

# CEO Report to the Board

Period Covering: 18 December 2023 to 3 May 2024

28 May 2024



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# OFFICE OF THE CEO

Sally Costerton, SVP, Global Stakeholder Engagement and Interim President and CEO

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND MILESTONES

- ⦿ Launched the [ICANN Grant Program](#) and opened the first application cycle.
- ⦿ Launched the [WSIS+20 Outreach Network](#) and mailing list.
- ⦿ Launched the updated [New Generic Top-Level Domain \(gTLD\) Program website](#).
- ⦿ Organized the second annual [Universal Acceptance \(UA\) Day](#).

## OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

As we approach the halfway point of 2024, the ICANN organization (org) continues to make progress toward the [President and CEO Goals](#) for this fiscal year and to fulfill ICANN's mission.

In our effort to create a more multilingual Internet, ICANN celebrated the second annual [UA Day](#) on 28 March, with the flagship event taking place in Belgrade, Serbia. Meanwhile, work continued to make ICANN's systems UA-ready, and ICANN staff can now send emails to and receive emails from internationalized email addresses.

ICANN org made great strides on the [ICANN Grant Program](#). The program officially launched in January, and the first application cycle opened in March, presenting an exciting opportunity for eligible organizations across the globe to apply for funding for projects that are consistent with ICANN's mission.

As part of our communications and engagement strategy to address the 20-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+20) next year, ICANN org launched the [WSIS+20 Outreach Network](#) in April. This initiative brings together like-minded stakeholders to facilitate coordinated efforts leading up to the WSIS+20 negotiations

Also in April, the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) team took an important step toward changing the root zone key signing key (KSK) by generating a new key at the [53<sup>rd</sup> Root KSK Ceremony](#). The KSK rollover is an important component of maintaining a secure and stable Domain Name System (DNS).

To support community reviews, ICANN org facilitated Board action to [initiate the Pilot Holistic Review](#) and supported community leadership in forming the [Continuous Improvement Program](#) Community Coordination Group. In addition, org staff drafted an updated [Lifecycle of Reviews](#) Thought Paper that proposes a revised Specific Review process and community engagement plan.

Across the organization, dedicated staff are working toward opening the next round of new gTLD applications in April 2026. In May, we introduced an updated [New gTLD Program website](#), the first in a series of milestones and deliverables leading up to the next application round.

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Moreover, after successfully launching the [Registration Data Request Service](#) (RDRS) last year, ICANN org published the first RDRS usage metrics report in January, and it has been publishing them each month since.

In addition to these key efforts in support of the CEO Goals, work continues in furtherance of our Strategic Plan and ICANN's mission. In February, ICANN org published the [Registration Data Policy](#), the culmination of four years of work and collaboration between the ICANN org and community. Then in April, we [announced](#) three-year master service agreements with three organizations to support Internet accessibility under the [Emergency Assistance Program](#).

I'm proud of our many achievements so far this year and honored to have the opportunity to continue to lead the organization as the Interim President and CEO. I look forward to continuing to delivering on my goals and on our mission in the coming months.

# ORGANIZATION: FINANCES

Xavier Calvez, SVP, Planning and CFO

## Total ICANN Year-to-Date Financials – as of 31 March 2024

USD in millions Unaudited	FY24 YTD Actual				
	ICANN Operations	New gTLD Program	SFICR Projects	Grant Program	Total ICANN
<b>Funding</b>	<b>\$112.7</b>	<b>(\$0.2)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$112.5</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>\$112.5</b>	<b>\$14.4</b>	<b>\$2.8</b>	<b>\$0.9</b>	<b>\$130.6</b>
<b>Average FTEs</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>456</b>
<b>End of Period FTEs</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>475</b>

The table above is a summary of ICANN's financials and its segment components which include ICANN Operations (including IANA), the New gTLD Program 2012 round and next round, Review Prioritization Implementation, RDRS, and the ICANN Grant Program. This information reflects nine months of fiscal year (FY) 2024 actuals ending 31 March 2024.

Total ICANN year-to-date expenses have increased \$17 million from the same period last year, driven primarily by increases in personnel, inflation in travel expenses, and work on the New gTLD Program: Next Round. Total ICANN ending headcount was 475 across all ICANN's segments, up from an ending headcount of 423 in the same period last year. Staffing levels have increased to support new work that the org is carrying out.

Below are more detailed summaries of each ICANN segment and the Reserve Fund.

### ICANN Operations

- ⦿ Funding of \$112.7M is favorable to budget by \$0.4M. Lower than planned legacy transaction fees have been more than offset by higher than planned new gTLD transaction fees, registrar accreditation and application fees, and registry fixed fees.
- ⦿ Expenses of \$112.5M are \$4.1M higher than budget, driven by higher than planned travel and personnel costs, partially offset by lower than planned professional services.

### New gTLD Program: 2012 Round

- ⦿ The 2012 round of the New gTLD Program has incurred \$2.0M in FY24 for costs to process remaining applications including, but not limited to, application change requests, communicating with applicants, contracting processes, support systems for gTLD launches, the Trademark Clearinghouse and Trademark Database, and the Emergency Back-End Registry Operator program, which is in place in the event of a registry failure. In addition,

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there has been \$0.7M of expenses for contingency items related to legal fees for remaining applications.

### **New gTLD Program: Next Round**

- ⦿ In July 2023, the ICANN Board received and acknowledged the \$70M Implementation Plan.
- ⦿ Thus far, \$22M in funding has been approved by the ICANN Board.
- ⦿ Expenses of \$15.3M have been incurred from April 2023 through March 2024 for continued internal staff and external vendor costs as work continues toward implementation of the next round and opening the application period in the second quarter of 2026.

### **Review Prioritization Implementation**

- ⦿ Review prioritization implementation work, which was approved by the ICANN Board in November 2022 for \$5.8M, continues to progress and is 55 percent complete at spend of \$2.5M from July 2022 through March 2024.

### **Registration Data Request Service**

- ⦿ RDRS has incurred \$2.0M of costs for developing and operating the system from December 2022 through March 2024.

### **ICANN Grant Program**

- ⦿ The Grant Program has incurred \$1.4M of implementation expenses from July 2022 through March 2024 for staff efforts, external consultations, and ICANN org administrative support. The first application window opened in March 2024.

### **Reserve Fund**

- ⦿ The Reserve Fund balance of \$179M as of 31 March 2024 is an increase of \$9M from the start of the fiscal year due to investment increases.

## ICANN Operations Year-to-Date Financials – as of 31 Mar 2024

ICANN Operations, a segment of Total ICANN, consists of ongoing activities such as the technical coordination of the DNS and coordination of the development and implementation of policies concerning top-level domains.

The statement of activity below provides a summary of ICANN Operations' financial cost categories covering nine months of FY24 unaudited financials ending 31 March 2024.

USD in millions Unaudited	FY24 YTD Actual	FY24 YTD Revised Budget	Under/(Over) vs. FY24 Budget	FY23 Actual	Under/(Over) vs. FY23 Actuals
<b>Funding</b>	<b>\$112.7</b>	<b>\$112.3</b>	<b>\$0.4</b>	<b>\$113.4</b>	<b>-\$0.7</b>
Personnel	64.6	63.5	(1.1)	60.2	(4.4)
Travel & Meetings	12.0	9.6	(2.4)	8.0	(4.0)
Professional Services	18.7	19.7	1.0	16.6	(2.2)
Administration	13.9	13.6	(0.3)	14.3	0.4
Capital	0.7	0.9	0.2	1.7	1.0
Contingency	2.8	2.8	0.0	4.0	1.2
Cost Savings Initiatives	(0.3)	(1.9)	(1.6)	0.0	0.3
<b>Cash Expenses <sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>\$112.5</b>	<b>\$108.3</b>	<b>(\$4.1)</b>	<b>\$104.8</b>	<b>(\$7.7)</b>
<b>Operating Excess/(Deficit)</b>	<b>\$0.2</b>	<b>\$3.9</b>	<b>(\$3.7)</b>	<b>\$8.6</b>	<b>(\$8.4)</b>
ICANN Ops Average FTEs <sup>(2)</sup>	412	406	(7)	402	(10)
ICANN Ops EOP FTEs <sup>(2)</sup>	426	410	(16)	416	(10)

1) Expenses exclude depreciation, investment income, and F/X translation

2) Average and End of Period Full-Time Equivalents after allocations to other ICANN segments

**Operating Excess at the end of March is \$0.2M, which is \$3.7M lower than budget and \$8.5M lower than the prior year.**

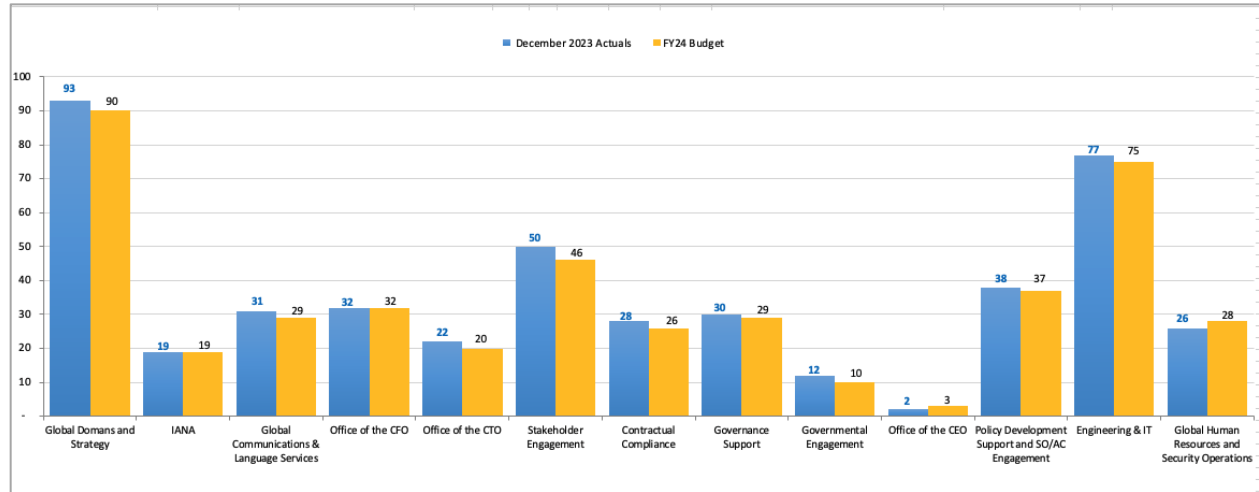
- ⊙ FY24 operating excess is \$3.7M lower than budget, driven by \$4.1M higher expenses.
- ⊙ Funding is favorable to budget by \$0.4M. Lower than planned legacy transaction fees have been more than offset by higher than planned new gTLD transaction fees, registrar accreditation and application fees, and registry fixed fees.
- ⊙ Cash expenses are \$4.1M higher than budget driven by:
  - ⊙ \$1.1M higher than planned personnel primarily driven by higher than planned full-time equivalents and one-time costs.
  - ⊙ \$2.4M higher than planned travel and meetings driven by ICANN78, ICANN79, the Africa Engagement Forum, and increased travel across the org.
  - ⊙ \$1.6M driven by lower than planned cost savings initiatives.

# ORGANIZATION: PEOPLE

Henry Meyer, VP, Global HR Operations, and Interim Head of HR

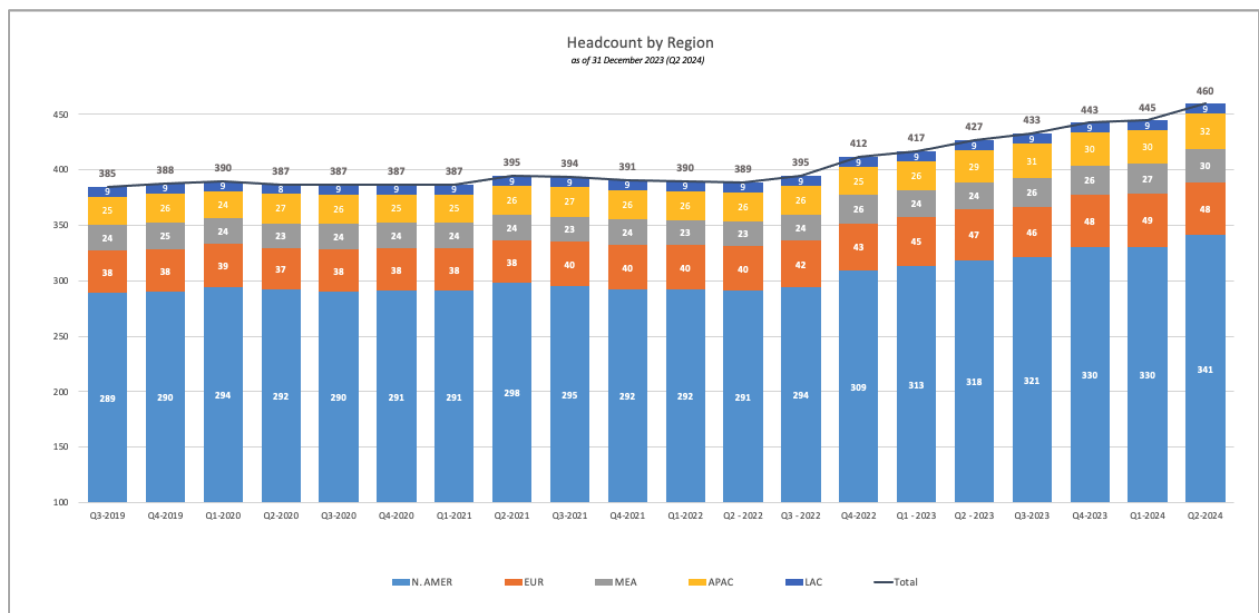
## ICANN Org Headcount

As of 31 December 2023, ICANN org had a headcount of 460 active staff. There were 9 pending new hires confirmed beyond 31 December.



All new positions are held in an unallocated pool at the corporate level. In some departments, headcount will appear to exceed the FY24 budget, but that is not the case. The FY24 budget allots 18 unallocated positions held at the corporate level. Total ending headcount in the FY24 budget is 462.

