with local stakeholders and community members.

This decision will have a fiscal impact, which will be accounted for in the FY27 and future ICANN budgets.

There is no anticipated impact to the security, stability, and resiliency of the domain name system as a result of this action.

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

Submitted by: Simon Garside
Position: Vice President, Security Operations and Interim Head
of Administrative Services
Date Noted: 12 May 2026
Email: simon.garside@icann.org

ICANN BOARD PAPER NO. 2026.06.07.1b

TITLE: ICANN Ombuds Office Framework and Process

PROPOSED ACTION: For Board Consideration and Approval

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Ombuds is seeking Board approval of the Office of Ombuds Framework and Process document (Framework and Process). The Framework and Process describes the Ombuds Office scope, responsibilities, processes, and timescales for conflict resolution, unfairness complaints, and harassment complaints. It updates the 2009 operative Ombuds Framework and aims to help all participants in a given Ombuds matter to understand the role undertaken by the Ombuds in that matter, as well as what those participants can expect and what is expected of them.

With the Board's approval, robust, consistent and accessible Ombuds processes and standards can be shared with the community – the Ombuds will publish the Framework and Process on the Ombuds Office webpages together with plain-language summaries of the process for handling complaints and conflict resolution.

OMBUDS RECOMMENDATION:

The Ombuds recommends that the Board approve the new ICANN Ombuds Office Framework and Process, and that the Board plan a review of it approximately two years following publication.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

Whereas, ICANN has an Ombuds Framework that was originally published in 2009.

Whereas, the Ombuds has recommended that the Board approve a revised ICANN Ombuds Office Framework and Process (Framework and Process) in line with the evolution of the Ombuds Office since 2009.

Resolved (2026.06.07.xx), the Board approves the Framework and Process and commits to reviewing it within approximately two years after it is posted and in effect.

PROPOSED RATIONALE:

The Framework and Process document describes the Ombuds Office scope, responsibilities, processes, and timescales for conflict resolution, unfairness complaints, and harassment complaints. A transparent, clear and robust framework is essential to maintaining an impartial and fair process. By clearly defining these

important aspects, the Framework and Process will help establish the Ombuds Office as a trustworthy community resource and holds the Office accountable to established professional standards. Rationale Text Superseded

The content is informed by consultation with the ICANN community through the Public Comment Process, with the Board, and benchmarking against peer ombuds offices and international standards to ensure best practices.

Approving the Framework and Process is consistent with ICANN's mission and in the public interest as it supports the Ombuds role as an independent, impartial and neutral voice to promote fairness with the ICANN community as it continues its crucial work of helping support ICANN's mission.

There is no anticipated fiscal impact stemming from the approval of the ICANN Ombuds Office Framework and Process. There will be no impact on the security, stability, and resiliency of the DNS as a result of this action.

This Framework and Process has been subject to Public Comment.

Submitted By: Elizabeth Field, ICANN Ombuds

Date Noted: 26 May 2026

Email: elizabeth.field@icann.org

:

ATTACHMENT A: CLEAN: ICANN OFFICE OF OMBUDS FRAMEWORK AND PROCESS

This document describes the ICANN Office of Ombuds (Ombuds Office or Office) scope, responsibilities, and high-level Process for handling complaints and conflict resolution (Ombuds Office Framework and Process). In particular, it aims to help all parties in a given Ombuds matter to understand the role undertaken by the Ombuds in that matter, as well as what those participants can expect and what is expected of them.

This Framework and Process will supersede and replace the 2009 Ombudsman Framework.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	DEFINITIONS	2
2.	OMBUDS ROLE, SCOPE, AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	4
2.1	Ombuds Role and Scope	4
2.1.1	Circumstances Where the Ombuds May Decline to Take Action.....	5
2.1.2	Access to Information.....	6
2.1.3	Recommendations	6
2.1.4	Own Initiative Investigation (relating to Matters within the scope of the Ombuds Office).....	76
2.1.5	Requests for Reconsideration.....	7
2.2	Ombuds Responsibilities.....	7
2.2.1	Collaborative Conflict Resolution	7
2.2.2	Evaluation and Investigation of Complaints.....	7
2.2.3	Reports	7
2.2.4	Notification to Board of Serious Breach of Administrative Fairness	8
2.2.5	Applicable Review Procedures.....	8
3.	OMBUDS OFFICE OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS OF PRACTICE AND ETHICS	98
	Part B: PROCESSES.....	12
4.	INTAKE AND INITIAL ASSESSMENT	12
4.1	Intake.....	12
4.1.1	Matters Outside the Scope of the Ombuds' Remit	12
4.2	Initial Assessment of All Matters Brought to the Ombuds	1312

4.3 Timescale	13
4.3.1 Expedited Timescales.....	14 ¹³
5. CONFLICT RESOLUTION	14
5.1 Initiation of an Ombuds-Facilitated Conflict Resolution Process.....	14
5.2 Ombuds Role in an Ombuds-Facilitated Conflict Resolution Process.....	14
5.3 Ombuds Process and Approaches in Ombuds-Facilitated Conflict Resolution	15 ¹⁴
5.4 Outcomes of an Ombuds-Facilitated Conflict Resolution Process.....	15
6. COMPLAINTS OF UNFAIRNESS	15
6.1. Initiation of Unfairness Complaints.....	15
6.2. Ombuds Role in an Unfairness Complaint	15
6.3 Ombuds Process in Handling an Unfairness Complaint.....	16 ¹⁵
6.3.1 First Level Resolution	16 ¹⁵
6.3.2 Second Level Resolution: Ombuds Evaluation or Investigation.....	16
7. COMPLAINTS OF HARASSMENT UNDER THE ICANN COMMUNITY ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY (CAHP)	17
7.1 Initiation of a Complaint under the CAHP	17
7.2 Ombuds Role in a Complaint under the CAHP	17
7.3 Ombuds Process for Handling Complaints under the CAHP Policy	17
7.4 Outcomes from a Complaint Investigation under the CAHP Policy	18
8. OMBUDS ROLE IN REQUESTS FOR RECONSIDERATION	19 ¹⁸
8.1 Initiation of a Request for Reconsideration to the Ombuds	19 ¹⁸
8.2 Ombuds Role in a Request for Reconsideration	19
8.3 Ombuds Process in Addressing a Request for Reconsideration	19
9. RESPONSIBILITY TO RESPOND TO THE OMBUDS OFFICE	19
9.1 Response Timeframes	20
10. REPORT(S) TO BOARD	21
11. CLOSING A CASE.....	21
12. FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE OMBUDS OFFICE.....	22
13. OMBUDS ROLE IN PROMOTING FAIRNESS, LEARNING, AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	23

PART A: FRAMEWORK

1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.1 “Board” means ICANN’s Board of Directors.
- 1.2 “Bylaws” means ICANN’s current Bylaws, as set forth at <https://www.icann.org/en/governance/bylaws>.

- 1.3 “Case” means a discrete contact, process, or engagement, that is in scope for the Office, and on which the Ombuds Office takes action.
- 1.4 “Collaborative Conflict Resolution” means any voluntary, cooperative Process to resolve a conflict or Dispute using problem-solving approaches that satisfy the interest and needs of the participants and develop mutually acceptable solutions. Any third party, such as the Ombuds, supporting such a Process facilitates the outcome rather than determines it.
- 1.5 “Community Anti-Harassment Policy” means the Board-approved policy available [ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy](#).
- 1.6 “Community Member” means a member of the volunteer-based collection of global stakeholders that provide advice, develop policy recommendations, conduct reviews, propose implementation solutions for issues that relate to ICANN’s mission and scope and individuals who otherwise participate in the ICANN community. Together, these stakeholders, which include businesses, Internet engineers, technical experts, civil society, governments, end users, and many others, work throughout their respective Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees to shape policies that guide the operation and evolution of the Domain Name System. (See <https://www.icann.org/en/icann-acronyms-and-terms>.)
- 1.7 “Complaint” means a formal expression of dissatisfaction or an allegation made to the Ombuds about a decision, action, or inaction that a Complainant perceives to have resulted in unfairness or harassment toward them and deviates from a relevant policy, standard, or process (or reasonably expected standard or process).
- 1.8 “Complainant” means any Community Member or Members either as an individual or group) who submits a Complaint to the Ombuds Office on a Matter within the scope of the Ombuds Office.
- 1.9 “Conflict” means the process of expressing dissatisfaction, disagreement, or unmet expectations within an exchange or exchanges in the ICANN community.ⁱ
- 1.10 “Dispute(s)” means disagreement or dissatisfaction that arises from a Conflict or Complaint that has not been resolved and is submitted to the Ombuds Office for a resolution process on a Matter within the scope of the Ombuds Office.
- 1.11 “ICANN” refers to the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, a nonprofit, public-benefit organization with the mission of ensuring the stable and secure operation of the Internet’s unique identifier systems, as well as any ICANN affiliates and subsidiaries.
- 1.12 “Investigation” means a formal, documented fact-finding process initiated by the Ombuds Office to establish facts in relation to alleged or suspected noncompliance with relevant community policies.ⁱⁱ
- 1.13 “Matter” means any issue, concern, allegation, or request raised with the Ombuds Office.
- 1.14 “Mediation” means a confidential, flexible, and voluntary technique in which an impartial third party helps individuals or groups in Conflict or Dispute communicate and reach a consensual, nonbinding agreement.
- 1.15 “Negotiation” means a structured, voluntary, and facilitated communication process between two or more parties with conflicting and convergent interests, including at least one party who is seeking to reach an agreement. Negotiations

generally fall into two types, Dispute negotiations (which one or more parties has suffered a loss) or opportunity negotiations (one or more parties seek to improve their status quo).ⁱⁱⁱ

1.16 “Ombuds” means the individual appointed by the Board to serve in the function of Ombuds, reporting to the Board, who manages the Office of Ombuds.

1.17 “Ombuds Office” means the Office, managed by the Ombuds, including any support functions such as an adjunct ombuds, independent legal counsel, and other consultants and contractors working on behalf of the Office.

1.18 “Own Initiative Investigation” means an Ombuds Office Investigation that arises from an Ombuds request to investigate a Matter (within the scope of the Ombuds Office – as outlined in section 2.1 of this document) based on a pattern of facts that the Ombuds Office becomes aware of but without receiving a specific Complaint. In general, the pattern of facts will have a systemic component.

1.19 “Process” means a structured approach involving a series of steps that the Ombuds follows to handle a given Matter, for example a Complaint or request for Collaborative Conflict Resolution support such as a Mediation.

1.20 “Respondent” means an individual or party(s) whose actions or inactions are the subject of a Complaint submitted to the Ombuds Office.

2. OMBUDS ROLE, SCOPE, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Ombuds Role and Scope

The key purpose of the Ombuds and the Ombuds Office is to ensure that all ICANN Community Members receive fair and respectful treatment when interacting with the ICANN Board, staff, and other Community Members.

The Ombuds’ primary function is to act as an independent, early collaborative resolution office for all ICANN Community Members who may wish to initiate a Collaborative Conflict Resolution or Dispute Resolution Process, raise a Complaint, or request an Investigation into whether an ICANN Community Member, staff, Board (including individual Directors) or any constituent body or group has treated them unfairly or in violation of the Expected Standards of Behavior. The ICANN Bylaws, Article 5, includes provisions to protect the Ombuds’ independence including budget and threshold for dismissal. The Ombuds also handles Complaints from ICANN Community Members about harassment under ICANN’s Community Anti-Harassment Policy. Bylaws Article 5, Section 2 states:

The principal function of the [Ombuds] shall be to provide an independent internal evaluation of Complaints by members of the ICANN community who believe that the ICANN staff, Board or an ICANN constituent body has treated them unfairly.

In addition to the Ombuds’ primary authority (requiring and enabling the Ombuds to be an advocate for fairness, evaluator, investigator, and when possible, resolver of Complaints and Disputes), the Bylaws require the Ombuds to use various Conflict and Dispute resolution techniques to facilitate the fair, independent, impartial, and timely

resolution of Complaints and Conflict made to the Ombuds Office. Bylaws, Article 5, Section 5.2 states:

The [Ombuds] shall serve as an objective advocate for fairness, and shall seek to evaluate and where possible resolve complaints about unfair or inappropriate treatment by ICANN staff, the Board, or ICANN constituent bodies, clarifying the issues and using conflict resolution tools such as negotiation, facilitation, and "shuttle diplomacy" to achieve these results.

The [ICANN \[Ombuds\] Framework \(2009\)](#), clarifies that:

The [Ombuds] does not have the unilateral power to make, change or set aside a policy, administrative or Board decision, nor to reverse an act or omission. To the extent a complaint has been made relating to a policy, administrative or Board decision (or an act or omission), the [Ombuds Office] does have the power to investigate the [underlying] events, and to use [collaborative conflict and dispute resolution] techniques to attempt to resolve such complaint[s or disputes].

The Ombuds Office receives and has responsibility to address issues of unfairness claimed by Community Members including Matters that arise as a result of:

- Decisions, actions, or inactions by a member/members of ICANN staff;
- Decisions, actions, or inactions by the Board or its Directors that may be inconsistent with the Articles of Incorporation or the Bylaws;
- Decisions, actions, or inactions by ICANN constituent bodies.

The ICANN Ombuds Office also has responsibility for addressing harassment Complaints from Community Members raised under the Community Anti-Harassment Policy.

The Ombuds does not have authority to act over Complaints concerning:

- Internal ICANN organization administrative matters;
- ICANN staff personnel/employment related issues;
- Issues relating to membership on the ICANN or Public Technical Identifiers Board; or
- Issues relating to vendor/supplier relationships with ICANN .

2.1.1 Circumstances Where the Ombuds May Decline to Take Action

The Ombuds Office may decline to take action or initiate a Process in the following instances:

- The Complaint or Matter is not raised in a timely manner;
- The Complainant does not have sufficient personal interest;

- The Complainant has pursued an alternate available or adequate process or the Complaint is subject to another ICANN process (Reconsideration Request or Independent Review Process);
- The Complaint is repetitive, trivial, vexatious, frivolous, nonsubstantive, otherwise abusive, or not made in good faith;
- The Complaint lacks credibility;
- Having due regard for all the circumstances, further action by the Ombuds is not necessary or possible to resolve the Matter or the Complaint or Ombuds action would not benefit the individual or Complainant; or
- The Complainant either revokes the Ombuds Process by engaging in a formal review process under the Bylaws, Article 4, or they engage in an outside legal process. (See <http://www.icann.org/general/bylaws.htm#IV>.)

The Ombuds Office does not normally intervene in unfairness Complaints that are speculative or premature where: (i) an underlying process is still ongoing and has not yet reached an outcome or decision; (ii) sufficient time has not been allowed for response; or (iii) the matter is still capable of being resolved by the relevant group, team or individual. Ordinarily, a group, team, or individual should be given the opportunity to respond, and where appropriate, resolve issues, before involving the Ombuds Office.

Where an unfairness Complaint is considered unripe for Ombuds review, the Complainant will generally be referred to the appropriate process or decision-maker. This helps ensure that the Ombuds Office considers Matters at the appropriate stage and on the basis of a complete factual record. In some circumstances, where appropriate and at the Ombuds discretion, the Ombuds may assist resolution through the facilitation of informal problem-solving or Collaborative Conflict Resolution.

2.1.2 Access to Information

Under Bylaws, Article 5, Section 5.3, the Ombuds has the right to have access to (but not to publish if otherwise confidential) relevant and necessary information and records from the ICANN Board and staff and constituent bodies to enable an informed evaluation of the Complaint and to assist in Complaint and Collaborative Conflict and Dispute Resolution where feasible. Private and internal communications not distributed via public websites may be designated as confidential by the party providing such information and records. Nothing shall stop the Ombuds Office from designating information confidential if the Ombuds deems it appropriate to do so.

2.1.3 Recommendations

The Ombuds may make recommendations to the Board with respect to Matters arising from Complaints reviewed and investigated by the Ombuds Office. Where the Ombuds makes a recommendation to the Board and to the extent the Board deems it appropriate and feasible, the Board should endeavor to respond to the Ombuds within timescales set out in [Section 9](#) of this document.

Under Bylaws, Article 5, Section 5.5, the Ombuds may include recommendations in the Annual Report for steps that could be taken to minimize future Complaints. These recommendations may also identify learning and systemic improvement(s).

2.1.4 Own Initiative Investigation (relating to Matters within the scope of the Ombuds Office)

The [ICANN Ombudsman Framework \(2009\)](#), indicates that the Ombuds can request authority from the Board to start an Own Initiative Investigation.

If the Ombuds Office becomes aware of a pattern of facts supporting the initiation of an Own Initiative Investigation on a Matter clearly within the scope of the Ombuds Office, the Ombuds may request authority to open such an Investigation from the Board group designated to address these requests. Matters within scope for the Ombuds Office are described in sections 2.1 and 2.2 of this document (namely, unfairness or inappropriate treatment toward Community Members) and excluding Matters where the Ombuds has no authority to act (including Internal administrative matters, personnel issues, and issues relating to Board member conduct or membership). The Board group designated to address these requests shall then determine, based on the information provided by the Ombuds in the request and any information it obtains on its own, whether the requested Own Initiative Investigation is approved and; if approved, the Ombuds Office is then authorized to proceed with its Own Initiative Investigation.

2.1.5 Requests for Reconsideration

Under the Bylaws, the Ombuds must provide a substantive evaluation of Requests for Reconsideration. (Bylaws, Article 4, [Section 4.2\(I\).](#)) When a Request for Reconsideration (Request) has been received, if it has not been summarily dismissed by the Board Accountability Mechanisms Committee (BAMC), then it goes to the Ombuds, who must either recuse themselves from evaluating the Request, or provide a timely, substantive evaluation of such Request to the BAMC.

2.2 Ombuds Responsibilities

2.2.1 Collaborative Conflict Resolution

The Ombuds may employ a wide range of Collaborative Conflict and Dispute Resolution methods in the efforts to resolve Conflict and Disputes in the ICANN community. These methods include, among others: Mediation, shuttle negotiation, conciliation, and dialogue.

2.2.2 Evaluation and Investigation of Complaints

Where warranted, as set out in the Bylaws, Article 5, as well as under the Community Anti-Harassment Policy and Expected Standards of Behavior (to which all Community Members must agree to adhere), the Ombuds Office, conducts evaluations and/or Investigations of Complaints with the relevant parties.

2.2.3 Reports

The Ombuds provides to the Board an Annual Report highlighting Cases, resolution, and trends, which is then posted on the ICANN website.

See Bylaws, Article 5, Section 5.5 states:

The Office of [Ombuds] shall publish on an annual basis a consolidated analysis of the year's complaints and resolutions, appropriately dealing with confidentiality obligations and concerns. Such annual report should include a description of any trends or common elements of complaints received during the period in question, as well as recommendations for steps that could be taken to minimize future complaints. The annual report shall be posted on the Website.

Where appropriate, the Ombuds may post reports of Complaints and Cases and their resolutions, either in aggregate or as a single matter, to ICANN's website (<https://www.icann.org/ombuds>). All reports will be anonymized and redacted to protect confidentiality of communications with the Ombuds Office.

See Bylaws, Article 5, Section 5.4(d) states:

The [Ombuds] shall be specifically authorized to make such reports to the Board as he or she deems appropriate with respect to any particular matter and its resolution or the inability to resolve it. Absent a determination by the [Ombuds], in his or her sole discretion, that it would be inappropriate, such reports shall be posted on the Website.

In determining whether to publish a written report on a given Case, the Ombuds will consider the benefit to the community in publishing a report, including:

- promoting an understanding of the issues in the ICANN community;
- promoting learning and raising awareness about administrative fairness;
- allowing the community to see the results of similar previous Cases; and
- preventing and reducing future Conflicts and Complaints.

During each fiscal year the Ombuds also provides at least one additional report to the Board on the Ombuds Office activities.

2.2.4 Notification to Board of Serious Breach of Administrative Fairness

Where, in the conduct of an Investigation of a Complaint or management of a Case, if the Ombuds forms an opinion that there has been a serious breach of administrative fairness, the Ombuds may notify the Board directly as to the circumstances thereof. Such a notification will be consistent with agreed confidentiality parameters with parties in the Case.

2.2.5 Applicable Review Procedures

Where there exists no further opportunity for collaborative Conflict or Dispute resolution to be applied, or there is no likelihood of a successful Ombuds resolution, the Ombuds shall advise the Complainant of the applicable review procedures.

3. OMBUDS OFFICE OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS OF PRACTICE AND ETHICS

The Ombuds and the Ombuds Office will adhere to the standards of practice and ethics adopted by The International Ombuds Association (IOA), as they may be applicable to the Office.^{iv}

3.1 Confidentiality: All Matters brought before the Ombuds Office shall be treated as confidential, except where otherwise agreed by parties or required by law, policy or approved procedures.