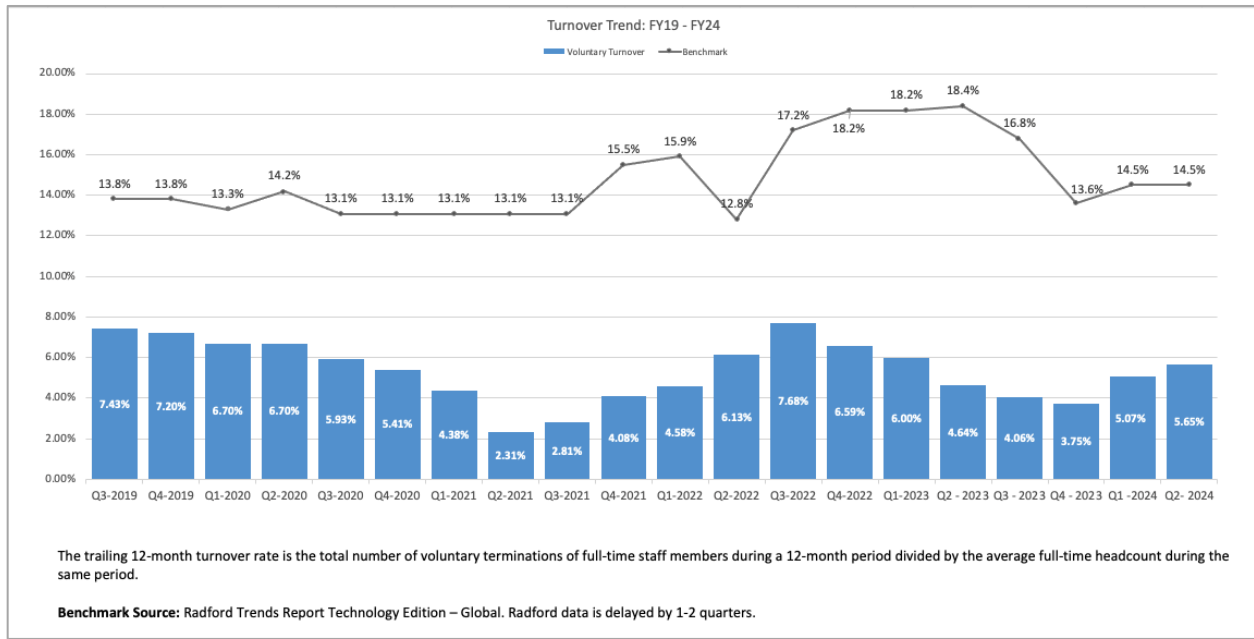
As of 31 December, the staff distribution by region was 341 (74 percent) in North America, 48 (10 percent) in Europe, 30 (7 percent) in the Middle East and Africa, 32 (7 percent) in Asia Pacific, and 9 (2 percent) in Latin America and the Caribbean, for a total of 460.



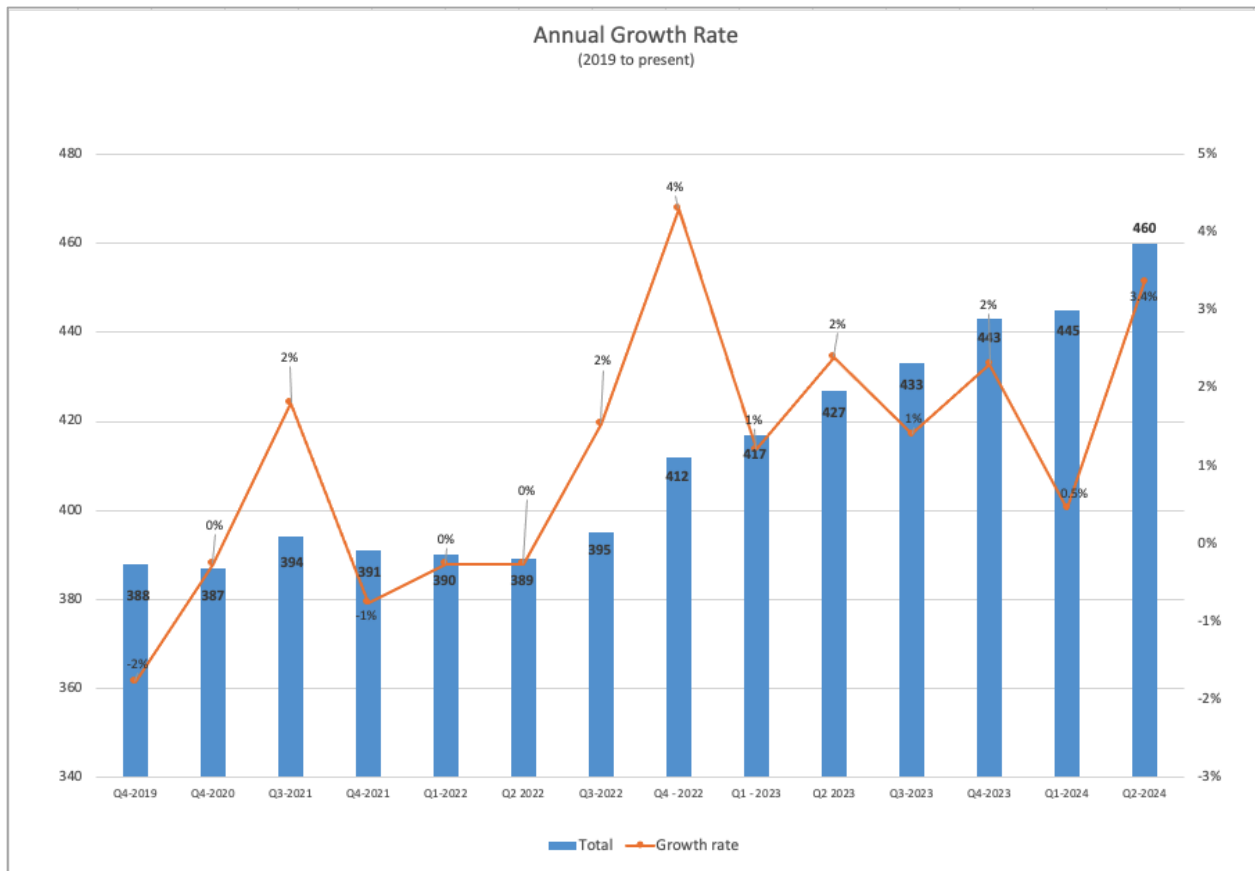


## Voluntary Turnover

As of 31 December, voluntary turnover was 5.65 percent and increased slightly from the previous quarter-end rate of 5.07 percent. Voluntary turnover has remained substantially lower than the worldwide voluntary turnover benchmark.

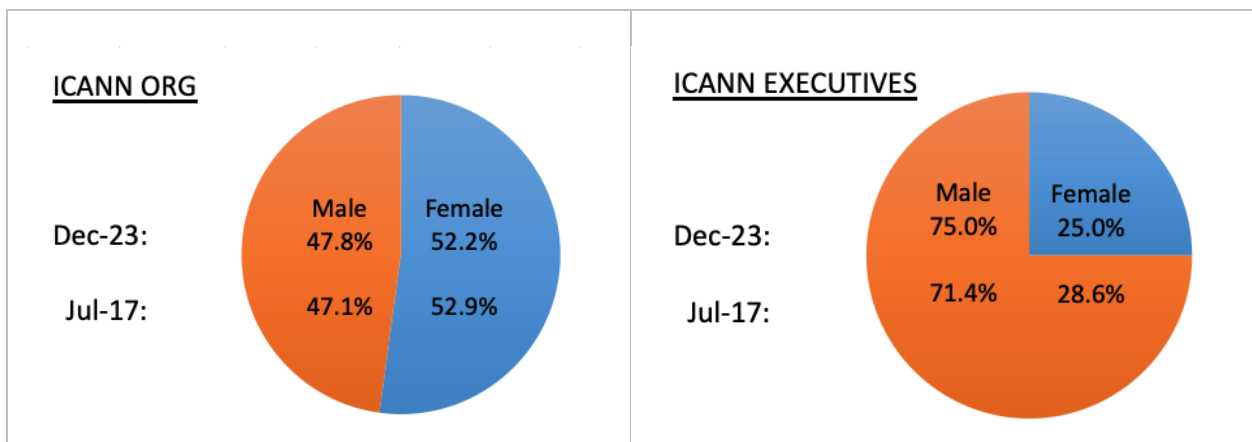


Over the last three months, 22 staff members joined ICANN org and six departed, resulting in a growth rate of 3.4 percent.



## Gender Diversity

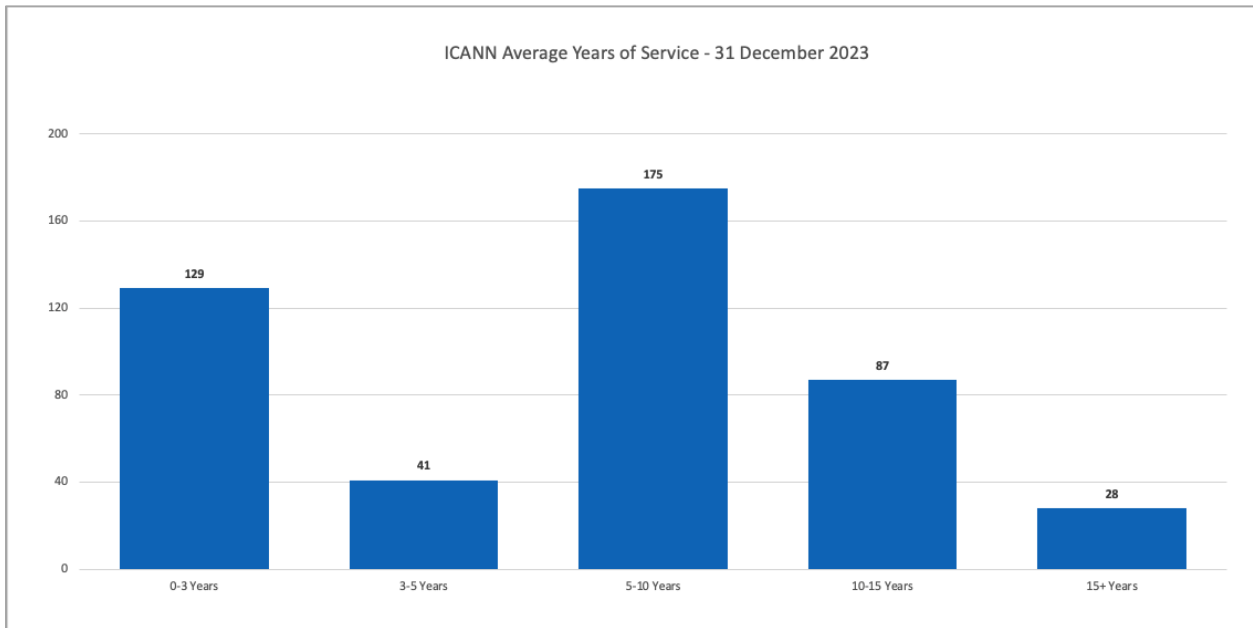
ICANN org continues to be well-balanced with females having a slight majority (52.0 percent). The diversity profile of the Executive Team has changed as a result of recent reorganization. ICANN org is committed to building a culture of diversity and inclusion at all levels of leadership.



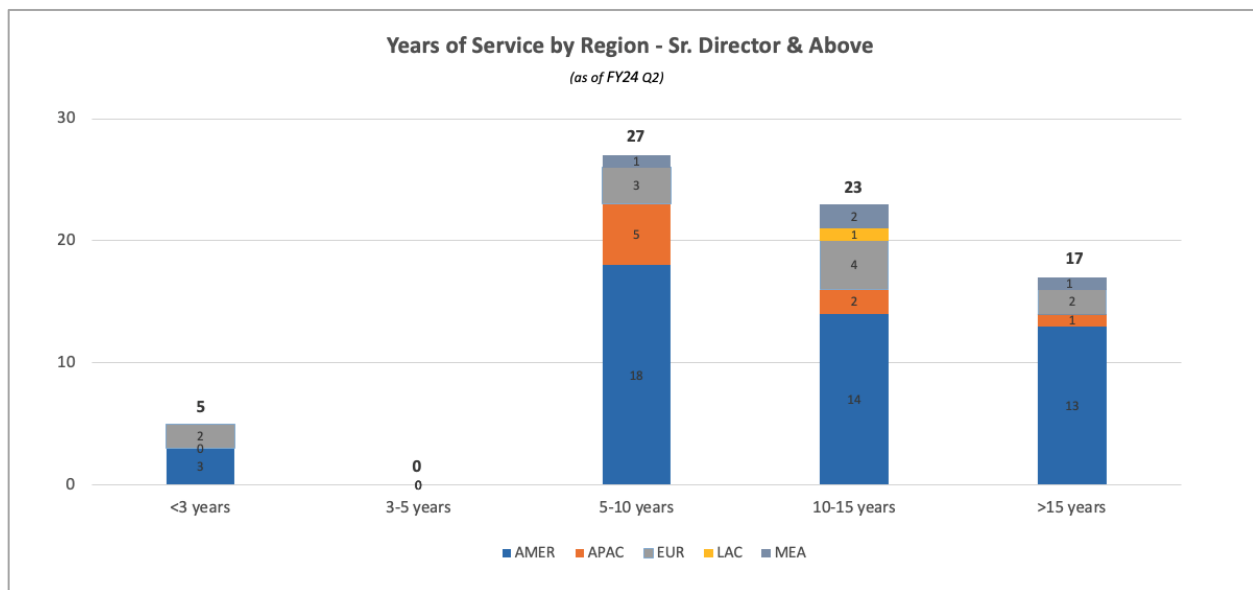
## Age and Years of Service

Age distribution also has been stable over the last four years, averaging approximately 45 years of age and representing the typical midpoint of most professional careers.

As of 31 December, the average years of service is seven years, reflecting consistent growth and stability in ICANN org positions.



At the senior director level and above, global distribution has remained stable for the last few years, with the largest population between five and 10 years of service. This reflects ICANN org’s depth of experience among senior leadership.



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# GOVERNANCE (LEGAL, BOARD OPERATIONS, AND COMPLAINTS OFFICE)

*John Jeffrey, General Counsel and Secretary*

## OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

### Board Operations

- ⦿ Facilitated the Montevideo Board Workshop (19–21 January) and the pre-ICANN79 Board Workshop (1–3 March) and ICANN79 in San Juan.
- ⦿ Organized and supported a new engagement session between the Board and the community during ICANN79 Prep Week.