The Ombuds Office shall take all reasonable steps to protect people's privacy and to avoid harm. This commitment extends to all parties to a Case and to individuals who are not directly involved in a Case but who may be contacted by the Ombuds Office as part of the management of a Case, including the Investigation or evaluation of Complaints.

The Ombuds may be required to make inquiries with or to advise staff, the Board, or others about the identity of a party(s) or Complainant(s) as part of an evaluation, Investigation, or other resolution Process. In these Cases, the Ombuds will inform and, if appropriate, seek the consent of the party(s) before disclosing information that could reveal their identity. If the party(s) does not wish to have their identity disclosed, this may limit options for resolution but in all Cases the Ombuds will attempt to find a suitable resolution Process that allows for their identity to be protected. Additionally, if a harassment Complaint is raised by or about a staff member or Board member, the Ombuds is required to inform the appropriate party in ICANN. In these Cases, the Ombuds will inform the Complainant of the appropriate party that the Ombuds will refer to in advance of any such referral.

The Ombuds Office may be required to disclose to relevant parties in ICANN the existence or outcome of an Investigation resulting (or which may result) in remedial measures that could be considered disciplinary (e.g., role restrictions, restrictions on participation). Where the Ombuds Office determines such disclosure is necessary for legitimate policy, legal or safety purposes, disclosure will be on a strictly need-to-know basis. Such purposes may include, but are not limited to, the implementation or monitoring of Ombuds Office remedial measures, safeguarding or duty-of-care obligations, or compliance with policy, legal or regulatory obligations.

In general terms, due to the very nature of the work of the Ombuds Office, the Ombuds, *will resist* testifying in any process which would reveal informal, confidential information given to the Ombuds Office, during the course of a Case.” (

Any disclosure will be proportionate, limited to information that is reasonably necessary in the circumstances and handled in such a manner so as to protect the privacy and dignity of the parties.

The Ombuds shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that, if staff and Board members are made aware of the existence of a Case or Complaint and the identity of the individual(s) involved, they agree to maintain the confidential nature of such information, except as necessary to further the resolution of a Case or a Complaint or as otherwise required by policy or law.

3.1.1 Exceptions to confidentiality: Confidentiality does not apply when there is an imminent threat to the individual or others, when criminal activity is threatened, or when legally required, such as through a court order.

3.2. Impartiality: The Ombuds is a designated neutral and impartial resource who does not take sides or serve as an advocate for any person or party. The Ombuds avoids conflicts of interest and conduct that could be perceived as a conflict of interest. An Ombuds Process should not be influenced by personal feelings, interpretations, or prejudice. An Investigation or evaluation will be conducted objectively and based on factual evidence.

3.3 Fair treatment: The Ombuds is an advocate for fairness and will be neutral, candid, and unbiased. The process to address queries, concerns or Complaints is clear and the Ombuds follows that process, keeping participants informed during the process about what has happened and what will happen. All Complaints are assessed against established fairness criteria. The Ombuds commitment to fair and unbiased treatment includes:

- **Opportunity to be heard:** Participants in the Process will all be given equal opportunity to present information relevant to the matter to the Ombuds.
- **Notice of the planned or ongoing Process:** Participants in the Process will be given notice of the chosen Process as well as a description of how the Process will proceed. The Ombuds will inform participants where a Process is voluntary (e.g., Mediation).
- **Reasoned determination:** Where the Process involves reaching a conclusion or determination by the Ombuds, the Ombuds will make fair and impartial findings and conclusions. An Ombuds' determination will not be capricious, unreasonable, or arbitrary.

3.4 Independence: The Ombuds is independent in structure, function, appearance, purpose, practice, and decision-making. The Ombuds reports to the Board on the Ombuds Office activities and performance and not to any function or team within the organization that could affect or be perceived to affect the Ombuds' independence. When undertaking an Investigation or evaluation, the Ombuds will not be influenced or controlled by other people, events, or incentives in relation to the subject matter that is being investigated.

Acting within the Bylaws and the Ombuds Office scope set out in this document, the Ombuds has sole discretion over whether and how to engage regarding individual or group Cases and Complaints.

3.5 Role clarity: The Ombuds clarifies with participants the role the Ombuds plays in a Process at every step. Participants in any Process should understand fully (a) the role in which the Ombuds, and those acting on the Ombuds Office's behalf (such as an adjunct ombuds), is playing, and (b) the participants' responsibilities in such Process. Early in a Process, participants in the Process will be told if the Ombuds plays a role determining an outcome or if the Ombuds will be playing an informal, nondeterminative role, such as a mediator or facilitator.

3.6 Dignity and respect: The Ombuds Office commits to treat every person, including all Complainants and Respondents, with dignity and respect. Everyone who engages with the Ombuds Office can expect to have their concerns and experiences taken seriously and to be treated equitably. In putting dignity and respect at the heart of all its work, the Ombuds Office seeks to create a safe environment for Community Members to speak freely and openly, and to engage in constructive dialogue and Complaint and Conflict resolution.

3.7 Informality: The ICANN Ombuds Office is both informal under Bylaws Article 5, and formal, under Bylaws Article 4, pertaining to Reconsideration Requests. It also plays a more formal role in dealing with complaints made regarding the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior and the Community Anti-Harassment Policy. To the extent the Ombuds Office plays a determinative role in the handling of Complaints (whether of unfairness under Bylaws Article 5, or harassment or violations of the Expected Standards of Behavior), it acknowledges the value of the underlying principle of informality that applies to and guides ombuds offices. The value of informality accrues to individuals working with the Ombuds Office and to the wider ICANN community and stakeholders. As such, when appropriate and feasible, the Ombuds Office will promote and employ informal, Complaint and Collaborative Conflict Resolution methods. Towards finding resolutions, the Ombuds Office in its informal role solves problems, promotes dialogue, enables learning; it also identifies and brings forward issues and procedural irregularities that affect individuals or the organization, and it provides ongoing feedback to ICANN leadership on emerging or systemic concerns.

Wherever possible and appropriate, the Ombuds will endeavor to work off the record, unless required by law or policy to retain relevant records. In the case that records are retained, the Ombuds maintains records in accordance with ICANN's record retention policy and has a consistent practice for the timely elimination of personally identifiable information, where not required to retain such information.

3.8 Service Quality Commitments

In addition, the Office also commits to its services being:

- **Timely:** the Ombuds Office strives to deliver its services in the shortest timeframe possible without compromising quality and adheres to the timelines set out in this document. Where there are delays these will be communicated to parties;

- **Useful:** the Ombuds Office helps community members address their issues with the right information, guidance, or process; and
- **Accessible:** the Ombuds Office endeavors to make it easy for all community members, wherever they are based and whatever their needs, to use and to contact the Ombuds Office.

3.9 Anti-retaliation: Retaliation is prohibited against any person for engaging with the Ombuds Office. No-one should face retaliation for seeking information or advice from the Ombuds Office, for raising a concern or Complaint, or for participating in an Ombuds Office Process or Investigation.

Retaliation means any action with detrimental consequences for individual(s) because of their engagement with the Ombuds Office. Retaliation may include, but is not limited to, excluding someone from opportunities relevant to their role; damaging the individual's reputation; unfair or harsh treatment; and threats or intimidation.

Protection against retaliation applies even if a Complaint is not substantiated.

Part B: PROCESSES

4. INTAKE AND INITIAL ASSESSMENT

4.1 Intake

At intake, the Office of Ombuds will:

- Provide participants information about options and Process.
- Where appropriate, refer individuals raising the Matter to another department or body when the Matter raised is outside the Ombuds scope.
- Help individuals identify and clarify cause for concern and issue(s) they want reviewed or resolved.

4.1.1 Matters Outside the Scope of the Ombuds' Remit

The Ombuds Office will respond to all submissions where the individual provides sufficient information that enables a response, whether the submission is in scope for the Ombuds or not. If the Ombuds Office receives a submission that is out of scope, the Ombuds Office will inform the individual that the issue is out of scope and endeavor to refer them to alternative avenues to have their issue addressed, if available and appropriate.

In most circumstances, the Ombuds Office will provide self-help links and resources or refer the individual to another responsible team, person, or body in ICANN (e.g., Global Support).

There are some Cases where the Ombuds Office may have a role to play but does not have the remit to address independently, for example Complaints related to [ICANN Community Participant Code of Conduct Concerning Statements of Interest](#).

In these cases, the Ombuds will, prior to referring, discuss with the individual the referral to the appropriate party or parties within ICANN, and may remain as an informal support or resource, where appropriate. In harassment Complaints involving staff or Board members, the Ombuds must provide all the necessary information to the appropriate party in the organization.

4.2 Initial Assessment of All Matters Brought to the Ombuds

In Matters brought to the Ombuds Office, the Office will take the following steps:

- Gather sufficient information to make an initial assessment about whether or how the Matter should be pursued, and the scope of any process undertaken.
- Clearly distinguish Conflicts and Complaints and identify what Process(es) the participant(s) are willing to participate in pursuit of the outcome (e.g., collaborative or Ombuds-led resolution).
- Identify parties' interests in the Matter and outcome sought.
- After completing a sufficient level of assessment, the Ombuds may make a recommendation about a resolution process to follow.
- Where parties are not willing to undertake any of the recommended Processes, identify other avenues.

4.3 Timescale

The Ombuds Office recognizes the importance of dealing with all Cases promptly and in as short a timescale as feasible. The Ombuds Office also recognizes that some issues are complex or require more time to handle fairly and effectively. The Ombuds Office has these guiding timescales. It should be noted that many, if not most, Matters can be dealt in a shorter timescale.

- The Ombuds Office will acknowledge receipt of a written request or Complaint within **two to five working days**.
- If a meeting is requested and is deemed necessary (either to provide information or address a request), the Ombuds Office aims to set a meeting within **five to seven working days**.
- The Ombuds Office aims to determine whether the Matter is within the scope of the Ombuds and agree the Process (e.g., Complaint or Collaborative Conflict Resolution Process), agree scope/parameters of the Process and undertake the Process (e.g. an evaluation or Investigation) within **25 working days** of receipt of the request or Complaint.
- The Ombuds Office acknowledges that Collaborative Conflict Resolution Processes require a more open-ended approach and that the Ombuds may keep Cases open allowing parties to request further support as needed.
- The Ombuds Office aims to conclude the evaluation or Investigation of most Complaints within **60–90 days of agreeing scope** with the Complainant.
- The Ombuds Office will communicate about a Case with relevant parties, such as Complainant(s) and Respondent(s), and update them, generally weekly or

bi-weekly assuming the parties do not opt out of such communication and the parties respond to Ombuds Office communications. The Ombuds Office will further notify relevant parties about any delays associated with the Process.

4.3.1 Expedited Timescales

- The Ombuds Office will consider, where necessary and feasible, to apply an expedited timescale for Matters requiring a time-sensitive response.
- The Ombuds Office may initiate an expedited Process when circumstances indicate that the standard timeline set out in section 4.3 of this document could result in a significant negative impact to a party involved in the Process.
- Requests for an expedited Process may be granted in situations including, but not limited to, an immediate health, safety, or welfare concern, a time-sensitive deadline and/or a situation where delay would substantially impair the potential to effectively resolve a situation.
- A request for an expedited Process may be submitted by any party to the Process and should include a brief explanation of the urgency and supporting documentation where available.
- The Ombuds Office will determine, at its discretion, whether an expedited Process is feasible and warranted.
- Where the Ombuds Office agrees to an expedited Process, the Ombuds Office will aim to:
 - Determine scope, agree the Process and initiate the Process within **10-15 working days**;
 - Conclude the evaluation or Investigation within **35-60 days** of agreeing scope with the Complainant.

5. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

5.1 Initiation of an Ombuds-Facilitated Conflict Resolution Process

An interested party can contact the Ombuds to request support with Collaborative Conflict or Dispute Resolution. The interested party should describe the situation and how they think the Ombuds can help and what, if any, steps have been taken to resolve the issue thus far.

5.2 Ombuds Role in an Ombuds-Facilitated Conflict Resolution Process

The Ombuds is an independent, impartial third party who supports and facilitates individuals and groups using Collaborative Conflict Resolution techniques such as Mediation and coaching appropriate to the situation and the participants. The Ombuds does not play a role in determining the outcome of the Process or who is “right” or “wrong.”

Participation in an Ombuds-facilitated Collaborative Conflict Resolution Process is strictly voluntary.

The Ombuds may contract an external Conflict or Dispute resolution facilitator, depending on the nature of the issue, for example if the parties would be better served by a facilitator with regional expertise or language skills. This external person will be agreed in advance by the parties before contracting.

5.3 Ombuds Process and Approaches in Ombuds-Facilitated Conflict Resolution

- **Conflict situation assessment:** The Ombuds will undertake an assessment of the Conflict or Dispute to identify participants, the scope of issues to address, and one or more appropriate resolution methods.
- **Process and methods:** A facilitated Conflict/Dispute resolution Process will vary depending on the needs. It may be a one-off, (for example a two-hour Mediation between two people) or it may be multiple sessions involving different people. The Ombuds may use a range of Collaborative Conflict Resolution methods, including coaching, Mediation, and negotiation.

5.4 Outcomes of an Ombuds-Facilitated Conflict Resolution Process

The participants are responsible for determining the outcomes of the process. Some processes may result in an agreement or other working arrangement that is voluntary and informal (nonbinding).

6. COMPLAINTS OF UNFAIRNESS

6.1. Initiation of Unfairness Complaints

Complaints to the Office of the Ombuds must be made in writing or orally to the Ombuds. When making a Complaint, the Complainant should be explicit that they wish to make a Complaint. The Complainant should provide the following information:

- Date(s) of the incident/issue of concern;
- How they believe they have been treated unfairly by the Respondent(s);
- A description of the basis of the Complaint including relevant policy/process that may apply;
- A summary of contact between the Complainant and the Respondent(s) on the issue, if applicable, and any previous attempts to resolve the issue;
- How they have been adversely affected;
- What they are looking for to put the matter right;
- How they believe the Ombuds Office can help; and
- Any other information the Complainant wishes to provide.

6.2. Ombuds Role in an Unfairness Complaint

The Ombuds is an impartial, independent third party who assesses whether the Complainant has been treated unfairly. The Ombuds reviews facts and evidence and reaches some form of conclusion.

If appropriate, the Ombuds may propose corrective actions, make recommendations or suggest a Dispute resolution pathway such as a Negotiation or Mediation Process.

6.3 Ombuds Process in Handling an Unfairness Complaint

6.3.1 First Level Resolution

The relevant group, team, or individual has the opportunity to first resolve the Complainant's dissatisfaction about unfair treatment, if feasible. In the first instance, the Ombuds will try to focus on "solving the problem" (e.g., if a response has not been provided, getting a response). Upon receipt of the Complaint, the Ombuds will contact the relevant group, team, or individual and (i) make them aware of the Complaint and the desired outcome; and (ii) ask for their response.

6.3.2 Second Level Resolution: Ombuds Evaluation or Investigation

If the Complaint remains unresolved, the Complainant may request that Ombuds evaluate or investigate the Complaint for unfairness.

6.3.2.1 Preliminary Assessment

The purpose of a preliminary assessment is to assess the nature of the unfairness Complaint and determine if the Ombuds Office may offer a suitable pathway for resolution and, if so, identify what pathway. The Office will also determine whether there are sufficient grounds to proceed to an evaluation or Investigation.

6.3.2.2 Investigating and Evaluating Unfairness

The Ombuds Office will review relevant facts and evidence about the alleged unfairness. The Ombuds will ask both Complainant and Respondent(s) to furnish evidence and may also request access to relevant information as set out in Section 1.3 of this document.

The Ombuds Office routinely assesses two aspects of fair treatment, listed below. In most Cases, the Ombuds Office will not evaluate a decision itself but will focus on the process and how the person was treated.

(i) Procedural fairness: refers to whether an action/inaction or a process to reach a decision or conclusion are in line with relevant agreed-upon standards/rules/processes and whether these were applied consistently.

In Cases where the Complaint is about a penalty or sanction (such as exclusion from a community group), the Ombuds will also assess whether the process to determine the penalty or sanction meets fairness standards and will consider the following questions:

- Was the Complainant informed about the process?
- Was the Complainant able to participate in the process, for example to respond to allegations or present information that contradicts the allegations?
- Can the Ombuds confirm the decision was based on objective facts and evidence?

(ii) Interactional/relational fairness: refers to how parties are treated in the decision-making process, with dignity and respect and in line with the Expected Standards of Behavior.

6.3.2.3 Opportunity to Comment

A draft report of an Investigation or evaluation, with preliminary findings and without conclusion, will be shared with both the Complainant and Respondent(s) to comment

on factual accuracy. The Ombuds will correct any incorrect factual statements. Additionally, the Ombuds will consider all responses, including differences of beliefs, interpretations, and opinions, carefully before reaching a conclusion.

The relevant parties should endeavor to respond to the Ombuds, or request an extension to respond, within 15 calendar days from receipt of the relevant draft report.

6.4 Outcomes from an Evaluation or Investigation of an Unfairness Complaint

Once an evaluation or Investigation is complete, the Ombuds reaches a conclusion on the basis of the facts and evidence reviewed during the Process:

- The Complaint of unfairness is substantiated or
- The Complaint of unfairness is substantiated in part or
- The Complaint of unfairness is not substantiated

The Ombuds may propose resolution pathways or provide observations related to prevention, improvements, or resolving the issue.

Where a Complaint is substantiated or substantiated in part, the Ombuds will provide written feedback on steps to improve or resolve the issue, which may include recommendations. If a Complaint of unfairness is substantiated, the Ombuds may also provide a report to the Board that includes written feedback or recommendations.

7. COMPLAINTS OF HARASSMENT UNDER THE ICANN COMMUNITY ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY (CAHP)

7.1 Initiation of a Complaint under the CAHP

Complaints under the Community Anti-Harassment Policy should be submitted to the Ombuds as soon as possible after the incident has occurred and preferably in writing.

7.2 Ombuds Role in a Complaint under the CAHP

The Ombuds acts as an impartial, independent third party who investigates Complaints under the Community Anti-Harassment Policy. The Ombuds will make a determination about whether the behavior constitutes harassment. If there has been harassment, the Ombuds may suggest remedial action under the Community Anti-Harassment Policy.

7.3 Ombuds Process for Handling Complaints under the CAHP Policy

7.3.1 Preliminary Assessment

The purpose is to determine whether the Matter is within the scope of the Ombuds Office under this Policy and assess the nature of the complaint, the conduct at issue, harm and potential harm, potential resolution options, and determine whether there is sufficient basis to proceed to an Investigation.

7.3.2 Investigation

The Respondent is informed and brought into the Process. The Ombuds will assess evidence supporting the allegations, including, as relevant, witness statements for the Complainant and Respondent.

Anyone who is comfortable reaching out to the Ombuds can do so. If, however, the Ombuds receives a Complaint from or about an ICANN staff or Board member, the Ombuds must provide all the necessary information to the appropriate party within ICANN, as needed, so that the organization's Complaint process provided for staff and Board members is properly followed. Notably, the Ombuds Office is not a designated reporter for ICANN Personnel or Board members' Complaints relating to harassment. Per the Bylaws, 5.4(c): "*Contact with the Ombuds[] shall not constitute notice to ICANN of any particular action or cause of action.*" Depending on the circumstances, ICANN may file a Complaint with the Ombuds under this Policy as it relates to conduct toward a staff or Board member by a Community Member as part of the organization's process.

Interviews are documented and interviewees have the opportunity to review and correct facts in the interview notes.

The Ombuds will inform both the Complainant and the Respondent of the results of the Investigation and the outcome of the Complaint.

7.4 Outcomes from a Complaint Investigation under the CAHP Policy

Once an Investigation is complete, the Ombuds reaches a conclusion on the basis of the facts and evidence investigated:

- The Complaint is substantiated or
- The Complaint is substantiated in part or
- The Complaint is not substantiated

If the Complaint is substantiated or substantiated in part, the Ombuds may suggest remedial action as per the Community Anti-Harassment Policy. This will depend on the below-listed factors, among others:

- Severity, frequency, and pervasiveness of the conduct and impact on the Complainant and community;
- Prior Complaints relating to the Respondent and Complainant; and
- Acceptance/acknowledgement of behavior and willingness to correct and repair.