### Legal Support for GDS and Policy Teams

- ⦿ Provided legal guidance on all projects and workstreams for the New gTLD Program: Next Round, including: (i) text for the Applicant Guidebook and the Handbooks for the Applicant Support and the Registry Service Provider Evaluation Programs, and (ii) the Board-community consultation concerning public interest commitments and registry voluntary commitments, as these pertain to ICANN’s mission.
- ⦿ Supported operation of the Registration Data Request Service, including reporting of usage data.

### Legal Contracting

- ⦿ Handled a variety of contracting needs for GDS, including (i) proposed renewals of the .xxx and .post Registry Agreements, (ii) incorporation of the Registration Data Access Protocol global amendment obligations into legacy agreements, and (iii) advice on contracting matters for the next round.
- ⦿ Handled approximately 450 new requests for contract drafting or advice during the period for all ICANN groups, including for (i) ICANN79 and ICANN80, (ii) various next round systems and associated professional services, (iii) the ICANN Grant Program, (iv) Universal Acceptance Day 2024 preparations, (v) the Emergency Assistance Program, and (vi) Domain Metrica.

### Dispute-Related Matters and Internal Services

- ⦿ Managed three Independent Review Process (IRP) matters:
  - ⦿ Altanovo IRP (.web): In July 2023, Altanovo initiated another .web IRP challenging the Board’s April 2023 resolutions in which the Board determined that NDC did not violate the Guidebook or the Auction Rules and directed ICANN org to continue processing NDC’s .web application.
  - ⦿ .gcc IRP: In April 2023, the Board reaffirmed its 2013 acceptance of GAC consensus advice that the .gcc application not proceed. Claimant filed a Second Amended IRP Request in December 2023; ICANN filed a motion to dismiss the IRP in February 2024.

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- Namecheap IRP (.biz, .info, .org): As directed by the Board, work is in progress “to retain an economist to provide input regarding the current [DNS] marketplace as it relates to the market power of .info and .org.”
  - Litigation matters: ICANN is a defendant in a California lawsuit relating to certain single-character domain names, and in four trademark lawsuits in India about domain names.
  - Received two Reconsideration Requests. One was summarily dismissed by the Board Accountability Mechanisms Committee and the other is undergoing procedural evaluation for the committee’s consideration.
  - Received five requests submitted pursuant to the ICANN Documentary Information Disclosure Policy. Responded to four requests and one request is currently pending response.

## Legal Support for Stakeholder Engagement, Strategic Initiatives, and Implementation of IANA Stewardship Transition

- Concluded negotiation and execution of all agreements with providers selected for Emergency Internet Access Program.
- Continued significant legal guidance for the ICANN Grant Program implementation.
- Provided legal support for the development of work toward ICANN’s sustainability strategy.
- Provided legal guidance for ICANN’s strategic engagement and communications efforts regarding WSIS+20.

## Governance Support Services CEO Search Committee Support

- Working closely with the CEO Search Committee to ensure a seamless framework for the entire search process.
- Ensuring that every aspect, from candidate interviews to Search Committee meetings, aligned flawlessly with Search Committee objectives.
- Collaborated with the ICANN meetings team, managed schedules, venues, and accommodations, guaranteeing optimal conditions for productive discussions and assessments.
- Partnered with Finance to keep information regarding resource allocation budget up to date.
- Enlisted the assistance of Board Operations to facilitate the third Search Committee meeting support services to ensure the process proceeded without interruption.

## NomCom Support

- Continue to manage and oversee the support of the 2024 Nominating Committee (NomCom) for the 2024 selection cycle.
- Successfully facilitated the 2024 NomCom Onboarding Workshop in Hamburg, Germany.
- Successfully facilitated the 2024 NomCom First Intersessional meeting in Istanbul.
- NomCom Operations team has worked closely with Comms to keep the NomCom website current and up to date, and with the Meetings team to ensure all process requirements for all requested NomCom meetings have been completed.
- Facilitated the scheduling 34 candidate interviews to for assessment during the 2024 NomCom Virtual Second Intersessional, which is scheduled for 16–17 and 21–22 May.
- Successfully completed meeting planning for ICANN80 Kigali Selection meeting.

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## Complaints Office

- ⦿ No new complaints received during the reporting period. Improvements were made to address submissions that were being incorrectly routed to the Complaints Office.

## TOP ISSUES AND MITIGATION

The team provides support in ongoing litigation and Independent Review Process proceedings. Litigation and other dispute matters are mitigated by maintaining a litigation readiness plan for relevant legal filings as well as utilization of the 2012 round funds from new gTLD application fees. The team regularly provides a privileged and confidential version of a litigation report to the Board under separate cover. Ongoing litigation activities are published on the [Litigation Documents](#) page on the ICANN website.

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# GLOBAL DOMAINS AND STRATEGY

Theresa Swinehart, SVP, Global Domains and Strategy (GDS)

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND MILESTONES

- ⦿ Planned and executed the second annual UA Day, including the main UA Day event in Serbia on 28 March 2024.
- ⦿ Published monthly [Registration Data Request Service](#) Usage Metrics reports since January 2024.
- ⦿ Delivered the updated [New gTLD Program website](#), which will be used for the next and future rounds of new gTLD applications.
- ⦿ The global DNS abuse amendments were [approved](#) by the ICANN Board on 21 January and took effect on 5 April 2024.

## OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY

### Data Protection Privacy

The work on Data Protection and Privacy continued during this period building on Expedited Policy Development Phase (EPDP) Phase 1, Phase 2, and 2A activities, including:

#### EPDP Phase 1: Registration Data Policy Implementation

- ⦿ ICANN org published the Registration Data Policy, implementing the EPDP Phase 1 recommendations on 21 February 2024.
- ⦿ ICANN org also issued the legal notifications to registries and registrars to identify the relevant effective dates for coming into compliance with the new policy.
- ⦿ ICANN org has also created a page for implementation resources and is supporting RySG and RrSG discussions on coordinating their data processing interactions under the new policy.

#### EPDP Phase 2: System for Standardized Access/Disclosure

- ⦿ Published monthly [Registration Data Request Service](#) Usage Metrics reports since January 2024.
- ⦿ Since launch, the number of participating registrars has increased from 56 to 86, covering 57 percent of gTLD domains under management.
- ⦿ Outreach to requestor communities has continued, including to Noncommercial Stakeholder Group, and upcoming events for the International Trademark Association Annual Meeting, Association of the Internet Society, Computer, Privacy, Data Protection and Artificial Intelligence Conference, ICANN APAC-TWNIC Engagement Forum, Middle East DNS Forum, and Registration Operations Workshop.
- ⦿ ICANN org continues to collaborate with the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) Small Team on enhancements to the RDRS for both requestors and participating registrars, including clarification on the list of supported gTLDs in RDRS, improved error messaging for TLDs not supported in RDRS, an updated “Help” function, updated User Guides and FAQs, tracking requests for confidentiality from law enforcement, a metric to

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track downloaded disclosure request form usage for participating registrars, a downloadable CSV of the Summary of Data table, and clarifications for Metrics 9, 10,13. Additional improvements for registrars are pending and include an additional field for requestor organization/affiliation, making requestor address and phone number fields required, and updating the interface to allow review of all requests without the need for filters.

## New gTLD Program: Next Round

### Implementation of Adopted Policy Recommendations

- ⦿ Ongoing: Policy Implementation Workstream (WS1) continues to work with the Implementation Review Team (IRT) to draft the next Applicant Guidebook (AGB). In this period, the IRT held 17 full and 9 sub-track meetings, covering 14 topics.
- ⦿ Completed. WS1 completed the first [Public Comment](#) proceeding on the AGB handbook and discussed new topics with the IRT including closed generics, IDNs, and dispute-resolution procedures after delegation. In addition, the [community consultation](#) on Public Interest Commitments/Registry Voluntary Commitments (PICs/RVCs) concluded at the end of March 2024.
- ⦿ Completed. The Program Design Workstream (WS2) completed an assessment of service design work to-date and aligned resources and service design components into the established project structure. All future WS2 updates will be embedded in project updates as the teams become more fully integrated.
- ⦿ Completed. The Operationalization Workstream (WS4) completed an assessment of process design work to-date and aligned resources and process design components into the established project structure. The majority of WS4 updates in the near future will be embedded in project updates as the teams become more fully integrated.
- ⦿ Completed. The Applicant Support Program (ASP) closed the [Public Comment proceeding](#) on the [draft ASP Handbook](#), drafted a funding plan, and closed the [request for proposals](#) for support application review panelists . Work is on track to deliver ASP by Q4 2024.
- ⦿ Completed. The Registry Service Provider (RSP) Evaluation Program published the RSP handbook for [Public Comment](#), established a RSP evaluation fee, and completed the second phase of the RSP portal, the system that will be used to receive and process applications. The team also provided a demonstration of the portal to the Implementation Review Team (IRT). Work is on track to deliver RSP by Q4 2024.
- ⦿ Completed. The Registry Service Testing Project published the Registry System Testing 2.0 specifications and Application Programming Interface for [Public Comment](#).
- ⦿ Ongoing. The gTLD Application Processing project launched. This team is developing the design, infrastructure, and operationalization of the main round application process from submission through contracting, enabling an integrated end-to-end process and system design. In addition, the project is tasked with vendor strategy and sourcing for main round application processing. The project launched in February and high-level timelines, budgets, and resource plans have been developed. Design of services and business processes has begun with resources from WS2 and WS3, in alignment with teams from WS1 and with AGB language. Initial planning for high-level technical capabilities with E&IT and technical services has also begun.
- ⦿ Ongoing. The Next Round Base Registry Agreement Project also launched to evaluate and draft a new agreement for registries. Since launching, the core team has been established and a summary of the proposed changes to the existing agreement has been drafted.
- ⦿ Completed. The Next Round Website Project team delivered a critical milestone for the program: the updated [New gTLD Program website](#), which will be used for the next and



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future rounds of new gTLD applications. The initial rollout of the site features details and information for the RSP Program and the ASP. The majority of content on the website has been translated into the six ICANN Languages.

- ⦿ Ongoing. The Engagement and Communications Project team was integrated into one project to provide alignment for next round outreach activities. The project team developed regional engagement plans and began assessing stakeholders and their informational needs by mapping these audiences across all regions. In addition, development of a comprehensive communications and engagement plan is underway, which will be shared with the IRT for further input.

### ICANN Org Activities in Support of the Board

- ⦿ Supported Next Round Board Caucus meetings and presented information, prepared Board papers and scorecards about the New gTLD Program: Next Round during two Board Workshops.
- ⦿ A webinar was held on 18 December 2023 to provide an overview of the proposed Framework for PICs/RVCs.
- ⦿ The Board, supported by ICANN staff, held a plenary session on PICs/RVCs during ICANN79.
- ⦿ Through April 2024, ICANN staff worked with the Next Round Board Caucus to prepare the Board's May workshop's discussion on PICs/RVCs, auctions, and the supplemental recommendations that the GNSO Council approved on 18 April 2024.

### Next Round Program Governance

- ⦿ In the first quarter of 2024, the project team made significant strides to establish all components of the program, including the new leadership team and an expanded governance model, the launch of critical projects, and the enablement of supporting functions to deliver key capabilities.
- ⦿ On track. Deliver a status report on next round of the New gTLD Program Implementation two weeks prior to every ICANN Public Meeting, including before [ICANN79](#) (20 February).

### DNS Abuse Contract Negotiations

- ⦿ The ICANN Board [approved](#) the global amendments on 21 January 2024.
- ⦿ ICANN issued a notice on 5 February 2024 to [registrars](#) and [registry operators](#) noting the global amendments will be effective on 5 April 2024. ICANN also issued an [Advisory](#) that provides guidance on the interpretation of and compliance with the new requirements.

### IDNs Program

- ⦿ Continued to support policy development work on Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) by GNSO and the Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO).
  - The GNSO's [IDN EPDP Phase 1 Final Report](#), covering topics related to top-level gTLD definition and variant management, has been submitted to the ICANN Board consideration.
  - The GNSO's [IDN EPDP Phase 2 Initial Report](#), covering issues pertaining to second-level variant management, has been published for the [public comment](#) on 11 April 2024.

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- The ccNSO [ccPDP4 Final Report](#) on the (de-)selection of IDN country code top-level domains (ccTLDs) has passed the votes by the ccNSO Council to be transmitted to the ICANN Board.
  - Collaborated with the policy implementation team to analyze IDN EPDP Phase 1 and Phase 2 reports. Presented IDN EPDP Phase 1 analysis to the Board IDN UA Working Group. Finalizing analysis of IDN EPDP Phase 2 to submit public comments from ICANN.
    - Analyzed consistency of IDN EPDP Phase 1 recommendations with IDN ccPDP4 and presented to the Board IDN UA Working Group.
  - In preparation of the next round of gTLDs, published [String Similarity Review Guidelines for Public Comment](#) on 7 February 2024.
  - Developed the IDN module for the Applicant Guidebook for the next round of gTLDs and presented to the Implementation Review Team, following the finalization of modules on String Similarity, Root Zone Label Generation Rules, and Universal Acceptance.
  - Continued implementation of IDN Guidelines Version 4.1, based on the plan presented at ICANN78 and ICANN79. Published a [blog](#) and conducted outreach to affected parties in collaboration with the Accounts and Services team, focusing on combating DNS abuse.
  - Worked with the communities to develop first-cut [reference Label Generation Rules \(LGRs\)](#) for Thaana, Balinese scripts, and Inuktitut language using Unified Canadian Aboriginal Syllabics. Continued to maintain the [LGR Tool](#).
  - Continued to operate the [IDN ccTLD Fast Track process](#).

## UA Program

- Conducted outreach on Universal Acceptance (UA) to the community, including outreach at the ITU sessions at U.N. offices in New York and Geneva in January, Web Summit 2024 in Doha in February, [FOSDEM](#) in Brussels in February, the ICANN APAC-TWNIC Engagement Forum in April, and the Middle East DNS Forum in April.
- Engaged with the UA Steering Group (UASG) on governance matters – the discussion continues. The Statement of Interest was announced and being implemented.
- Conducted the UA Day 2024. Following the [call for proposals](#) for UA Day 2024, 130 proposals were received of which 56 were shortlisted. These events are being planned and held from March to May 2024. The work included organizing the main UA Day event in Serbia on 28 March 2024.
- Conducted testing and one-day workshop on 26 April 2024 for university members of the Association of African Universities' UA Project, as part of the Coalition of Digital Africa.
- Provided technical knowledge, context, support for the [Mox](#) team. This is a first all-in-one email server which is now UA-ready.
- Worked at IETF community to support Unicode contact addresses in RDRS, which is relevant for the next gTLD round.
- Supported multiple UA-related sessions at ICANN79.
- Published social media content to promote UASG resources, blogs, and industry news.
- Continued to support the development of UASG's five-year plan.