If a Respondent refuses to comply with the remedial action identified by the Ombuds, the Ombuds will refer the Matter to the ICANN Board with recommendations for consideration and action. The referral to the Board will include a discussion of the facts, claims, findings, and efforts to resolve the Matter with the Ombuds, and recommendation(s) of remedial action. All Cases referred to the ICANN Board will be handled with the highest level of confidentiality, as feasible for all parties.

Upon a receipt of a referral from the Ombuds, the ICANN Board will evaluate the Ombuds' findings, request additional information if needed, and decide whether the Ombuds' recommended remedial action, or alternative remedial actions, are appropriate. If warranted, the Board will then impose such remedial action(s) it deems appropriate.

8. OMBUDS ROLE IN REQUESTS FOR RECONSIDERATION

8.1 Initiation of a Request for Reconsideration to the Ombuds

Under the Bylaws, Article 4, Section 4.2 (I), Reconsideration Requests that have not been summarily dismissed by the BAMC will be sent to the Ombuds for a substantive review and evaluation.

8.2 Ombuds Role in a Request for Reconsideration

The Ombuds is an independent, impartial third party that is tasked with providing the BAMC a substantive evaluation of Reconsideration Requests, unless the Ombuds has recused themselves from the Matter (as set forth in the Bylaws and per section 2.1.4 of this document).

8.3 Ombuds Process in Addressing a Request for Reconsideration

The Ombuds shall recuse themselves from those Reconsideration Requests involving Matters for which the Ombuds' impartiality might reasonably be questioned, such as a previous evaluation or Investigation related to the subject matter of the Request for Reconsideration or Matters involving the Ombuds Office conduct in any way. Among other situations, recusal is expected where the Ombuds holds or has expressed interests, beliefs or opinions that question their ability to make unbiased determinations. In such circumstances, the BAMC will review the Reconsideration Request without substantive evaluation by the Ombuds.

When a Reconsideration Request is not summarily dismissed (and the Ombuds does not have reason to recuse), the Ombuds will promptly review the Request and provide a substantive evaluation of it to the BAMC. This substantive evaluation will then be made publicly available by ICANN.

All substantive evaluations of Reconsideration Requests will be done in an independent and impartial manner. As used herein, a substantive evaluation includes, where relevant,: (i) a review of all relevant and material documents (physical or electronic); (ii) interviews and communications necessary to learn the perspectives of persons reasonably connected to the Matter, and (iii) any outside research with assistance from outside sources as deemed necessary to ensure a fair and objective substantive evaluation has been made.

9. RESPONSIBILITY TO RESPOND TO THE OMBUDS OFFICE

Where the Ombuds Office has made a formal request to a group, team, or individual within the ICANN community or staff, the relevant group, team, or individual shall endeavor to respond within the shortest timeframe possible and within the timeframes set out below. Such Ombuds Office requests include response to a Complaint, request for information and response to a report or recommendation.

When a response is requested by the Ombuds Office, all parts of ICANN (community, Board, ICANN staff) should respect the guiding principles for response set out below:

- Work in good faith with the Ombuds Office on the resolution of Complaints and concerns;
- Respond to all requests in as short a timeframe as possible. Provide updates and where delays are unavoidable, provide reasons for the delays; and
- Provide the requested information fully, frankly and honestly.

9.1 Response Timeframes

- 9.1.1 Request for response, interview and/or information (including documents) as part of an assessment or investigation of a Complaint or other Matter before the Ombuds Office: **seven days**, with an extension, on request, to 14 days. Further extensions beyond 14 days may be granted, upon request, under exceptional circumstances. The Ombuds Office will proceed to form a view based on the information available to it where response is not provided or is delayed without reason.
- 9.1.2 Request to respond to a draft report arising from an Ombuds Office investigation or evaluation: **fifteen days** with an extension, on request, to 21 days. Further extensions beyond 21 days may be granted, upon request, under exceptional circumstances.
- 9.1.3 Request to respond to a final report and/or Ombuds Office recommendations: **sixty days** (or 90 days with a suitable reason for delay). A responding party should provide a substantive response to the Ombuds, along with rationale for that response. Should a responding party not be able to meet the 90-day limit due to exceptional circumstances, that party can seek from the Ombuds an additional extension as long as that request comes before the expiration of the original 60-day deadline. The extension request should be in writing, stating the nature of the exception and the expected time required to respond. The Ombuds Office will respond to such extension requests within one week.

In cases where a group, team, or individual has failed to reply or refused a formal request within the timeline above, the Ombuds Office may then notify the Board or, if the matter relates to ICANN staff, its President and CEO, of the noncompliance and proposed action to remedy the Matter.

In some cases, the proposed remedy for failure by a group or individual in the community to respond to or to provide formally requested information, or to engage with the Ombuds Office in good faith when requested to do so, might be a restriction on or suspension of the responding party's role and/or participation in ICANN. In these cases, the Ombuds Office will have taken all reasonable steps to contact the group or individual and provide fair notice of the proposed consequence for failure to respond.

While failures to respond are not addressed directly by the Bylaws, Article 5.4(a) states:

No ICANN employee, Board member, or other participant in Supporting Organizations or Advisory Committees shall prevent or impede the Ombuds[] contact with the ICANN community (including employees of ICANN). ICANN employees and Board members shall direct members of the ICANN community

who voice problems, concerns, or complaints about ICANN to the Ombuds[], who shall advise complainants about the various options available for review of such problems, concerns, or complaints.

Not “prevent(ing)” or “imped(ing)” “contact” implies a duty within ICANN to respond to inquiries made by the Ombuds Office, and in practice, such failures have been met with remedies as set forth above.

The ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy, 3.B, echoes this implied duty to respond in terms of “respondents” to complaints, as well as information being sought from and provided by any “percipient witnesses” relating to a harassment complaint.

10. REPORT(S) TO BOARD

In the case of a Complaint resulting in a written report to the Board, before transmittal of a final report, the Ombuds Office will provide the relevant parties an opportunity to review, respond, and offer feedback on the report before it is provided to the Board. The Ombuds Office will consider the feedback in the preparation of a final report.

If the Ombuds Office is notifying the Board of a Matter that may result in remedial measures that could be considered disciplinary, the Ombuds Office will inform the relevant parties that the Matter will be escalated to the Board, and the relevant parties are expected to respond within the timeframes set out in 9.1.1 of this document.

11. CLOSING A CASE

When the Ombuds Office closes a Case, it will be in one or more of the categories below, if relevant, and the Office will promptly notify party(s), where possible, by email which category:

- **Ombuds Collaborative Conflict Resolution Process concluded:** The Ombuds Office Process has concluded and/or the Matter has been addressed and does not require further action.
- **Self-managed:** The Ombuds Office has provided information, referral, coaching or advice to the individual(s) and the individual(s) have determined the appropriate action on their own without reporting back to the Ombuds.
- **Complaint substantiated:** Following an Ombuds Office evaluation or Investigation of a Complaint, the evidence establishes that, more likely than not (akin in civil law to the “balance of probabilities” or “preponderance of the evidence” standard), the action, inaction, decision, or behavior constitutes unfairness, harassment, or violates the Expected Standards of Behavior.
 - **With remediation agreed by parties:** When in the course of investigating or evaluating a Complaint, the parties agree to a course of remedial action to resolve the Matter.
 - **With notification to the Board:** When in the course of investigating or evaluating a Complaint, the Ombuds informs the Board, within the agreed level of confidentiality, of a Case and its resolution.

- **With recommendation to the Board:** When in the course of investigating or evaluating a Complaint, the Ombuds makes recommendations to the Board with respect to Matters arising from Complaints evaluated or investigated by the Ombuds Office.
- **Complaint substantiated in part:** Following an Ombuds Office evaluation or Investigation of a Complaint, that on balance of probabilities, the evidence establishes that some of the allegations relating to the action, inaction, decision, or behavior constitute unfairness, harassment, or violate the Expected Standards of Behavior.
 - **With remediation agreed by parties:** When in the course of investigating or evaluating a Complaint, the parties agree to a course of remedial action to resolve the Matter.
- **Complaint not substantiated:** Following an Ombuds Office evaluation or Investigation of a Complaint, the evidence does not establish, on balance of probabilities, that the action, inaction, decision, or behavior constitutes unfairness, harassment, or violates the Expected Standards of Behavior.
 - **With remediation agreed by parties:** When in the course of investigating or evaluating a Complaint, the parties agree to a course of remedial action to resolve the Matter.
- **No further action:** There is no viable further action that the Ombuds can take, although the issue may not be concluded or resolved. For example, there are insufficient grounds for further action, or after initial review the requested action is deemed to be out of scope, or circumstances change so that the chosen resolution pathway is no longer appropriate and there is no viable alternative resolution pathway the Ombuds Office can offer.
- **Abandoned/Withdrawn:** The Complainant either ceases to pursue the Complaint (abandoned) or notifies the Office they do not wish to pursue the Matter (withdrawn).
- **Declined to take action:** The Ombuds has declined to take action in line with the Process and reason described in this Ombuds Framework and Process, for example for Matters such as the timeliness of a Complaint, lack of personal interest, trivial, vexatious, etc., or in a circumstance where the Complainant escalates the Complaint to a formal process pursuant to Article IV of the Bylaws.
- **System Improvement:** When, conducting an evaluation, Investigation or in any Case, the Ombuds makes a recommendation or improvement suggestion to ICANN (either informally or via a report to the Board), which the Ombuds believes may lead to a prevention of Conflict escalation or prevention of future Complaints.

12. FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE OMBUDS OFFICE

The Ombuds Office welcomes feedback about its services and is committed to learning and improving as a result. Community Members and other parties working with the Ombuds are invited to give feedback to the Ombuds at any time, either while working with the Ombuds or the Ombuds Office, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Where a relevant party has a complaint about the Ombuds Office service quality or Process (rather than Case outcomes), they are encouraged to first discuss this with the Ombuds, or alternatively, use the structured Ombuds Office feedback channels.

If the issue remains unresolved or the complaint involves Ombuds Office's ethics or integrity, the affected Community Member may contact the Ombuds and request that the Ombuds provide the details of how to raise such a complaint. The Ombuds will provide this information within the designated timeframes for Ombuds' response, as set out in this Framework and Process.

13. OMBUDS ROLE IN PROMOTING FAIRNESS, LEARNING, AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Ombuds Office is committed to promoting fairness and supporting learning and continuous improvement in the ICANN community. The Cases that the Ombuds Office handles are a rich source of data about the ICANN ecosystem. The Ombuds will use aggregated and anonymized data from these Cases to identify and suggest improvements.

The Ombuds will conduct periodic reviews of ICANN's Expected Standards of Behavior and the ICANN's Community Anti-Harassment Policy and, where required, provide input and recommendations (sometimes suggesting changes) to these Standards and Policies.

/ends

ⁱ Constantino, Cathy A and Merchant, Christina Sickles, *Defining Conflict Management Systems: A Guide to Creating Productive and Healthy Organizations*. (Josey-Bass, 1996) p5

ⁱⁱ ISO/TS 37008:2023(E))

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://openpublishing.princeton.edu/read/negotiation/section/9dde2d4c-0bca-442a-9109-286f51de22ca>

^{iv} Standards and principles are adapted from the IOA Standard of Ethics and International Organization for Standardization (ISO) (ISO/TS/37008:2023(E)); Internal Investigation of Organizations

Pages 30-58 Removed -- Confidential Information

REFERENCE MATERIALS - BOARD PAPER NO. 2026.06.07.1b

TITLE: ICANN Ombuds Office Framework and Process

The Ombuds is seeking Board approval of the ICANN Ombuds Office Framework and Process document (Framework and Process) in line with the evolution of the Ombuds Office since 2009. The revised Framework and Process is attached in **Attachment A**.

BACKGROUND:

Since the 2009 publication of the operative Board-approved [Ombuds Framework](#), the ICANN Ombuds Office has evolved significantly including to address [Work Stream 2 \(WS2\) recommendations](#) to improve the Office and incorporate anti-harassment and reconsideration request responsibilities into the role. WS2 recommendations 5.2, 5.4 and 5.5 are addressed in this revised Framework and Process.

On 12 September 2025, the Board discussed an overview of the process to handle complaints and conflict resolution with the Ombuds at the Board Workshop.

On 26 October 2025, the Board further discussed a full draft of the Framework and Process at which time the Board agreed that the draft document could be posted for Public Comment.

On 23 December 2025, the [draft Framework and Process was sent for Public Comment](#). The proceeding received 11 submissions from individuals, organizations, and community groups and the Ombuds prepared a [Public Comment Summary Report](#).

From 13-15 April 2025, the Ombuds held three engagement sessions with Board members to get guidance on three complex topicsⁱ related to the Framework and Process revisions suggested by the Public Comment proceeding. The topics discussed were (i) Own Initiative Investigations, (ii) responsibility to respond to the Ombuds Office and (iii) notice to the Board.

Substantive changes to the Framework and Process following the Public Comment and include the following:

- Updated the standards of practice and ethics, including informality added service quality commitments (timely, useful, accessible) and an anti-retaliation statement;
- Clarified timelines, including an expedited timeline; and

- Updated the responsibility to respond section with guiding principles for full and timely response to the Ombuds Office, timeframes for response to initial requests, draft reports, and final reports/recommendations specified; shortened timelines for response so that these fit within the overall timescale for complaint handling and clarified potential consequences for failure to respond or engage.

Relevant Background Materials

- o Red-line version showing the changes since the 23 December 2025 version sent for Public Comment (**Attachment B**).
- o Operative Board-approved [Ombuds Framework](#), published in 2009;
- o [Public Comment Proceeding](#) and [Public Comment Summary Report](#); and

Submitted By:	Elizabeth Field, ICANN Ombuds
Date Noted:	27 May 2026
Email:	elizabeth.field@icann.org

ICANN BOARD PAPER NO. 2026.06.07.2a

TITLE: Transfer Policy Recommendations
PROPOSED ACTION: For Board Consideration and Approval

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This proposed action is to adopt the forty-seven (47) final policy recommendations of the [Transfer Policy Review Policy Development Process Final Report](#).

Per ICANN Bylaws Annex A, Section 9: Any PDP Recommendations approved by a GNSO Supermajority Vote shall be adopted by the Board unless, by a vote of more than two-thirds (2/3) of the Board, the Board determines that such policy is not in the best interests of the ICANN community or ICANN. If the GNSO Council recommendation was approved by less than a GNSO Supermajority Vote, a majority vote of the Board will be sufficient to determine that such policy is not in the best interests of the ICANN community or ICANN. In this case, there was a [GNSO Supermajority Vote](#) in favor of the adoption of the PDP Recommendations.

Privileged and Confidential

the Board reviewed the recommendations and the ICANN organization (ICANN org) implementation analysis and found that the policy supports the best interests of the ICANN Community and ICANN.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

Whereas, the [Inter-Registrar Transfer Policy \(IRTP\)](#), [renamed Transfer Policy in 2015](#), is a consensus policy adopted in 2004 to provide a straightforward procedure for domain name holders to transfer domain names between registrars.

Whereas, on 18 February 2021, the GNSO Council passed a [resolution](#) to initiate a review of the [Transfer Policy](#). The Transfer Policy Review Working Group was tasked with determining if changes to the policy are needed to improve the ease, security, and efficacy of inter-registrar and inter-registrant transfers.

Whereas, the PDP followed the prescribed [PDP steps as stated in the Bylaws](#), and on 31 January 2025, the Transfer Policy Review Working Group reached full consensus on all of the forty-seven (47) final policy recommendations that are included in its [Final Report](#).

Resolution Text Superseded

Whereas, the ICANN Board considered the [Final Report](#) of 4 February 2025, [Board Public Comment Proceeding input](#), including the [Public Comment Summary Report](#), and ICANN org’s analysis on the feasibility of the recommendations

Resolution Text Superseded

Resolution Text Superseded

Resolved (2026.06.07.xx), the Board adopts the Recommendations, and directs ICANN's President and CEO, or his designee(s), subject to prioritization, to implement the Recommendations, taking into account the ICANN org Feasibility Assessment and any additional operational, technical, legal, security, or resource considerations identified during implementation.

Why is the Board addressing the issue?

Resolution Text Superseded

On 12

March 2025, [the GNSO Council unanimously voted](#) to approve all of the forty-seven (47) Transfer Policy Review recommendations,

Rationale Text Superseded

Rationale Text Superseded

Rationale Text Superseded

The GNSO Council [transmitted](#) its [Recommendations Report](#) to the ICANN Board on 10 April 2025.

The Board held a public comment period on the [Final Report](#) from 28 April 2025 to 16 June 2025, with the [Report of Public Comments](#) published on 2 July 2025.

As required by the ICANN Bylaws, the Board provided [notice](#) to the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) on 25 July 2025 of the recommendations and requested notice of any public policy concerns from the GAC, with no concerns received by the requested date of 18 August 2025.

Rationale Text Superseded

What is the proposal being considered?

This proposed action is in furtherance the GNSO Council [resolution](#) to initiate a two-phased PDP to review the [Transfer Policy](#), and in turn on the proposed recommendations as the PDP WG specified in the [Final Report](#).

Which stakeholders or others were consulted?

The PDP Working Group opened two public comment proceedings on the Initial Report of the Transfer Policy Review Working Group and its updated version, one in [2022](#) (Phase 1(a)) and one in [2024](#) (complete version of initial report). Thirty-four (34) and 17 submissions from groups, organizations, and individuals were received, respectively. The WG responded to public comment submissions in subsequent sessions, using a Public Comment Review Tool for both the 2022 (link [here](#)) and 2024 (link [here](#)) public comment proceedings.

In addition to regular updates provided to and during GNSO Council meetings, webinars on the Transfer Policy Review took place on [4](#) and [9](#) September 2024.

The ICANN Board opened a [Public Comment Proceeding on the Final Report](#) from 28 April to 16 June 2025, and the [Public Comment Summary Report](#) was published on 2 July 2025. The ICANN Board received a total of 11 submissions from groups and individuals.

What significant materials did the Board review?

The Board considered various significant materials and documents, including the Transfer Policy Review Working Group [Final Report](#), the [submissions](#) received during the [Public Comment Proceeding on the Final Report](#) that opened from 28 April to 16 June 2025, and the ICANN Feasibility Assessment.

Are there positive or negative community impacts?

Taking action on the recommendations Rationale Text Superseded

Rationale Text Superseded

The Transfer Policy

Review Working Group was tasked with determining if changes to the policy are needed to improve the ease, security, and efficacy of inter-registrar and inter-registrant transfers.

The WG aimed to achieve positive community impacts in proposing updates to the Transfer Policy, which include enhancing the minimum security requirements for the technical aspects of an inter-registrar transfer, converting optional security locks to mandatory locks to create a more consistent policy, adding required notices to alert registrants of potential action on their domain names, and clarifying previously confusing definitions and text. In making its recommendations, the WG aimed to update the current Transfer Policy to allow for a consistent, secure, and streamlined process for transfers across all accredited registrars, reducing confusion and simplifying registrants' experience. The Board has reviewed the recommendations and believes they support the goals of increased security and other benefits for domain name registrants.

Are there fiscal impacts or ramifications on ICANN (strategic plan, operating plan, budget); the community; and/or the public?

Adoption of the recommendations will require changes in processes and procedures for gTLD registries as well as accredited registrars, which will entail associated costs. In addition, ICANN org resources will be required for the implementation of these recommendations, including drafting policy with an Implementation Review Team as well as design and production of a separate Change of Registrant Data (CORD) Policy.

These efforts are considered necessary to address the issues that are part of this Policy Development Process and to enhance the existing Transfer Policy to the benefit of all parties concerned.

Are there any security, stability or resiliency issues relating to the DNS?

The WG spent considerable time discussing how to improve the security of the inter-registrar transfer process. In its Final Report, the WG noted, “the recommendations include adjustments and enhancements that seek to provide an appropriate level of security for the inter-Registrar transfer process while also taking into account the customer experience, applicable law, and operational considerations for Registries and Registrars.”

Is this decision in the public interest and within ICANN’s mission?

This action is within ICANN's mission and mandate, and action arises out of the GNSO's defined policy development process in Annex A of the ICANN Bylaws.

Signature Block:

Submitted by: XXX

Position: XXX

Date Noted: XXX

Email: XXX

Appendix: High Level Overview of the 47 Recommendations

In describing its rationale for the policy recommendations, the Working Group noted the recommendations are intended to:

- create a standalone “Change of Registrant Data” policy;
- improve the security of inter-registrar transfers by adjusting the current requirements, which lack defined security details, to align with current industry security standards;
- clarify or remove language that had historically caused confusion for registrants and/or inconsistent application by registrars;
- incorporate a currently optional Registry Service into the Transfer Policy, which will obviate the need for the RSEP process when a registry chooses to offer this service;
- adjust and further define the process under which ICANN approves bulk transfers due to a registrar acquisition or termination; and
- resolve the provisions under Board-initiated deferral of contractual compliance enforcement. (Specifically, the Board [deferred](#) enforcement of the Gaining FOA, and the Working Group is recommending removing that requirement. Additionally, the Working Group has agreed that the addition of removal of a Privacy service does not constitute a Change of Registrant, as defined in the Transfer Policy).