## Global Support

The Global Support team answered 1,245 phone calls and closed 6,772 cases. ICANN's contracted parties represented 11.8 percent of the case volume, while the remaining 88.2 percent was from registrants and the community. The team sent 43 notifications, including [contracted party communications](#), during this period. The overall customer satisfaction score for

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contracted parties was 4.7 on a five-point scale for the question, “How satisfied are you with the service you received from ICANN?”

## Contracted Party Service Delivery

A total of 504 service requests were completed during the period. 194 Registrar Accreditation Agreements (RAAs) and 224 Registry Agreements (RAs) were renewed. Four RAAs (4 voluntarily/0 involuntarily) and 11 gTLD RAs (11 voluntarily/0 involuntarily) were terminated. Five new registrars were accredited in three regions: 40 percent in the Asia Pacific, 10 percent in Europe, and 40 percent in North America. 17 Registry Agreement (RA) assignments were completed for 17 gTLDs; 14 Material Subcontracting Arrangement requests were completed for 15 gTLDs. 32 Registry Services Evaluation Policy (RSEP) requests (including Fast Track RSEPs) were completed for 56 gTLDs, and three IDN Service requests were completed for three gTLDs.

## Board Advice

The ICANN Board received one advisory during this period related to At-Large Advisory Committee, Root Server System Advisory Committee, Root Zone Evolution Review Committee, and Security and Stability Advisory Committee advice, which equates to one piece of individual advice (advisories often contain more than one piece of advice). The ICANN Board received no advisories during this period. Open Board advice can be found on the [Board Advice workspace](#), while open Board advice items for the GAC can be found on the [GAC advice page](#).

## Correspondence

ICANN org handled 150 cases related to the work of processing correspondence. Of those, nine were letters resulting in substantive responses and were published on the [ICANN Correspondence](#) page. ICANN also published 14 letters directed to the ICANN community to inform the community or request information on various topics.

## New gTLD Program: 2012 Round

As of 3 May 2024, 29 applications remain in the 2012 round, with two applications actively working toward contracting. During this period, no applicants withdrew from the New gTLD Program.

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# REVIEW SUPPORT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Theresa Swinehart, SVP, GDS

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND MILESTONES

- ⦿ Facilitated Board action to [initiate the Pilot Holistic Review](#) to progress implementation of the Third Accountability and Transparency Review (ATRT3) recommendations, and to [defer ATRT4](#).
- ⦿ Launched the [Continuous Improvement Program](#) Community Coordination Group (CIP-CCG) to develop a draft CIP Framework to progress implementation of ATRT3 recommendations.
- ⦿ Drafted updated Lifecycle of Reviews Thought Paper that proposes a revised Specific Review process and community engagement plan.
- ⦿ Facilitated Board Organizational Effectiveness Committee (OEC) discussions on the “Unaffiliated Director” and NomCom rebalancing topics, to identify a path forward with the broader discussion of ICANN governance.

## OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

### Evolve Organizational Reviews Into a Continuous Improvement Program

- ⦿ ICANN [launched](#) the CIP-CCG in January 2024, with 21 out of 22 community groups participating.
- ⦿ Completed external research of CIP models and frameworks and presented to the Community Coordination Group. Presented “straw-person” principles, criteria, and indicators to inform community work.
- ⦿ Participated/contributed to the ccNSO Open Space virtual working session on continuous improvement and met with other community groups to discuss implementation work.
- ⦿ Facilitated the work of the CIP-CCG, resulting in [substantial progress toward developing common principles](#) for the ICANN CIP. Prepared the group for engagement with their respective groups to build out the draft CIP Framework for Public Comment later this year.

### Lifecycle of Reviews

- ⦿ Briefed the community on the challenges and proposed improvements to the Specific Reviews process during an ICANN79 Prep Week webinar on 22 February 2024.
- ⦿ Drafted updated [Lifecycle of Reviews](#) Thought Paper that proposes a revised Specific Review process and community engagement plan. Briefed the OEC during its 2 April meeting.
- ⦿ Identified two short-term deliverables and a work plan to meet deadlines: Ad Hoc Operating Standards for the Pilot Holistic Review to be ready for the start of work in September 2024, and Revised Operating Standards to be ready for the start of ATRT4.

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## Pilot Holistic Review Implementation

Facilitated Board action to initiate the [Pilot Holistic Review](#) by accomplishing the following:

- ⦿ Briefed the OEC on ICANN org’s analysis of the public comments received on the Pilot Holistic Review Revised Draft Terms of Reference and facilitated a discussion on potential next steps to address outstanding issues. Supported the OEC in briefing the Board on the analysis of public comments and its proposal for next steps during the Board workshop in January 2024.
- ⦿ Drafted updates to the Terms of Reference on the Organizational Effectiveness Committee’s behalf, at the request of the Board. Drafted a Board paper for Board action to initiate the Pilot Holistic Review during a special Board Meeting on 29 April 2024.
- ⦿ Started preplanning for the Pilot Holistic Review, including preparations for the Call for Volunteers.

## ATRT4 Deferral

Facilitated Board action to defer ATRT4 by no more than 12 months by accomplishing the following:

- ⦿ Conducted community consultation.
- ⦿ Analyzed community input and presented to the OEC on 2 April to inform their recommendation to the Board to defer by no more than 12 months.
- ⦿ Drafted the Board paper and supported the OEC in briefing the Board.

## NomCom2 Review

- ⦿ Initiated activities with the Governance team to have the NomCom Standing Committee in place and available to support the 2025 NomCom.
- ⦿ Completed a benchmarking study on how similar organizations select and appoint Board members and volunteer leadership positions; briefed the OEC to inform discussions with the Board on NomCom rebalancing.
- ⦿ In consultation with the Governance and NomCom Ops teams, provided historical data on “Unaffiliated Directors” to inform the plan to address the “Unaffiliated Director” definition.

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# IMPLEMENTATION OF NON-POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND AD-HOC PROJECTS

Xavier Calvez, SVP, Planning and CFO

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND MILESTONES

- ⦿ Finalized and published the [process to retire non-policy recommendations](#) [PDF].
- ⦿ Implementation of 39 out of the 71 pending Specific Reviews recommendations is complete, while 30 recommendations are in progress and two are in the not started status.
- ⦿ Implementation of 51 out of the 65 Cross-Community Working Group on Enhancing ICANN Accountability – Work Stream 2 (WS2) pending recommendations in the org portfolio is complete, while 12 recommendations are in progress and two have not started.
- ⦿ The application window for the first ICANN Grant Program cycle opened on 15 March 2024.

## OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

### Specific Reviews

- ⦿ Addressed input received in the [community consultation](#) on the proposed process to retire non-policy recommendations, documented refinements accordingly.
- ⦿ Coordinated the Board consideration of and [action](#) on four Specific Reviews recommendations.
- ⦿ Monitored the status of the Specific Reviews recommendations that remain pending Board consideration.
- ⦿ Delivered progress updates to the Executive Team and the Board’s Organizational Effectiveness Committee (OEC).
- ⦿ Posted one blog post and delivered Prep Week updates during ICANN79.
- ⦿ Released two quarterly reports on the status of Specific Reviews recommendations.
- ⦿ Supported the Review Support and Accountability function’s work through contributions to the Lifecycle of Reviews process, Continuous Improvements Programs, and suggested next steps on the Pilot Holistic Review Terms of Reference.

### WS2 Implementation

- ⦿ Delivered progress updates to the Executive Team, WS2 Implementation Team, and the Board’s OEC.
- ⦿ Published one blog post and delivered one Prep Week update during ICANN79.
- ⦿ Released two quarterly reports on the implementation status.

### ICANN Grant Program

- ⦿ Completed the selection of the main external vendors for the program implementation and contracted them.

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- ⦿ Produced and published 3 versions of the Applicant Guide for the first cycle, the last one released on 15 March 2024, and translated the Guide into the six ICANN Languages.
  - ⦿ Delivered an update on the Grant Program during a public session at [ICANN79](#).
  - ⦿ Completed the design of program communication related activities, launched an awareness campaign to support the launch of the grant program first cycle, and published the [ICANN Grant Program webpage](#).
  - ⦿ Prepared the Board [resolution](#) on the allocation of \$10 million for the successful applications of the first grant cycle.
  - ⦿ Followed up on the process to update the language of the CCWG-AP Recommendation 7.
  - ⦿ Completed all internal steps that enabled the opening of the application window for the first cycle on 15 March 2024.

## TOP ISSUES AND MITIGATION

All the projects have numerous sensitivities at community level. The review of the language of the Cross Community Working Group on -Proceeds Recommendation 7 that goes in parallel with the Fundamental Bylaws amendment process represents a key dependency for the completion of the first cycle of the ICANN Grant Program.

The Implementation Operations team continues to work closely to keep all the stakeholders apprised of the progress, as well as to anticipate and mitigate possible issues.

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# CONTRACTUAL COMPLIANCE

Jamie Hedlund, SVP, Contractual Compliance and U.S. Government Engagement

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND MILESTONES

- ⦿ Launched a new audit round focused on validating 62 selected registrars' compliance with the Registrar Accreditation Agreement (RAA), ICANN Consensus, and Temporary Specification policies.

## OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY

### Audit Program

- ⦿ Completed the Audit focused on registry operators (ROs) compliance with the Registry Agreements, Temporary Specification, and Consensus Policies. The [consolidated audit report](#) has been published.
- ⦿ Continued reviewing responses and documentation received from the 62 registrars selected for the audit launched in February 2024.

### Notices of Breach, Suspension, Termination, and Non-Renewal

On 27 March 2024, a [Notice of Breach](#) was sent to the registrar ALIBABA.COM SINGAPORE E-COMMERCE PRIVATE LIMITED. The deadline to cure was 17 April 2024. The registrar has been responsive, and all information and documentation are still under review by Compliance.

Additional information is located on the [Contractual Compliance Enforcement](#) webpage.

### Compliance Matters Related to Registrars and Registry Operators

The Contractual Compliance team processed the following during the period of December 2023 through March 2024:

- ⦿ 9,996 Complaints Received
- ⦿ 1,252 Inquiries and Notices Sent
- ⦿ 8,650 Closed Before First Inquiry/Notice

### Contractual Compliance Performance Measurement

- ⦿ [Monthly dashboards](#) are available for this reporting period.
- ⦿ New [Trend Reporting](#) for this period is available.

### Policy and Working Groups

The Contractual Compliance team contributed to the following:

- ⦿ IDN Implementation Guidelines 4.1
- ⦿ RDRS



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- ⦿ Rights Protection Mechanisms IPT
  - ⦿ IDN EPDP
  - ⦿ New gTLD Subsequent Procedures
  - ⦿ EPDP on the Temporary Specification for gTLD Registration Data Phase 1
  - ⦿ Second Security, Stability, and Resiliency Review Team
  - ⦿ Transfer Policy Review – Phase 2
  - ⦿ DNS Abuse Amendments to the RAA and the Base RA negotiation efforts

## Contractual Compliance Outreach

- ⦿ 5 December 2023: Attended the Ukraine Registrar Training for Ukraine-based registrars. The webinar was presented remotely in Russian.
- ⦿ 7 December 2023: Presented at the webinar "Managing gTLD Domain Names Effectively" for the African Internet Community.
- ⦿ February 2024: Participated in ICANN79 Prep Week and other events to deliberate on a wide range of contractual requirements, including DNS abuse.
- ⦿ 20 February 2024: Attended in-person registrar training held in Vienna, Austria, for Europe-based registrars.
- ⦿ 19 March 2024: Participated in the "Engagement Webinar for ICANN-accredited registrars and resellers" based in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia Region. Presented remotely in Russian.
- ⦿ 19 April 2024: Attended the webinar for the Central Europe and Baltics region titled "ICANN Compliance Essentials: What You Need to Know."
- ⦿ 25 April 2024: Attended the Middle East DNS Forum and presented at the session "Navigating the Intersection between Intellectual Property Rights and Domain Name Dispute Resolution Panel."

Additional information regarding all ICANN Contractual Compliance activities during this reporting period is available in the [Contractual Compliance Monthly Reports](#).

# PROCUREMENT

Xavier Calvez, SVP, Planning and CFO

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND MILESTONES

- Contracted with key software provider for the New gTLD Program: Next Round, after an extensive multistage evaluation process .
- Contracted with key suppliers for the ICANN Grant Program after extensive identification, evaluation and selection via a competitive bidding process.

## OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY

### Procurement Operations

There were 308 purchase orders totaling approximately \$16.8M issued to 229 unique suppliers, with an average PO amount of approximately \$54,500. January shows a high PO total amount of approximately \$5.5M, which is expected due to the seasonality of many contract renewals occurring at the beginning of the calendar year.

Purchasing Operations Metrics for Reporting Period (18 Dec '23 thru 3 May '24)						
Metrics	Reporting Period (18 Dec '23 to 3 May '23)	April '24 (through the 24th)	March '24	February '24	January '24	December '23 (18th onwards)
Number of PO's	308	69	78	64	85	12
Total PO Amount (\$)	\$16,797,919	\$2,284,863	\$4,114,919	\$2,390,038	\$5,467,889	\$2,540,210
Average PO Amount (\$)	\$54,539	\$33,114	\$52,755	\$37,344	\$64,328	\$211,684
Average Cycle time <sup>1</sup> (days)	18.0	16.4	12.6	18.4	25.0	11.3
Number of unique suppliers that were issued POs	229	57	72	55	69	12

1. Cycle time is defined as the number of days it takes from submission of a purchase request in Oracle to creation of the associated purchase order (PO). Steps included: Approvals per contracting & disbursement policy; contract revisions by Legal-Contracting; and obtaining contract signatures.  
 2. The last date for purchase order transactional data considered for this report is 24 April 2024, which is the date this report was submitted for processing prior to circulation.

### Strategic Sourcing

Procurement continued to support the organization with the various phases of sourcing activities throughout the reporting period. Five competitive bidding events were concluded within the reporting period. In addition, 17 competitive bidding events were worked on during the reporting period, and are currently in various ongoing stages (planning, preparation, live, evaluation, contracting). Hence, overall, Procurement was involved in coordinating 22 competitive bidding events during the reporting period. There has been an uptick in the number of competitive bidding events over the reporting period, which is expected to grow even further as vendor selection work related to the next round continues.

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# RISK MANAGEMENT

*Xavier Calvez, SVP, Planning and CFO*

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND MILESTONES

- ⦿ Continued work to update the ICANN org's Risk Appetite Statement.

## OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY

The org Risk Appetite Statement was approved two-and-a-half years ago, and an update is in order. Risk Management analyzed the evolution of the org's portfolio of risks and compared actual experience to previous expectations in order to draft a proposed, revised Risk Appetite Statement. The draft has been discussed with the org Executive Team and the Risk Liaison Network. The Board Risk Committee is in process of an in-depth review to confirm and potentially evolve the structure of the risk appetite currently in place, as well as the level of appetite across categories or risks and at the organization level. The outcome of this review will be a comprehensive updated Risk Appetite Statement and will be brought to the full Board for approval in due course.

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# PLANNING

Xavier Calvez, SVP, Planning and CFO

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND MILESTONES

- ⦿ The ICANN FY25 Operating Plan and Budget process continued with a Public Comment proceeding for the plans that closed on 12 February 2024. A Summary Report was published responding to 160 comments received.
- ⦿ The Public Comment proceeding for the Draft FY25 Public Technical Identifiers (PTI) Operating Plan and Budget closed with no major changes to the plan. The PTI Board adopted the plan in March.
- ⦿ The ICANN FY25 Operating Plan and budget is due to be adopted by the Board on 5 May 2024, after which the Empowered Community process will start.
- ⦿ The development of the FY26–30 Strategic Plan continued with community engagement at ICANN79, and the Board worked on developing the draft strategies.

## OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY

### ICANN FY25 Operating Plan and Budget

- ⦿ Public Comment proceeding completed and Summary Report published.
- ⦿ Updated the plans with adjustments identified through the comments and due to changes in the funding assumptions.
- ⦿ FY25 plans shared with Executives and the Board.

### PTI FY25 Operating Plan and Budget

- ⦿ Public Comment proceeding completed and Summary Report published.
- ⦿ Presented to the PTI Board for adoption.

### FY26–30 Strategic Plan

- ⦿ During ICANN79, the Board shared the working draft vision statement and the major focus areas that are guiding the Board’s strategy development.
- ⦿ The Board has been working diligently to develop and evaluate draft strategies for the next five years, which will be shared with the community for initial feedback at ICANN80.

## TOP ISSUES AND MITIGATION

Changes to the FY25 funding assumptions impacted the planned production timeline for the ICANN FY25–29 Operating and Financial Plan and the FY25 Operating Plan and Budget. Planning worked alongside Finance to adjust communication and complete deliverables within the scheduled time. An updated ICANN FY25–29 Operating and Financial Plan and FY25 Operating Plan and Budget were delivered to the Board with sufficient timing for the Empowered Community process.

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# GLOBAL HUMAN RESOURCES

Henry Meyer, VP, Global HR Operations, and Interim Head of HR

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND MILESTONES

- ⦿ During the reporting period 34 vacancies were filled.
- ⦿ In response to sustained high inflation in the Republic Türkiye, a special salary adjustment was applied effective January 2024; the situation is being monitored quarterly.
- ⦿ Annual staff benefits renewals were completed for the U.S. effective January, for Belgium effective March, and for Türkiye effective April 2024.

## OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

- ⦿ Talent Acquisition: During this reporting period 34 vacancies were filled, three through internal placements, and 30 percent were outside of the U.S. Key roles filled included: Technical Services Principal Engineer, Director of Accounting, Associate General Counsel, and Next Round Program Development Senior Director, and 11 roles were filled for the next round including a Program Development Senior Director.
- ⦿ Leadership and development activities included modules through our Leadership Education and Development program, including Delegating with Purpose and Coaching – Connect Through Conversations. Continued to build networking and development opportunities for staff and leadership through our Development Debrief with ICANN Leadership program. Topics of focus were diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), as well as motivation and anxiety management. Special DEI events included celebrating Black History Month and International Women’s Day. Two “Getting to Know ICANN” sessions were held to introduce the new Interim Leaders for GE (Veni Markovski) and E&IT (Andre Abed).
- ⦿ Due to ongoing economic challenges in Türkiye, economic factor monitoring and quarterly gap analysis was put in place. Effective January 2024, Türkiye staff received a salary increase to replace the temporary hardship allowance that had been put in place in July 2023. Meal and transportation allowances were increased as of January 2024 to align with government-allowed limits. Local economic conditions will continue to be monitored on a quarterly basis to see if further adjustments are required – this is common practice for many organizations in Türkiye.
- ⦿ U.S. staff group benefits were renewed effective January 2024 with no change in carriers or plan design. Completed Belgium and Türkiye staff group benefits insurance renewals respectively in March and April 2024 with the same carriers and plan limit increases were based on inflation rates.
- ⦿ ICANN Be Well health and wellness education events were held in December 2024, including Retirement Workshop for U.S. Staff and Nutrition Workshop for all staff. April 2024 sessions included Financial Wellness for U.S. Staff and Physical Wellbeing in May 2024 for all staff.

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# SECURITY OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

*Simon Garside, VP, Security Operations and Interim Head of Administrative Services*

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND MILESTONES

- ⦿ Successfully delivered Travel Security Training 2.0 furnishing staff with the tools and know-how to safely navigate the world's volatile risk landscape.
- ⦿ Implementation of a new cost-saving parking solution at the Los Angeles office.

## OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

### Security Operations

- ⦿ Initiated a strategic review across numerous internal security programs, such as physical security, emergency response, and event security, in order to drive efficiencies and optimize operational capability. This included a thorough review of Health & Safety Center operations at ICANN Public Meetings, with the aim of enhancing information exchange, operational processes and cost savings. The effectiveness of this solution will be trialed at ICANN80 in Kigali, Rwanda.
- ⦿ Provided on the ground health, safety, and security support to ICANN79 in San Juan in addition to many other ICANN sponsored events globally, such as the Middle East DNS Forum in Rabat, Morocco, and the ICANN Board Workshop in Montevideo.
- ⦿ Effectively coordinated and supported crisis-management activities.
- ⦿ Prepared staff for global business travel with mandatory travel security training.
- ⦿ Executed a robust review of intelligence tools as well as health and security risk management mechanisms.
- ⦿ Conducted a site visit to Istanbul in preparation for ICANN81.
- ⦿ Led the Hybrid Working Project. Established in December 2023, the goal of the Hybrid Working Project is to produce recommendations for making ICANN's hybrid working model more successful, sustainable, and purpose-driven.
- ⦿ Enhanced team skill sets and capabilities across multiple fronts through training and courses.

### Administrative Services

- ⦿ Conducted the relocation of the ICANN (Regus) office in Geneva.
- ⦿ Completed security system upgrades at the Washington, D.C., and Singapore offices.
- ⦿ Implemented a new parking system for the LA office, resulting in very substantial (60 percent) savings.
- ⦿ Launched a "hot-desking" pilot in the Brussels office in support of hybrid working.
- ⦿ Initiated the search for a new office in Nairobi, Kenya.

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# ENGINEERING AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

*Andre Abed, VP, Relationship and Delivery Management and Interim Head, Engineering and IT*

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND MILESTONES

- ⦿ As part of the Information Transparency Platform (ITP), Engineering and Information Technology (E&IT) continues developing many features and updates to icann.org, RSSAC authoring experience, webpages, and addition of RSSAC to the content subscription feature to be available by June 2024.
- ⦿ As part of the Community Engagement system (CES), E&IT successfully onboarded Meetings, Communications, PRS, and OCTO using differentiated access for privacy by design.
- ⦿ E&IT successfully delivered compliance web forms, Datamart, and Naming Services portal changes to support the new DNS abuse amendments in April.
- ⦿ As part of Tech Rationalization and Consolidation efforts, E&IT has successfully sunset services of multiple vendors, replacing such with other infrastructure and support allowing for faster turnaround times and flexibility for enhancement and stability, effort ongoing. In addition, E&IT has reduced contracts with unused licenses, such as Salesforce, and negotiated better support rates, such as that for SLAM, as part of the efforts to optimize resources.
- ⦿ As part of the next round of the New gTLD Program, E&IT completed the development of the updated program website that launched in May 2024. In parallel, development of the RSP, RST, and ASP are in progress and on track to complete by the end of Q3 and Q4 of 2024.
- ⦿ E&IT has successfully implemented the Board Management tool.

## OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

### Relationship and Delivery Management Team

#### Information Transparency Platform

The ITP team deployed enhancements to the Engagement Calendar in coordination with the CES team. Additionally, the team has been working on copying all icann.org documents to the new Audit environment within Alfresco Authoring, along with their associated taxonomy, and providing an editor that will allow business to maintain the taxonomy. In parallel, the team has developed the RSSAC authoring experience, webpages, and added RSSAC to the content subscription feature. The team is expecting to release RSSAC, along with the copy of icann.org documents with associated taxonomy, by the end of June 2024. The ITP team has also begun implementation of Matomo web analytics (Google Analytics replacement) and development of the Community pages initiative (authoring experience, webpages, and adding to the content subscription feature).

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## **Community Collaboration Systems – New gTLD Program: Next Round Website**

The team developed and launched a new website dedicated to the [New gTLD Program](#). The site scope was greatly enhanced during the semester, and a cross collaboration effort with the E&IT development and web content teams enabled on-time deployment. The launch of the website marks the first in a series of milestones and deliverables, paving the way to the opening of the next round of new gTLD applications in April 2026.

## **Community Engagement System**

The integration from Events 2.0 to the ICANN Website Engagement Calendar was launched in October 2023 with adoption expanding to 55+ events representing all regions in the Engagement teams as of April 2024. Additional migration of events from CES ICANN JOIN from the Policy team was completed in April 2024. Onboarding of new functions including Meetings, Communications, PRS, and O CTO were completed in April 2024 with additional functions planned to complete by June 2024. The delivery of the requirements definition of the Minimum Viable Product Dashboard is planned by June 2024 with the recent completion of the data discovery process with subject-matter experts and near finalization of the report tools. Final delivery of the dashboard is planned for December 2024.

## **Community Engagement Systems – ICANN Account**

Additional integration of community services was completed for BoardVantage and the ICANN Grant Program in March 2024. The underlying Okta platform was upgraded in February 2024 along with a feasibility analysis and updated design for integrating Email Address Internationalization (EAI) functionality targeted to be delivered by November 2024.

## **Community Engagement Systems – Cookie Consent Management Tool**

Evaluated and selected the vendor, OneTrust, to centralize cookie consent management across ICANN services and improve the user experience for managing their consent for essential and other functional cookies. Implementation is targeted to complete by November 2024.

## **Contracted Parties Systems – Naming Services portal (NSp)**

Delivered compliance web forms, Datamart, and NSp changes to support the new DNS abuse amendments in April. Completed a project to rework NSp case processing to improve scalability when new gTLDs are added during the next application round. Completed architecture design for streamlining the Compliance Metrics reporting processes. The NSp team is on track to retire a deprecated email-based ticketing platform for registrars and migrating cases to NSp by 10 May 2024.

## **Technical Services Systems – IGO Notification System**

IGO Notification System is a new service developed to be launched in Q3 2025. This system is going to notify registered IGOs if one of their acronyms or names is registered in a gTLD. Currently, these domain names are blocked from registration but it is the desire of the community to allow these registrations. The goal of this project is to release these domains and notify the IGOs if any of the domains are registered so that the IGO can verify if the registration is legitimate and if not can challenge the registration.



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## **Technical Services Systems – MoSAPI-Metrica Integration**

The Technical Services team developed Monitoring System API (MoSAPI)-Metrica Integration for interaction with the parent ICANN Domain Metrica system. ICANN Domain Metrica expected to go live in Q4 2024. ICANN Domain Metrica is an initiative for reporting domain name registration and security threat (abuse) behavior across domain name registries and registrars. Domain Metrica provides measurements to contracted parties for their domain names under management. With this project, contracted parties are able to collect this information via an API and expand the web interface that is being created.

## **Technical Services Systems – SLAM and MoSAPI Enhancements**

New functionalities added for Service Level Agreement Monitoring (SLAM) and MoSAPI and deployed to production over multiple phases in FY24 SR2. A new internal service server was created that provides the SLAM domain name monitoring data to the Registration Data Access Protocol (RDAP) service and is used for monitoring the RDAP service for contracted parties. In addition, internal users and/or new servers may automatically and dynamically get data from Bulk Registration Data Access reports.

## **Universal Acceptance System Readiness**

E& IT continue planned work of making ICANN systems UA-ready. The team has completed the gap analysis of non-public-facing systems. The team has also assessed and suggested an ICANN Account IDN support approach to the org for EAI to be UA-ready. Work with Cofomo for Mailman to be UA-Ready continues.

## **Software Engineering**

### **Software Engineering – New Technologies**

Through the development of the Domain Metrica product, Software Engineering has introduced two new technologies into our overall ecosystem. As Domain Metrica is driven by many different data sources, there was a need to be able to store a high volume of data and allow consistency and stability with analytical tooling. Software Engineering introduced Apache Iceberg to fit this need. Apache Iceberg is an open table format for huge analytic datasets allowing for scalability and flexibility.

Software Engineering also leverages DuckDB to take the speed and scalability of the data storage solution down to the application level itself. DuckDB allows our applications to run analytical queries in parallel and allows for processing larger-than-memory workloads.

### **Software Engineering – Eliminating Vendor Dependencies**

Software Engineering worked with multiple business teams to allow for the removal of Second Rise as a vendor. Second Rise used to own and operate four sites on the features.icann.org domain including Board advice, ICANN resolutions, ICANN Calendar, and Compliance Reporting. All four services were reviewed and re-homed to different locations within our infrastructure and support is now in-house, allowing for faster turnaround times and flexibility for enhancement and stability.

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## Software Engineering – Static Site Solutioning

Software Engineering worked specifically with the Compliance function to take the monthly compliance reports and build out a new static site solution based on the AWS Amplify delivery product. The new compliance reporting website is housed within AWS and has no native servers behind the scenes requiring maintenance or monitoring. By using a static solution for this website, Software Engineering was able to lower hosting expenses for this product down to under \$2 a month based on current traffic.

Software Engineering leveraged the same AWS Amplify delivery product for our ICANN meetings website. Previously on Drupal requiring a team to do continual maintenance and updates, it has now been moved to AWS. By using the same static solution for this website, Software Engineering was able to lower hosting expenses for this product down to under \$10 a month on average based on current traffic and eliminated the need for dedicated development time to continue maintenance and support.

## Software Engineering – Meeting Tech Services Architecture Enhancements

Software Engineering has worked with the Meeting Tech Services team to provide technical enhancements to the Meeting Tech Services core products used to support and operate our public meetings. Currently, there is a development dependency on contracted team members to provide support and updates. Software Engineering will continue working with the MTS team to lower this dependency and eventually remove it entirely. This will allow for our larger pool of existing resources to be able to help support and maintain these core services and offer additional cost savings by removing contracted development members in full.

## New gTLD Program: Next Round

Development of the first phase of the New gTLD Next Round website completed in April 2024 and was live the first week of May 2024. Content updates to continue regularly. Website development to resume in 2025 when further scope is defined.

The Registry Service Provider (RSP) evaluation system evaluates potential registry service providers to streamline the gTLD application process. System development is ongoing and on track to complete development during Q3 2024 and public release scheduled during Q4 2024.

The Applicant Support Program (ASP) system assists in the application submission and evaluation of the ASP of the New gTLD Program: Next Round. System development is ongoing and on track to complete development during Q3 2024 and public release scheduled during Q4 2024.

Development of Shared Services (e.g., OFAC, Background Screening, Payments, and Reporting) ongoing and on track to complete during Q3 2024 in alignment with internal releases of ASP and RSP (dependency systems) and public release scheduled during Q4 2024.

The Registry System Testing (RST) 2.0 service that will automate the verification that RSP applicants can operate in a stable and secure manner and/or a gTLD has been correctly configured in the Registry Service Provider system before delegation. System development is in progress with the Operational Test & Evaluation environment scheduled to be available to current and prospective RSPs and registry operators during Q3 2024.

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Preparations for development of the TAMS system to support the New gTLD Next Round Application Processing are in progress. Development is planned to begin during Q3 2024.

## Data Center and Cloud Ops, Meetings Tech Services, End User Support, and Back Office Relationship

### Data Center and Cloud Operations

DCCO and Software Engineering began migrating our Kubernetes clusters to RedHat OpenShift Container Platform (OCP) in order to provide services with more stability and support within our enterprise. DCCO, together with our RedHat vendor, completed building the foundation framework of our six clusters. This foundation is necessary for us to deliver future hardened solutions that will make it easier for ICANN to work across multiple platforms and environments. Software Engineering is continuing to migrate our applications to the OCP framework.

### Meetings Tech Services (MTS) – Hybrid Meetings

MTS provided hybrid meeting participation services for ICANN79 and 12 additional meetings or events. MTS completed two site inspections in preparation for ICANN80 and ICANN81. MTS worked with End User Support and Software Engineering on a successful rollout of JAMF for MTS managed devices at ICANN Meetings. This will bring MTS managed computers in line with EUS management of devices.

### End User Support (EUS) – Technical Support Requests

EUS fielded 3,554 general support requests. During the same period last year, EUS worked 3,249 general support requests, representing a 9 percent increase. The trend of staff requiring increased technical assistance continues. This increase in requests is a function of the higher numbers of staff, and increased support commitments for non-staff, within the org. Of note, EUS onboarded 87 users, compared to 49 users during the same prior year period. This number comprises of staff and fully supported contracted resources.

### Back Office Relationship – Board Management Software

The Board is requesting a Board Management application to streamline board processes and to more effectively manage document security as well as other features. The project team has finished all the initial configuration and testing of the tool by the end of December 2023. Board Ops admins were trained by 12 January 2024. Board members and executives were trained by 24 January 2024. This project is complete and considered closed.

### Back Office Relationship – ERP

E&IT and HR teams have worked together to conclude the existing Halogen product (ICANNU) will be renewed for 2 years. In the next two years, ICANN will implement Oracle Goals, Performance and Learn modules. Oracle demos have been completed and a high-level project plan has been developed. This project is part of Tech Rationalization and Consolidation.

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## Information Security and Network Engineering

### Endpoint Detection and Response for Servers

CrowdStrike Falcon Complete for servers has been procured to serve as the Endpoint Detection and Response tool for ICANN org servers. Initial deployment will be to ICANN Managed Root Server (IMRS) nodes, followed by remaining ICANN infrastructure.

### IMRS Cluster Implementation

IMRS Cluster deployment in Egypt was completed at the end of October 2023. The next deployment to be targeted was Germany with the RFP/RFQ process completed. However, funding for this Cluster has been frozen, and the expected implementation in 2024 will not be completed. No further work on new clusters or upgrading of existing clusters that require significant spending will be performed in FY24 or FY25. Given the shift in budget position related to SSR funds, there will need to be a review on how SaNE's budget can absorb the ongoing costs of the Egypt and Kenya cluster installations.

## Governance

### Tech Rationalization and Consolidation

As part of process improvement for the ICANN org, E&IT has initiated the Technology Rationalization and Consolidation effort. Technology rationalization is the process of cataloging and eliminating duplicate or overlapping software applications or services used across the organization. This allows the organization to improve efficiency, simplify its tech portfolio, enhance user productivity, and lower the total cost of ownership for its portfolio. Completed during this period was a negotiated support rate reduction for the SLAM service, as well as unused license reductions for the Salesforce platform.

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# IDENTIFIER RESEARCH, OPERATIONS, AND SECURITY

*John Crain, SVP and Chief Technology Officer*

## OFFICE OF THE CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND MILESTONES

- ⦿ Second IANA Naming Function Review (IFR) work continues.
- ⦿ NCAP Study 2 completed and delivered to SSAC.
- ⦿ Two new documents published in the OCTO document series.
- ⦿ Led IETF engagement for significant new changes to DNS delegation.
- ⦿ Contributed to the IETF's RFC series on the DNS.
- ⦿ Published two OCTO documents.

### OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

#### Second IANA Naming Function Review

The second IFR team (IFR2) continued to meet biweekly to conduct the review in accordance with the scope specified in [Article 18](#) of the ICANN Bylaws, which centers around a review and evaluation of PTI's performance of the IANA naming function against the contractual requirements in the [IANA Naming Function Contract](#) and the [IANA Naming Function Statement of Work](#). In February, IFR2 formalized its objectives and methodology, including milestones and anticipated delivery dates, in its [Terms of Reference](#) and high-level [Work Plan](#).

#### NCAP Study 2

The Name Collision Analysis Project (NCAP) Discussion Group (DG), which consists of SSAC and community members and is supported by OCTO, completed NCAP Study 2. The draft study went out for Public Comment in late January 2024. After the conclusion of the comment period, the NCAP DG made minor changes to the study based on feedback. The NCAP DG sent the final version of Study 2 to SSAC on 5 April 2024. SSAC plans to publish its own document as an accompanying commentary on Study 2 by the end of May 2024.

#### OCTO Publications

Since December 2023, OCTO has published two new documents in the OCTO document series:

- ⦿ [OCTO-037](#): RBL Evaluation Methodology
- ⦿ [OCTO-038](#): Methodology to Classify Unsolicited Email Threats

## IETF Engagement

Paul Hoffman from the Research team co-chaired the Birds-of-a-Feather effort to create a new Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) working group to develop new types of DNS delegation. This work is expected to increase the security and stability of the DNS in many ways, such as making the use of large DNS providers more reliable and greatly increasing the use of encrypted transport for DNS queries. Roy Arends contributed to the effort by helping the group focus on operational requirements for the new technologies.

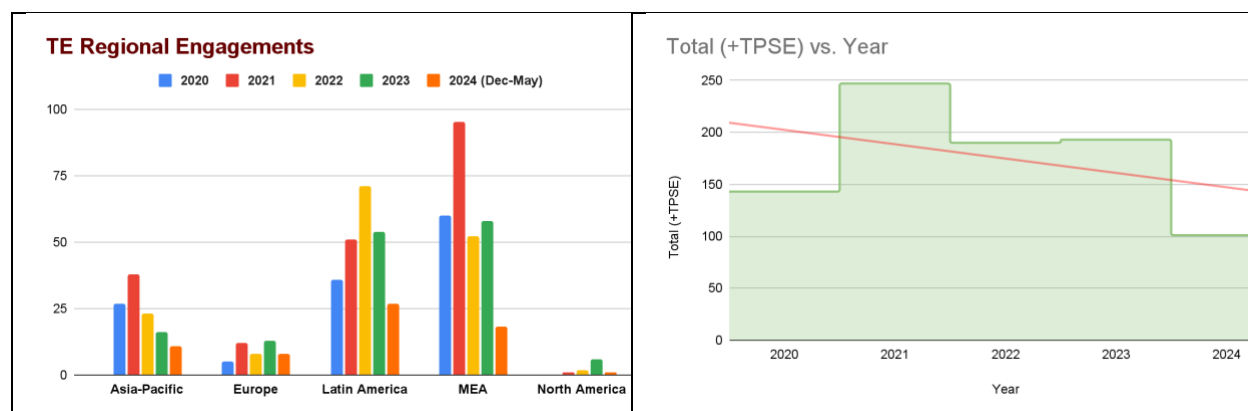
### The IETF's RFC Series on the DNS

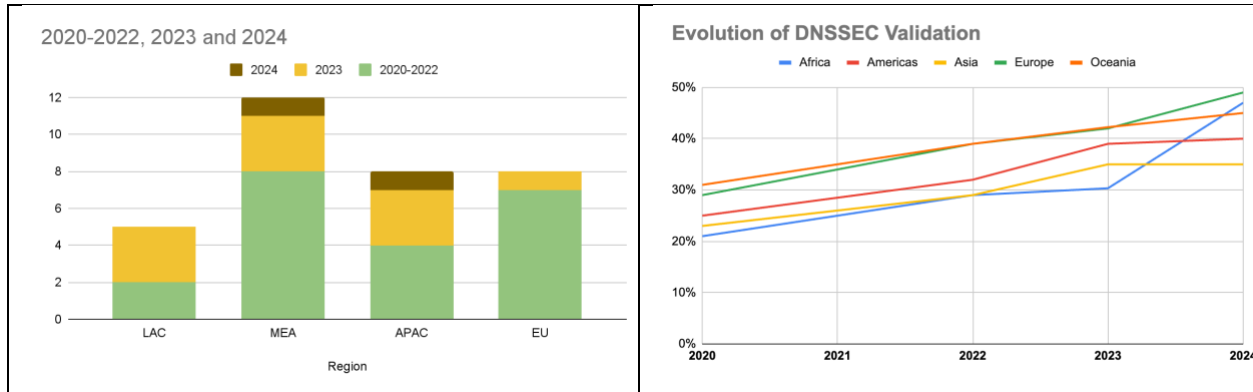
RFC 9539, "Unilateral Opportunistic Deployment of Encrypted Recursive-to-Authoritative DNS," describes best practices for authoritative servers to enable best-effort encryption for connections from resolvers. It is co-authored by Paul Hoffman from the Research team.

RFC 9499, "DNS Terminology," was published as a Best Current Practice RFC. It is co-authored by Paul Hoffman from the Research team.

## Technical Engagement and Capacity Building

- Technical Engagement has continued around the world on DNS ecosystem security with 101 new engagements during the period under review (158 total for 2023): 11 in APAC, eight in Europe, 27 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 18 in the Middle East and Africa, and one in North America.
- The focus on ISPs in our outreach activities also helped significantly improve DNS Security Extensions (DNSSEC) validation in each region, particularly in Africa (30 percent increase during the period) and Europe.
- Two new ccTLDs (including IDNs) have signed their zone following our outreach and hands-on capacity-building workshops.





## Trust and Public Safety Engagement

- ⦿ Our engagement with trust and public safety has continued over the period. We had 36 distinct engagements with different trust and public safety groups globally.
- ⦿ We have provided assistance to the cyberthreat intelligence community to address queries related to domain names and DNS in investigating and mitigating attacks more than a dozen times during the period under review.

## KINDNS

- ⦿ During the period under review, 188 Operators participated in the Knowledge-sharing and Instantiation Norms for DNS and Naming Security (KINDNS) initiative by completing their self-assessment and downloading their personalized implementation report.
- ⦿ We see the same pattern in the responses of operators, their objective was mainly to know where they stand in their DNS operation practices and to convince their organization to better secure their DNS operations. We continue to work with operators to help them actually make their assessment reviewed and formally join the program.

# INTERNET ASSIGNED NUMBERS AUTHORITY

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND MILESTONES

- ⦿ The IANA services have satisfactorily met service-level agreements (SLAs) for the period.
- ⦿ A significant project was undertaken to replace the hardware security modules used to store the root zone key signing key (KSK). This work successfully culminated in a key generation ceremony in April.

## OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

### Performance in Brief

This represents a summary view of comprehensive reporting available on the [IANA website](#).

	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.
<b>DNS Root Zone</b>					
SLAs Met	100%	100%	100%	98.3%	100%
Metrics Met	64/64	64/64	63/64	63/64	64/64
CSC assessed satisfactory or higher	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Request Volume	396	459	283	238	288
TLDs in Root Zone	1455	1454	1452	1450	1448
<b>DNS Root KSK*</b>					
Metrics Met	5/5	-	-	5/5	-
Scheduled Items Met	7/7	-	-	7/7	-
<b>.INT Top-Level Domain</b>					
New .INT registered	1	1	0	0	0
.INT modifications	2	4	5	3	1
Request Volume	16	20	25	24	12
<b>Protocol Parameters</b>					
SLAs Met	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Met MOU requirement (90%)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Met internal target (95%)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Request Volume	260	186	251	253	260
<b>Number Resources</b>					
SLAs Met	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Metrics Met	4/4	4/4	4/4	4/4	4/4
Met SLA requirement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Request Volume	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Label Generation Rulesets</b>					
New LGRs posted	0	0	0	0	0
LGRs modified	111	0	20	215	17
Request Volume	2	0	2	5	1
<b>General Enquiries</b>					
Request Volume	138	177	100	107	124

\*Only applicable to months where ceremonies are held.



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## Customer Satisfaction in Brief

	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.
Response Rate	41.9%	23.1%	38.6%	42.7%	31.6%
Satisfaction	96.2%	91.7%	96.3%	93.8%	100%

## Updates and Initiatives

- ⦿ A critical component of how we safely secure the root zone KSK, the trust anchor for the DNS, is a specialized device called a hardware security module. The vendor of the current hardware security modules has discontinued the devices. As a priority, work was undertaken to redesign much of the operational practices to support a new HSM from an alternative vendor. As the HSMs operate in significantly different ways, it requires an extensive redesign of how key management operations are performed. This culminated in the generation of a new root zone KSK using the alternative hardware in April. The key generated is anticipated to be used for root zone signing in 2026.
- ⦿ IANA has launched an RDAP server for the domain names and IP address allocations it manages. It has been initially listed in the bootstrap registry for the .int domain and will be expanded to other areas of responsibility as its operation is proven out.
- ⦿ IANA performed an assessment of potential candidate strings to implement SAC113 and has recommended that .internal be reserved for this purpose.

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# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Sally Costerton, SVP, Global Stakeholder Engagement and Interim President and CEO

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND MILESTONES

- ⦿ During this period, Stakeholder Engagement conducted the 10<sup>th</sup> Middle East DNS Forum, 24–26 April 2024 in Rabat, Morocco. This included a workshop day on Universal Acceptance with partners in the Coalition for Digital Africa. The function also supported [UA Day](#) events in March 2024, including a key event in Belgrade with .rs, Interim CEO Sally Costerton, and ICANN Board Vice Chair Danko Jevtović.
- ⦿ ICANN org has [announced](#) three-year \$0 master service agreements with three organizations focused on supporting Internet access and recovery for local populations during emergencies: the [Emergency Telecommunications Cluster \(ETC\)](#), [NetHope](#), and [Télécoms Sans Frontières \(TSF\)](#). Funding under the Emergency Assistance Program for Continued Internet Access will only be activated in response to specific crisis situations that meet [established criteria](#), and is subject to the availability of funds.
- ⦿ Working with the Board Anti-Harassment Working Group, ICANN org successfully implemented Upstander training at ICANN79 for the Leadership Program, newcomers, and the SSAC. These three workshops provided participants with tools customized to the ICANN environment for intervening in perceived inappropriate and/or harassment situations. The well-received sessions were required for sponsored participants of newcomers' programs as well as for participants of the Leadership Program.
- ⦿ The Meeting Operations team is actively working to confirm future ICANN triannual meetings for 2025 and 2026.
- ⦿ In March, ICANN conducted the [ICANN79 Community Forum](#) in San Juan, Puerto Rico, with 1,737 attendees, with 1,189 participating in-person and 558 virtually. For more information, see the [By the Numbers Report](#).
- ⦿ ICANN Travel Support [announced and previewed](#) the new Funded Traveler Portal at ICANN78. This new portal has been delayed slightly during the quality assurance and testing phase through June 2024, but is still planned to be introduced to all funded travelers in the fall of 2024 and will make the process of traveling easier for Funded Travelers, from welcoming new travelers to keeping track of their bookings all in one location.

## OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

### Global Stakeholder Engagement

Major initiatives included UA Day 2024 events around the world and online; the Coalition for Digital Africa, which published a [year-end recap](#) in December 2023, and supporting the expansion of TLD performance measurement in the region along with Universal Acceptance training for African universities. The team also conducted capacity-development training in San Juan ahead of ICANN79; attended NASIG 2024 in San Juan; and attended Netmundial+10 in São Paulo, Brazil.

Global Stakeholder Engagement facilitates dialogues to reach new stakeholders and represent ICANN org at events around the world. During this period, the team supported the following regional events: DNS technical training with PANDI in Indonesia; DNS ecosystem security

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training in Türkiye; NetMission Academy 2024; LAC-I Roadshows in Colombia; engagement and training with Icelandic Internet stakeholders; ICANN accredited registrar training in Vienna, Austria; Asia Pacific Next Generation Camp 2024; Web Summit Qatar 2024; Myanmar NOG 6; NAP Colombia DNSSEC training; NAP Peru training; ZANOG training in South Africa; and APRICOT 2024/APNIC 57.

The team also participated in and supported the China IGF; MEAC School on Internet Governance; India Internet Governance Forum; Digital Freedom Summit in Nepal; Brussels Cybersecurity Summit 2024; LACIGF 16; National Summit of Community Networks in Kenya; Domain Pulse 2024 in Vienna; IIC Asia Forum 2024; APTLD 85 in Goa, India; Nonprofit Technology Conference; CloudFest 2024; WACREN 2024; OSIANE 2024; and the SECURE Conference organized by CERT.PL; among many other events.

## Engagement Programs

The team conducted best practice research to better understand the broader environmental sustainability landscape. This research informs a proposed environmental strategy, which includes a vision, principles, and proposed activities. Based on this research and discussions with sustainability consultants, the team scoped an environmental sustainability audit to better understand ICANN's baseline, particularly around greenhouse gas accounting pertaining to ICANN offices, ICANN Managed Root Server and co-location facilities, travel, events, and org-wide products and purchases.

ICANN org launched new training on ICANN Learn, including the Registry Operators Fundamentals, ICANN Policy Development Processes, and a skill-building course on Handling Change. Additionally, the Policy Accelerator workshop discussions and coursework are being hosted on ICANN Learn. At the beginning of April, ICANN held a third webinar as part of the [ICANN for Beginners Virtual Program](#) series. This webinar introduced newcomers to the basics of how policy and advice is developed at ICANN and was attended by a total of 203 non-staff participants.

ICANN welcomed 33 fellows (one virtual) and 12 NextGen participants from 30 countries for ICANN79 and selected 40 fellows and 12 NextGen participants from 39 countries to participate at ICANN80.

On 29 February to 1 March, the team supported the eighth edition of the [ICANN Leadership Program](#) in San Juan, Puerto Rico. This year's program had a total of 30 participants from across ICANN community structures.

The [Registrant Program](#) continued to hold informational and capacity-building activities on topics relevant to domain name registrants, and sought out feedback from the community about additional registrant issues that could be addressed by the program. Activities included: [ICANN Training Series – Central Europe & the Baltics: Safeguarding End-Users: Best Practices for Managing and Protecting Domain Names](#), [Registrant Program Update ICANN79 Prep Week session](#), and ongoing collaboration with the [ccNSO on capacity building for ccTLD Registrants](#).

## Meetings Operations

Planning for the ICANN80 Policy Forum in Kigali and the ICANN81 Annual General Meeting in Istanbul is in progress. In consultation with community leaders, the team is working to sustain

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the improvements to the hybrid meeting format and is committed to ensuring an inclusive meeting experience that provides an equal opportunity for all to engage on important policy matters.

The travel team is implementing the Travel Modernization Project with beta testing currently underway with select funded travelers through mid-2024, with a full public launch by Q3 2024.

Meetings Operations conducted a site visit in Istanbul for ICANN81 and is reviewing options for host locations for future ICANN public meetings and regional events in 2025 and 2026.

For more information, see the [ICANN Meeting By the Numbers Reports](#).

## Regional Offices

In January, the Montevideo regional office hosted a meeting of the ICANN Board and Executive Team and facilitated a meeting between the ICANN Board and the LACNIC Board.

In February, the Brussels regional office hosted an ICANN org staff Europe regional all-hands event in Gent, Belgium.

The Washington, D.C., regional office celebrated its first anniversary in the new location and hosted a series of events in April 2024, including a DC Regional All Hands meeting; guest chat with Vint Cerf; a meeting of the Root Server System Governance Working Group; and hosted 40 students from The Washington Center's Cybersecurity Accelerator Program.

The Istanbul regional office hosted series of engagement events for local stakeholders ahead of the ICANN81 Istanbul meeting in November 2024.

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# GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

*Sally Newell Cohen, Senior Vice President, Global Communications*

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND MILESTONES

- ⦿ Supported the communications activities related to the keystone [UA Day](#) event in Belgrade, Serbia (28 March) and other events around the world.
- ⦿ Supported the launch of the ICANN Grant Program and opening of the application window.
- ⦿ Developed and executed a communications plan for the [Middle East DNS Forum](#) (24–25 April), which included securing an interview with Interim President and CEO Sally Costerton with L’Economiste.
- ⦿ Developed and launched a new [website](#) for the New gTLD Program: Next Round, which is available in six languages.

## OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

### Media

#### Press Releases

During this period, ICANN issued four [press releases](#), which generated:

- ⦿ More than 3,541 release pickups across global media outlets.
- ⦿ More than 69,795 release views.
- ⦿ More than 4,765 media views.

In addition to earned media through press release distribution, ICANN receives regular media mentions. During the reporting period, ICANN was mentioned more than **2,300** times across a variety of media outlets.

#### Announcements and Blogs

Global Communications is responsible for writing or editing all blogs and announcements published on the ICANN website. During this period, ICANN published 42 [announcements](#) and 37 [blogs](#).

### Creative Services

The Creative Services team completed 212 projects, including graphics, newsletters, photography, and social media campaigns. See the [ICANN Social Media Report](#) for metrics.

### Information Transparency Platform

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ICANN retained an external, third-party accessibility solutions provider, TPGi, to ensure the ITP pages and content follow the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1](#). Based on the resulting accessibility audit report, we have categorized the findings to address based on priority, with the most critical areas largely addressed.

## Internal Communications

During this period, we made several enhancements to our internal communications approach and channels, including adding a regional spotlight to some Info Calls and launching a new Team Leads call and Slack channel to share relevant and timely information with approximately 85 senior staff.

- ⦿ Monthly Internal Newsletter (five issues): 70 percent average open rate and 23 percent average click rate
- ⦿ Monthly Info Calls (five calls): 60 percent average attendance for the live call and 20 percent viewership for the recording
- ⦿ Monthly Team Leads Calls (two calls): 95 percent average attendance

## Regional and Functional Communications Support

### Asia Pacific

- ⦿ Supported the ICANN APAC-TWNIC Engagement Forum (23–24 April) with a social media campaign to promote the event and sessions that ICANN participated in.
- ⦿ Developed an introduction to Internet governance presentation for Chinese media in December.
- ⦿ Collaborated with subject-matter experts and the PR agency to contribute articles to ETGovernment: [28 March](#) and [3 May](#)
- ⦿ The PR agency in successfully pitched UA stories in China. (22 December)
  - ⦿ [CERNET](#) (official Ministry of Education portal)
  - ⦿ China Education Network: [Sohu](#) and [Toutiao](#)

### Europe, the Middle East, and Africa

- ⦿ Developed and executed a communications plan for the launch of the second phase of the [Coalition for Digital Africa](#)'s ICANN Managed Root Server Infrastructure initiative.
- ⦿ Developed and executed a communications plan for the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary [Middle East DNS Forum](#) (24–25 April).
  - ⦿ Secured media interviews for ICANN's VP of Stakeholder Engagement – Middle East Baher Esmat, UASG Vice Chair Nabil Benamar, and Interim President and CEO Sally Costerton.

### Latin America and the Caribbean

- ⦿ Developed and executed a communications plan for the NetMundial+10 conference in Sao Paulo, Brazil (29–30 April): messaging, byline article for VP of Stakeholder Engagement & Managing Director – LAC Rodrigo de la Parra, social media, and graphics.

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## North America

- ⦿ Developed and executed the communications plan for ICANN79.
  - Coordinated ICANN's social media efforts in English and Spanish.
- ⦿ Provided communications support for ICANN's participation in the North American School of Internet Governance and capacity development provided in collaboration with EDP University in San Juan, Puerto Rico (February and March).

## Community Engagement System

- ⦿ Coordinated the preparation for Comms team onboarding, identifying users and training.

## Contractual Compliance

- ⦿ Copy edited the monthly Contractual Compliance report for the period of December 2023 to April 2024 and updated the [dedicated webpage](#).

## Global Domains and Strategy

- ⦿ Developed and launched a new [website](#) for the New gTLD Program: Next Round, which is available in six languages.
- ⦿ Continued targeted awareness campaigns to create interest in opportunities associated with the next round of new gTLD applications, including media outreach, speaking and event opportunities, and paid and organic social media campaigns.
- ⦿ Raised awareness of the first RDRS metrics report and community webinars via a [blog](#) (17 January), monthly newsletters, and paid and organic social media campaigns.
- ⦿ Updated RDRS [webpage](#), supporting GSE materials, and user guides.
- ⦿ Supported the communications activities related to the keystone [UA Day](#) event in Belgrade, Serbia (28 March) and other events around the world. This included issuing a joint [press release](#) with the sponsor, coordinating responses for media interviews, drafting remarks, conducting ICANN and UASG social media campaigns, and reviewing and editing presentations.

## Governance

- ⦿ Provided communications support for the ICANN Board, including publishing blogs and providing talking points.
- ⦿ Provided communications support for the NomCom Operations, including publishing announcements and blogs and planning and executing a social media campaign to raise awareness of the 2024 application period.

## Government and IGO Engagement

- ⦿ Developed dedicated webpage and comms plan for the [WSIS+20 Outreach Network](#).
- ⦿ Coordinated a video message from ICANN's Interim President and CEO for the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity 45th Anniversary.

## Identifier Research, Operations, and Security

- ⦿ Developed and executed the communications plan for ICANN Domain Metrics.

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- ⦿ Reviewed the [OCTO Publications](#) “Defense Mechanisms Against Harmful Internet Content” and Version 2 of “Quantum Computing and the DNS.”
  - ⦿ Coordinated the material for the KINDNS booth at ICANN79, including flyers, graphics, translations, and social media efforts in English and Spanish.

### **Meetings Operations**

- ⦿ Compiled the Hot Topics and Topics of Interest briefing documents for ICANN79.
- ⦿ Reviewed and revised guidelines for the ICANN Public Meeting session request form, particularly for session titles and descriptions.

### **Office of the CFO**

- ⦿ Developed and executed the communications plan for the [ICANN Grant Program](#), including a dedicated webpage, two press releases, and social media campaign.
- ⦿ Provided communications support for the development of the next [ICANN Strategic Plan](#), including updated webpages, announcements, blogs, and newsletter features.

### **Policy Development Support**

- ⦿ Reviewed GNSO Policy Briefing and Policy Outlook Report for ICANN79.
- ⦿ Developed and executed communications plan for the Community Excellence Award.
- ⦿ Drafted emails and flyers for the ccNSO’s mailing lists and community libraries.

### **Public Responsibility Support**

- ⦿ Reviewed the new [ICANN for Beginners Virtual Program](#) webpage.
- ⦿ Developed a script for a webinar on policy development for the ICANN for Beginners Virtual Program.
- ⦿ Reviewed and the post-meeting Fellowship Program report for ICANN79.



# LANGUAGE SERVICES

## Language Support

### Translation Projects

Type	No. of Projects	No. of Words
General	203	2,032,188
GAC	42	876,849
Board	11	255,630
Newsletters	12	39,834
Press Releases	4	11,438
Announcements	44	57,646
Blogs	38	94,765
IANA	7	13,216
Total	361	3,381,566

### Teleconference Interpretation

No. of Calls	78 (with at least 3 languages/call)
No. of Interpreters	27
No. of Minutes	11,391

### Transcriptions

Type	No. of Calls	No. of Minutes
GNSO	113	7,527
ICANN General	139	16,956
ALAC (RTT)	40	2,970

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## ICANN Meeting Support

Support Service	ICANN79 and Prep Week	Middle East DNS Forum
No. of Languages	6	3
Simultaneous Interpretation	107 sessions	15
Real Time Transcription	41 sessions	–
Transcription	215 sessions	Tk
<b>Support Staff</b>		
On-Site Interpretation	40 interpreters	–
Remote Simultaneous Interpretation	43 interpreters	8 interpreters
Real Time Transcription	4 captioners	–
Tech Support	15 tech experts	3 tech experts

## LS Projects

### Neural Machine Translation (Generative AI)

The team is continuing its effort to conduct research and testing related to AI and its impact and application in the language industry. In the meantime, we are also publishing a series of internal blogs that we hope will educate and inform ICANN org staff about the workings of the LS team.

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# POLICY DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

David Olive, SVP, Policy Development Support and Managing Director – Washington, D.C.

## OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

### Policy and Advice

- ⦿ Assisted the Address Supporting Organization (ASO) with the development of an implementation document for Internet Coordination Policy 2 (ICP-2) and an eventual successor document to ICP-2.
- ⦿ Supported the ccNSO in delivering a policy on the (de-)selection of IDN ccTLD strings. ccNSO members approved the policy in April 2024.
- ⦿ Supported the GNSO Council in delivering supplemental recommendations related to non-adopted policy recommendations for new gTLDs and the adoption of the Final Reports of Phase 1 of the Expedited Policy Development Process on Internationalized Domain Names and the GNSO Guidance Process on Applicant Support.
- ⦿ Facilitated the development of 15 comments from the At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC), including 12 ALAC statements in response to Public Comment proceedings and three pieces of correspondence.
- ⦿ Facilitated the development of Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) consensus advice on two topics facilitated the transmission of four GAC letters to the ICANN Board and ICANN organization; and submitted GAC responses to two Public Comment proceedings.
- ⦿ Facilitated an update of the Root Server System Advisory Committee (RSSAC) Operational Procedures and publication as RSSAC000v8.
- ⦿ Facilitated three Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC) work parties on name collision analysis, registrar name server management, and DNSSEC delegation signer record automation. The SSAC published reports on name collision analysis and the evolution of Internet name resolution.

### Community Engagement and Capacity Development

- ⦿ Organized a GAC Capacity Development Workshop for 79 participants focused on policies of interest and an introduction to GAC operations.
- ⦿ Planned and supported the African Regional At-Large Organization UA Day event about a regional UA adoption strategy.
- ⦿ Planned and supported four Asian, Australasian, and Pacific Islands Regional At-Large Organization Policy Forum sessions, which facilitate and coordinate ICANN policy-related discussions in the region.
- ⦿ Planned and supported three European Regional At-Large Organization Roundtables.
- ⦿ Planned and supported the North American Regional At-Large Organization Roundtable on “Domain Abuse in the Digital Economy.”
- ⦿ Approved 11 trip proposals as part of the Community Regional Outreach Program.
- ⦿ Managed an average of over 240 remote participation calls for each month in the reporting period.
- ⦿ Produced 35 issues of the ICANN Community Digest.

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## Community Governance and Resourcing

- ⦿ Supported five Customer Standing Committee (CSC) meetings and facilitated implementation of the recommendations from the second CSC Effectiveness Review, which concluded in April 2023.
- ⦿ Supported the Root Zone Evolution Review Committee (RZERC) in finalizing the first RZERC Charter Review and supported ICANN Board approval of the new RZERC Charter.
- ⦿ Supported the Root Server System Governance Working Group in the identification of stakeholders and organized a three-day workshop in Washington, D.C., in April 2024 to determine roles and responsibilities of those stakeholders.
- ⦿ Managed the ongoing amendment process of the gTLD Registries Stakeholder Group charter.
- ⦿ Supported the Community Coordination Group for the implementation of Recommendations 1, 2, 3, and 6 from Work Stream 2 of the Cross-Community Working Group on Enhancing ICANN Accountability.
- ⦿ Facilitated ICANN community input to the Continuous Improvement Program Community Coordination Group, deferral of the fourth Accountability and Transparency Review, and the Pilot Holistic Review.
- ⦿ Collaborated with the GSE function, PRS team, and OCTO to assess current ICANN-supported efforts that foster informed ICANN community participation in policy development and advice activities.
- ⦿ Managed 14 Public Comment proceedings, which received 70 submissions.
- ⦿ Ended the Additional Budget Requests Process, which supported 264 requests and considered 502 total requests over the course of 12 years.

## Community Readiness

- ⦿ Completed Class 1, Term 1 of the Policy Development Accelerator on gTLD registration data with 51 participants.
- ⦿ Launched Class 1, Term 2 of the Policy Development Accelerator focused on developing skills to effectively contribute to policy and advice development.
- ⦿ Developed the Consensus Building Program through in-person workshops focused on the Consensus Playbook and through a supplementary ICANN Learn course.

## ICANN79

- ⦿ Led 193 of 245 (79 percent) total scheduled sessions held during the ICANN79 Community Forum.
- ⦿ Organized ICANN79 Prep Week, which featured 12 webinars. Topics ranged from an introduction for newcomers to project updates from several functions of the ICANN organization.
- ⦿ Published the ICANN79 Policy Outlook Report and the GNSO Policy Briefing: ICANN79 Edition.

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# GOVERNMENT AND IGO ENGAGEMENT

Veni Markovski, VP and Interim Head, Government and IGO Engagement (GE)

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND MILESTONES

- ⦿ GE continued to monitor the United Nations processes that could potentially touch on ICANN's mission, such as the AHC Final Session, OEWG 7th Session, and the publication of the U.N. Global Digital Compact (GDC) Zero Draft.
- ⦿ ICANN submitted a [contribution](#) to the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) questionnaire for 20-year review of WSIS implementation.
- ⦿ ICANN submitted a [contribution](#) to the IGF Leadership Panel's consultation on the draft framework on the "Internet We Want" in March 2024.
- ⦿ ICANN participated in several events relating to its mission including the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi (21–23 February), Mobile World Congress in Barcelona (26–29 February), CEPT (19–21 March), UA Day, CSTD 27th Session (15–19 April), ITU APAC Girls in ICT Day 2024, and WTSA prep meetings.
- ⦿ GE organized the Geopolitical Legislative and Regulatory developments presentation at each ICANN meeting as well as a session on the WSIS+20 review, providing updates for the ICANN community. In collaboration with the wider ICANN org, GE organized webinars on topics relevant to the WSIS+20 Review.

## OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY

### U.N. and Other IGOs

- ⦿ On 11 January 2024 ICANN and the ITU co-hosted two meetings for over 100 diplomats. One briefing at the U.N. Headquarters in New York was co-hosted by the Permanent Missions of Bulgaria and Guatemala, and the other briefing took place at the ITU Headquarters in Geneva. The topic for both briefings was "Demystifying Digital – How the Internet Works."
- ⦿ To facilitate conversations on Internet governance and WSIS+20, ICANN launched the WSIS+20 Outreach Network webpage and mailing list. ICANN also hosted webinars to discuss WSIS and the draft zero of the GDC.
- ⦿ Monitored and reported to the community the results from the discussions of 37 U.N., ITU, and other IGO events, among them: the U.N. OEWG, AHC, GDC, and WSIS-related events, ITU-D meetings, CSTD, ECOSOC, etc.
- ⦿ Held meetings with representatives from various Permanent Missions to the U.N. Office in Geneva.
- ⦿ Preparations and coordination are underway for the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event, 27–31 May, and for the IGF 2024 to be held in December in Saudi Arabia.

### Legislative and Regulatory

- ⦿ Submitted one regulatory-related [contribution](#) to external bodies. ICANN provided input for the draft Saudi Arabian Digital Infrastructure Policy.

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- ⦿ Followed European legislation affecting the domain names ecosystem, most notably the Regulations on Geographical Indications for craft and industrial products and on Geographical indications for wine, spirit drinks, and agricultural products.

## Governmental Advisory Committee

- ⦿ Supported the GAC Capacity Building Workshop at ICANN79, GAC leadership calls, APAC GAC calls, and planning for an APAC-GAC capacity-building workshop.
- ⦿ Planned and coordinated GAC Leadership Retreat in Brussels.
- ⦿ Leading the project for the GAC High-Level Government Meeting (HLGM) in Kigali, 9 June 2024.

## Government Engagement

- ⦿ GE team members participated in over 50 government, IGO-related, and community events, including global and regional IGFs, WTSA Prep meetings in APAC, ITU APAC Girls in ICT Day 2024, side events at the CSTD, and Regional At-Large Organization Meetings, among others.
- ⦿ Conducted bilateral meetings with ministers from several geographic regions on Internet governance topics, including with governmental representatives from Rwanda, India, Sri Lanka, the European Union.

## TOP ISSUES AND MITIGATION

The U.N. GDC negotiations are intergovernmental by nature, and no non-state stakeholders can participate in them, including ICANN. The GDC Zero Draft was published 1 April and member state negotiations are ongoing. GE is monitoring the text and the discussions that are to follow in the coming months. GE has continued its interaction with the U.N. member states, including during the ICANN–ITU organized briefings for diplomats at the U.N. in New York and in Geneva in January, as well as during bilateral meetings with government officials.

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# ANNEX

## ICANN SOCIAL MEDIA REPORT

*Covering the period of 18 December 2023 to 17 April 2024*

### Social Media Metrics: Prologue

Social media plays an important role in our engagement with global stakeholders and remains a powerful communication tool in expanding our reach to other audiences. ICANN's Global Communications team continues to invest time, resources, and budget to expanding our global social media reach. The team operates a total of 17 accounts and pages in multiple languages, as noted below.

Note: Engagement rate is an important social media metric that measures how many people interact or “engage” with ICANN's social media content via likes, shares, comments, or reactions divided by how many people saw the post. A higher engagement rate typically indicates that people found the content more relevant or compelling.

### Key Findings: Cross-Platform

- ⦿ **Overall Performance:** Our primary social media platforms are X, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram. LinkedIn and Instagram lead in follower growth and engagement.
- ⦿ **High Engagement Rates:** Engagement rates exceed industry benchmarks across all platforms.
- ⦿ **Slowed Follower Growth:** Growth slowed on X and Facebook, likely due to a previous period of rapid expansion, indicating the need to refine our social media strategy.
- ⦿ **Paid Campaign Success:** Paid campaigns were highly effective, especially for events like the Middle East DNS Forum 2024 and announcing the Registration Data Request Service.
- ⦿ **Top-performing Content:** Content related to specific events and programs, such as Universal Acceptance Day, the ICANN81 Fellowship Program, and ICANN79, consistently stood out as top performers across platforms, indicating the importance of event-related content in engaging the audience.
- ⦿ **Visual Content Effectiveness:** Posts featuring carousel photos on LinkedIn and high-resolution imagery on Instagram were particularly successful, indicating the importance of visual storytelling in driving audience interaction.
- ⦿ **Newsletter Engagement:** ICANN's regional newsletters recorded high open rates, showcasing the effectiveness of content strategy and social media promotion in driving engagement.

### Key Findings: ICANN79

- ⦿ **Overall Engagement Growth:** Achieved a 26.2 percent increase in mentions on X, indicating heightened engagement and community resonance.

- ⦿ **Strategic Content Curation:** Posts featuring Flickr albums, NextGen@ICANN programs, and industry conversations drove significant audience interaction across platforms.
- ⦿ **Effective Utilization of Visual Storytelling:** Leveraged high-resolution imagery and features like Instagram Reels to foster audience interaction.
- ⦿ **Cross-Platform Engagement:** Maintained high-engagement content across platforms, with Flickr posts driving above-average photo views and sustained audience interest.
- ⦿ **Newsletter Engagement:** Recorded record-high open rates of 59 percent, showcasing the efficacy of content strategy and social media promotion in driving engagement.
- ⦿ **YouTube Livestream Success:** Achieved the highest average watch time to date, with notable audience turnout for key events, fostering community dialogue and engagement.

## ICANN Social Media Accounts

Platform	Accounts	Details	Multilingual
X	8	English, French, Arabic, Russian, Portuguese, Spanish, ICANN President and CEO handles	Yes
Facebook	1	Multilingual platform in the six ICANN Languages, primarily focused on English	Yes
LinkedIn	1	English	No
YouTube	1	Videos in all ICANN languages	Yes
Instagram	1	English	No
WeChat	1	Chinese	No
Weibo	1	Chinese	No
Youku	1	Chinese	No
Flickr	1	N/A	N/A
SoundCloud	1	English	No

## Social Media Strategy

ICANN’s social media platforms encourage engagement with and awareness of our content, events, and important milestones, in multiple languages. Audiences also interact directly with ICANN to pose questions or send comments. This allows us to create a direct dialogue with audiences that would otherwise not exist. The Global Communications team responds to hundreds of direct messages posted to our social media channels each month.

Social media is monitored daily, and we regularly collaborate with other functions to create effective organic and paid campaigns, publicize announcements and blogs, and promote ICANN-related events. A metrics report is produced quarterly, which allows us to measure performance.





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