Group 1(a) Recommendations	
1	References to WHOIS must be changed to Registration Data Directory Services (RDDS)
2	References to Administrative Contact or Transfer Contact must be updated to Registered Name Holder
3	The Registrar MUST restrict RNH from transferring a domain name to a new Registrar within 720 hours (30 days) of the initial registration date
4	Replaced term “AuthInfo Code” with “Transfer Authorization Code” or “TAC”
5	Created definition for TAC, which is required for a domain name to be transferred
6	TAC must be set at the Registry and issued to RNH within 120 hours (5 days)
7	TAC Composition meets minimum requirements in RFC 9154
8	TAC stored at the Registry and Registry verifies it meets syntax requirements
9	Valid for 36 hours & can be reset by agreement among parties or for security reasons

10	TAC only upon request & Registry must store it securely
11	Registrar MUST send notification of TAC issuance within 10 minutes with details and instructions (provided in recommendations)
12	Registry MUST verify TAC is valid in order to accept an inter-Registrar transfer request
13	TAC MUST be used no more than once
14	Registrar MUST retain all records pertaining to TAC management and processing
15	Gaining FOA requirement eliminated
16	Registry must provide Gaining Registrar's IANA ID to Losing Registrar
17	Losing FOA (now called Transfer Confirmation) and procedure retained
18	Registrar MUST restrict the RNH from transferring a domain name to a new Registrar within 720 hours of the completion of an inter-Registrar transfer; Registrar MAY remove the 720-hour inter-Registrar transfer restriction early if specified conditions are met. Registrar MUST maintain records.
19	Registrar MUST send a "Notification of Transfer Completion" to the RNH without undue delay but no later than 24 hours after the transfer is completed
20	If Losing Registrar denies a transfer request for one of the enumerated reasons, Losing Registrar MUST provide the reasoning to the RNH and upon request to the Gaining Registrar.
Process Stage: Process & Confirm Transfer Request	
21	Enumerated reasons Registrar MAY deny request (e.g., evidence of DNS abuse)
22	Enumerated reasons Registrar MUST (formerly MAY) deny request (e.g., 30 days from registration)
23	Enumerated reasons Registrar MUST deny request (e.g., pending UDRP proceeding)
24	Enumerated reasons Registrar MUST NOT deny request (no response from RNH)
Group 1(b) Recommendations: Change of Registrant Data	
25	"Change of Registrant" to be replaced with "Change of Registrant Data" 25.1: CORD = Material Change to the RNH name or organization, or any change to the RNH email address 25.2: "Material Change" remains fit for purpose 25.3: CORD ≠ addition or removal of privacy data in RDDS (when privacy service are provided by the Registrar or its Affiliates)
26	Create a standalone "Change of Registrant Data" policy, existing outside of the Transfer Policy 26.1: Remove "Designated Agent" from CORD policy 26.2: Remove Section II.B "Availability of Change of Registrant" from CORD policy 26.3: Remove requirement that both the Prior Registrant and the New Registrant confirm COR 26.4: Remove 60-day post-COR Registrar transfer restriction (and opt-out)

27	Registrar MUST send a Change of Registrant Data notification to the RNH no later than 24 hours after CORD occurred (subject to Rec 28) 27.1-27.7: CORD notification requirements (language, elements, medium, email specifications, consolidation)
28	Registrar MAY provide RNH the option to opt out of receiving Change of Registrant Data notifications 28.1-28.6: Opt out requirements (default activation, clear instructions and warning, records, data field options)
Group 2 Recommendations: Transfer Emergency Action Contact (TEAC), Transfer Dispute Resolution Policy (TDRP), Full Portfolio Transfers	
29	Update required timeframe for TEAC initial response, from 4 hours to 24 hours / 1 calendar day
30	Initial communication to TEAC within 30 days of unauthorized domain loss, or else written explanation
31	Gaining Registrar must update Losing Registrar at least every 72 hours, with specific actions taken
32	Initial communication to TEAC must be/include email (which “starts the clock”)
33	Recommend the GNSO to request an Issues Report to explore expanding the TDRP to registrant filers and creating a new standalone dispute resolution mechanism for registrants to challenge improper transfers.
34	34.1 Registry MAY charge a fee for a full portfolio transfer of 50,000 or more domain names. 34.2: Registry MUST waive the fee in cases of involuntary full portfolio transfer (ex. ICANN is terminating Rr due to noncompliance)
35	Retain the current minimum 50,000 names for fee trigger and the current price ceiling of USD \$50,000 (if multiple ROs, collective fee MUST NOT exceed USD \$50,000, and MUST be apportioned)
36	If RO opts to waive its portion of the collective fee, remaining ROs MUST NOT adjust their fees higher
37	Upon transfer completion, RO(s) MUST provide notice to ICANN and include the number of domains
38	Upon receipt of all RO notices, ICANN MUST provide affected ROs with the reported numbers and corresponding percentages of domains involved in the bulk transfer
39	Gaining Registrar MUST be responsible for paying any relevant Registry fees related to any voluntary full portfolio transfer that it initiated and approved.
40	Update Transfer Policy to include the Bulk Transfer After Partial Portfolio Acquisition (BTAPPA)
41	Expand BTAPPA to allow for transfer when customers of Registrar (such as reseller) elects to transfer its portfolio of names to another registrar
42	Registrar (or reseller) MUST notify affected registrants approximately one month before transfer is to occur.

43	Expiration dates are not affected by BTAPPA; accordingly, no ICANN fees.
44	Registry MUST reject BTAPPA request if there is reasonable evidence BTAPPA is requested to avoid paying fees. Registry MAY reject request if request occurs within six months of another BTAPPA request.
45	Registrar's Registration Agreement must permit BTAPPA.
46	ROs MAY charge a fee for a change of sponsorship, but ROs MUST provide notice to Registrars of any fees associated with a change of sponsorship upon request and prior to the initiation of the transfer
47	In a change of sponsorship, Gaining Registrar MUST NOT impose a new inter-registrar transfer restriction preventing affected registrants from transferring their domains to another Registrar

ICANN BOARD PAPER NO. 2026.06.07.2b

**TITLE: GNSO Phase 2 Final Report on the
Internationalized Domain Names Expedited Policy
Development Process**

**PROPOSED ACTION: For Board Consideration and
Approval**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Board is being asked to adopt fourteen (14) Recommendations from the Phase 2 Final Report of the Expedited Policy Development Process on the Internationalized Domain Names. The Board’s adoption of the Recommendations will allow for the commencement of implementation work.

The GNSO Council initiated an Expedited Policy Development Process (EPDP) on Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) (hereafter “EPDP-IDNs” or “IDN EPDP”) in May 2021 to i) Determine the approach for a consistent definition of (variant labels in) all Generic Top-level Domains (gTLDs); and ii) Develop policy recommendations, building on the existing New gTLD Subsequent Procedures (SubPro) PDP WG recommendations, that will eventually allow for the introduction of variant gTLDs at the top-level. In November 2022, the Council approved an EPDP Team request to divide its work into two phases, with Phase 1 covering topics related to top-level gTLD definition and variant gTLD management, and Phase 2 covering topics related to second-level variant domain management issues.

In November 2023, the EPDP Team finalized its Recommendations and submitted its Phase 1 Final Report to the GNSO Council, who approved all fifty-eight (58) policy Recommendations. The Phase 1 Recommendations, which addressed top-level gTLD definition and variant management, were [adopted](#) by the ICANN Board and are now under implementation through the IDN Implementation Review Team (IRT) as a sub-track to the full SubPro IRT. Phase 2 focuses

on key topics for the second-level domains such as the “same entity” principle, IDN table harmonization, registry agreements and services, dispute resolution procedures, and the process to update the [IDN Implementation Guidelines](#).

In November 2024, the GNSO Council voted to approve, by a GNSO Supermajority, all final consensus Recommendations contained in the [Phase 2 Final Report](#). As noted in Annex A, Section 9(a) in the ICANN Bylaws, “Any PDP Recommendations approved by a GNSO Supermajority Vote shall be adopted by the Board unless, by a vote of more than two-thirds (2/3) of the Board, the Board determines that such policy is not in the best interests of the ICANN community or ICANN.”

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Board IDN UA Working Group (BIUWG) reviewed the analysis of the IDN EPDP Phase 2 Recommendations. Based on its discussions, the BIUWG recommends that the Board consider adopting all fourteen (14) Recommendations and directing ICANN org to commence implementation work in consultation with the IDN EPDP IRT.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

Whereas, on 14 March 2019, the ICANN Board [approved](#) staff recommendations on allocating IDN variant TLD labels and requested that the GNSO and ccNSO consider the Recommendations while developing their respective policies related to IDN variant management.

Whereas, in response, the GNSO Council [conducted](#) an Expedited Policy Development Process on Internationalized Domain Names (EPDP-IDNs) from May 2021 to November 2024, as described on the [EPDP-IDNs webpage](#).

Whereas, on 13 November 2024, the GNSO Council [approved](#) all twenty (20) final Outputs documented in the IDN EPDP Phase 2 Final Report published on 7 October 2024, consisting of fourteen (14) policy Recommendations and six (6) items of Implementation Guidance, and recommended that the ICANN Board adopt all fourteen (14) policy Recommendations.

Whereas, on 9 December 2024, the GNSO Council transmitted its [Recommendations Report](#) to the ICANN Board, following which a [Public Comment](#) proceeding was held from 23 December 2024 to 03 February 2025, and the resulting [Staff Report](#) was published on 18 February 2025.

Whereas, on 23 December 2024, pursuant to the ICANN Bylaws, the ICANN Board [formally notified](#) the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) of the GNSO Council's adoption of the fourteen (14) policy Recommendations and six (6) items of Implementation Guidance contained in the IDN EPDP Phase 2 Final Report, and invited the GAC to raise any public policy concerns and provide related advice.

Resolved (2026.06.07.xx), the ICANN Board adopts the fourteen (14) policy Recommendations contained in the IDN EPDP Phase 2 Final Report.

Resolved (2026.06.07.xx), the Board directs the ICANN President and CEO, or his designee(s), subject to prioritization, to implement the Recommendations, taking into account the ICANN org Feasibility Assessment and any additional operational, technical, legal, security, or resource considerations identified during implementation.

Rationale for Resolutions 2026.06.xx.xx – 2026.06.xx.xx

Why is the Board addressing the issue?

On 13 November 2024, the GNSO Council voted with a GNSO Supermajority to [approve](#) all fourteen (14) Recommendations set forth in the IDN EPDP Phase 2 Final Report. Subsequently, on 9 December 2024, pursuant to Annex A-1 of the ICANN Bylaws, the GNSO Council

submitted its [Recommendations Report](#) to the ICANN Board of Directors, noting that “This Recommendations Report is being sent to the ICANN Board for its review of the recommendations approved by the GNSO Council, which the GNSO Council recommends be adopted by the ICANN Board.”

As required by Article 3, Section 6.(a)(iii) of the ICANN Bylaws, the approved Recommendations were posted for [Public Comment](#) to inform Board action. Additionally, according to Section 11.3(i)(x) of the ICANN Bylaws, the GNSO Council's support for these Recommendations, surpassing the Supermajority threshold, obligates the Board to adopt the Recommendations unless, by a vote of more than two-thirds, the Board determines that the policy is not in the best interests of the ICANN community or ICANN.

What is the proposal being considered?

In May 2021, the GNSO Council initiated an EPDP on IDNs to:

- i) Determine the approach for a consistent definition of all gTLDs; and
- ii) Develop policy recommendations that will eventually allow for the introduction of variant gTLDs at the top-level.

In November 2022, the Council approved an EPDP Team request to divide its work into two phases, with Phase 1 covering topics related to top-level gTLD definition and variant management, and Phase 2 covering topics related to second-level variant management issues. The ICANN Board adopted all fifty-eight (58) Phase 1 Recommendations on 8 June 2024, and implementation is currently underway.

The EPDP Team published its Phase 2 Initial Report for Public Comment in April 2024. Following its review of all the public comments received, the EPDP Team finalized its Recommendations and submitted its Phase 2 Final Report to the GNSO Council in October

2024. The Council approved the Final Report, including all fourteen (14) Consensus Policy Recommendations. The Board is now considering the Recommendations, which cover the following topics: the “same entity” principle, IDN table harmonization, variant deployment requirements, source domain determination, the “same entity” lifecycle, inter-registrar transfers, UDRP & Rights Protection Mechanism transfers, Registry-Registrar communication, variant domain disclosure, and IDN Implementation Guidelines.

Which stakeholders or others were consulted?

In accordance with the GNSO’s PDP Manual, in August 2021, the EPDP-IDNs Team reached out to all ICANN Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees as well as all GNSO Stakeholder Groups and Constituencies requesting input at the start of its deliberations. In response, [statements](#) were received from the: Registries Stakeholder Group (RySG), Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC), and Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO) (specifically its ccPDP4 Variant Management Subgroup). The input received was incorporated into the EPDP Team’s deliberations as each topic was discussed. Where groups that provided written input also had representative members on the EPDP Team, those members were well-positioned to respond to questions from other members requesting clarity about the written input during the Team’s consideration of the topic.

While the Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC) did not appoint members to the EPDP Team, its subject matter experts on IDNs met with the EPDP Team during two engagement sessions to discuss their views on specific charter questions and preliminary recommendations. Some of the SSAC inputs were recorded in [SAC120](#), which was published in April 2022. In addition, the EPDP Team conducted an [outreach webinar](#) for the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) in February 2023, briefing the GAC on issues regarding variants and explaining the significance of the EPDP Team’s work.

Community input was also sought through Public Comment on the EPDP Team’s Phase 2 Initial Report from 11 April to 21 May 2024.

Throughout its work, the EPDP Team has maintained lines of communication with the ccPDP4 Working Group (WG), which was conducting policy development work on IDN ccTLDs. These communications focused on common topics which appeared in the charters of both the EPDP-IDNs and ccPDP4, namely variant management and the IDN Implementation Guidelines. For Phase 2, the ccPDP4 WG and/or ccNSO Council provided input on the document process and approval step pertaining to the IDN Implementation Guidelines. The goal of this communication was to meet the ICANN Board’s request that the GNSO and the ccNSO keep each other informed of the progress in developing the relevant policies and procedures to ensure a consistent solution for variant gTLDs and variant ccTLDs

In March 2024, the EPDP Team held a [working session](#) during ICANN79 to review draft recommendation text from the Phase 2 Initial Report. By the Public Comment closure date, the EPDP Team received a total of eight (8) submissions from groups, organizations, and individuals. Following a thorough review of the submissions, the EPDP Team finalized its Recommendations and Implementation Guidance. The EPDP Team delivered its Phase 2 [Final Report](#) to the GNSO Council on 07 October 2024.

Following the GNSO Council’s approval, the ICANN Board sought the community’s input via [Public Comment](#) on the Final Report from 23 December 2024 to 03 February 2025. The ICANN Board received a total of three (3) submissions from groups and individuals, all supporting the Final Report as drafted and recommending that the ICANN Board adopt all Recommendations.

What concerns or issues were raised by the community?

The EPDP-IDNs Team thoroughly reviewed the Public Comment submissions concerning the Phase 2 Initial Report and incorporated numerous suggestions, where necessary, to the Final Report.

During the review, the EPDP Team took note of those topic areas where there was a relatively high concentration of submissions expressing concerns or proposing alternative language. Examples of such topics relate to the automatic allocation and activation process , source domain name,, Transfer Policy,, mechanism and service for the realization of the “same entity” principle, including the use of Registration Data Directory Services (RDDS),, and defining the proper vehicle for the update of the IDN Implementation Guidelines.. Another topic that was brought to attention was related to the Extensible Provisioning Protocol (EPP) and transaction fees..The report detailing how the comments were addressed can be found [here](#).

What significant materials did the Board review?

To help facilitate the Board’s determination of whether the Recommendations are in the best interest of the ICANN community and ICANN, the Board considered the following materials to be significant:

- The 26 August 1999 [Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy](#)
- The 25 February 2012 [IDN Implementation Guidelines](#)
- The 23 July 2013 [SAC060](#) Report: SSAC Comment on Examining the User Experience Implications of Active Variant TLDs Report.
- The 25 January 2019 IDN Variant TLD Management [paper](#) developed by ICANN org.
- The 7 October 2019 [Recommendations](#) for the Technical Utilization of the Root Zone Label Generation Rules (RZ-LGR).

- The 26 January 2020 [Transfer Policy](#)
- The 24 November 2020 Phase 1 [Final Report](#) on the Review of All Rights Protection Mechanisms in All gTLDs Policy Development Process
- IDN-related Outputs under Topic 25 in the SubPro PDP [Final Report](#) published 2 February 2021.
- The 8 November 2023 Phase 1 [Final Report](#) of the Expedited Policy Development Process (EPDP) for Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs).
- The 11 April 2024 Phase 2 [Initial Report](#) of the Expedited Policy Development Process (EPDP) for Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs).
- The 7 October 2024 Phase 2 [Final Report](#) of the Expedited Policy Development Process (EPDP) for Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs).
- The 24 October 2024 [Second-Level Reference Label Generation Rule \(LGR\)](#)
- The 13 November 2024 GNSO Council [resolution](#) of the IDN EPDP Phase 2 Final Report Recommendations.
- The 9 December 2024 GNSO Council [Recommendations Report](#) to the ICANN Board Regarding Adoption of the Phase 2 Final Recommendations from the GNSO Expedited Policy Development Process (EPDP) on Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs)
- The December 2024 - February 2025 [Public Comment](#) on the IDN EPDP Phase 2 Final Report

Are there positive or negative community impacts?

Adopting the Recommendations will positively impact ICANN by upholding the pivotal role of IDNs in enabling global access to domain names in native languages and scripts. These Recommendations allow for implementing variant domain names effectively, making IDNs more usable across communities. More generally, IDNs not only foster a more linguistically diverse and trusted Internet but also facilitate broader engagement for organizations, governments, and businesses with audiences in their preferred language or script. The secure and stable use of

IDNs is essential for enhancing digital inclusivity and advancing the goal of an inclusive and globally accessible Internet and remains a priority for ICANN.

Additionally, in its March 2019 [rationale](#), the Board requested the GNSO and ccNSO to coordinate their respective areas of IDN policy work to help ensure a consistent solution based on the variant TLD Recommendations for IDN variant ccTLDs and IDN variant gTLDs. The Board anticipates that the success of this coordinated effort will also generate significant benefits for the global community, and reinforces the importance of collaboration and the critical role of the multistakeholder model.

Are there fiscal impacts or ramifications on ICANN (strategic plan, operating plan, budget); the community; and/or the public?

Implementation of the IDN EPDP Phase 2 Recommendations will require resources from across ICANN org. ICANN org’s cross-functional implementation assessment evaluated financial and systems impacts as part of its review, finding no concerns that would prevent implementation. Specific resource requirements will be scoped and planned through the implementation process, subject to availability of resources. It is further anticipated that registry and registrar systems will also require updates to accommodate new policy requirements.

Are there any security, stability or resiliency issues relating to the DNS?

The IDN EPDP Phase 2 Final Report identified the “same entity” principle as a core requirement for second-level variant domain management, under which an allocated variant domain name must remain associated with the same registrant throughout its lifecycle. Further, the Final Report calls for a consistent definition of variant domains across the gTLD and its variant gTLDs through IDN table harmonization. These Recommendations aim to balance the usability of IDNs while maintaining the security, stability, and resiliency of the DNS.

Is this decision in the public interest and within ICANN's mission?

This action is within ICANN's mission and mandate and in the public interest as set forth in the ICANN Bylaws. The multistakeholder policy development process of bottom-up, consensus policies and guidelines help advance the stable and secure operation of the Internet's unique identifier systems. Enabling the secure and stable use of IDNs will empower citizens, businesses, and communities to fully benefit from the Internet, enhancing accessibility and fostering greater participation in the digital world.

Is this either a defined policy process within ICANN's Supporting Organizations or ICANN's Organizational Administrative Function decision requiring public comment or not requiring public comment?

As required by the ICANN Bylaws and the GNSO's policy procedures, the Recommendations were the subject of [Public Comment](#) as discussed above, and the Final Report was developed in collaboration with the ICANN community, in accordance with the GNSO PDP Manual.

Signature Block:

Submitted by:

Position:

Date Noted:

Email: