

ICANN Response to the UN DESA Survey on WSIS Action Lines C1, C7 e-government and C11 Implementation Roadmaps

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) through the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG) serves as facilitator for the implementation of and follow-up to the action lines:

- C1 - The role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development
- C7 - ICT Applications: E-government
- C11 - International and regional cooperation

The [WSIS+20 outcome document](#), adopted by consensus on 17 December 2025, gives WSIS Action Line facilitators a concrete task. In paragraph 113 of General Assembly resolution A/RES/80/173, Action Line facilitators, in coordination with UNGIS, are requested to develop targeted, results-oriented implementation roadmaps for their respective Action Lines.

In this context, UN DESA is conducting this online survey to gather inputs, priorities, evidence and recommendations from Member States, United Nations entities, international and regional organizations, civil society, the private sector, the technical and academic communities, and other stakeholders. The responses will inform the development of implementation roadmaps for WSIS Action Lines C1, C7 and C11.

6. What are the main achievements or areas of progress under this Action Line in your country, region, organization or area of work? What are the main gaps, barriers or challenges that should be addressed in the Action Line Implementation Roadmap?

Please provide concrete examples where possible. This may include coordination gaps, financing constraints, capacity needs, data limitations, weak institutional arrangements, duplication of efforts or limited stakeholder participation.

C1 - The role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development

From ICANN's perspective, the WSIS framework recognizes that building a people-centered, inclusive and development oriented information society requires the active and coordinated participation of all governments and other stakeholders, including the technical community. This participation is central to Action Line C1 and remains important to the priorities reaffirmed in the WSIS+20 outcome document, including digital inclusion and capacity building initiatives.

The 2025 WSIS+20 outcome document reaffirmed the importance of multistakeholder participation in advancing the WSIS objectives. Participation by the technical community alongside governments and other stakeholders helps ensure that discussions affecting the

Internet consider the realities of the underlying technical foundations that support its global interoperability.

C1 in Practice - Examples:

ICANN contributes to WSIS Action Line C1 through its role in coordinating the Internet's unique identifier systems, including the Domain Name System (DNS), and by promoting multistakeholder collaboration and strengthening technical capacity in support of a secure, stable, and globally interoperable Internet. Through partnerships with organizations such as UNESCO, the Africa Telecommunication Union and the International Telecommunication Union, as well as governments, the technical community, academia and the private sector, ICANN supports cooperation and capacity building activities relevant to ICTs for development. Some of these activities are reflected below.

Collaborative Partnership with the ITU Regional Office for Africa, ATU and ICANN on Capacity Building Projects in Africa

Since 2022, ICANN, International Telecommunication Union (ITU), and the African Telecommunications Union (ATU) have collaborated under the Coalition for Digital Africa, a multistakeholder initiative launched at the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Addis Ababa. In February 2026, ICANN, ITU and ATU jointly organized a webinar to highlight their main areas of cooperation and invited interested Member States to submit expressions of interest for collaborative capacity-building projects. Requests were subsequently received from Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Senegal, Zimbabwe, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), collectively covering 32 African countries. The activities flowing from these expressions of interest are currently being implemented and cover topics such as DNS abuse, DNSSEC, UA & IDNs, IXP expansion, ccTLD development and GAC/ccNSO capacity-building.

Beyond strengthening technical knowledge and institutional capacities, the collaboration seeks to engage stakeholders from local Internet ecosystems and reinforce national Internet governance communities. By connecting government participants with technical experts and other relevant stakeholders within their own countries, the initiative aims to foster lasting relationships, facilitate access to local expertise and resources, and encourage continued cooperation beyond individual training activities. This approach reflects the principles of WSIS Action Line C1 by promoting locally grounded, multistakeholder capacity building that responds to African countries' priorities while strengthening their ability to participate meaningfully in Internet governance.

ICANN Grant Program:

The [ICANN Grant Program](#) supports innovative projects that strengthen the Internet's unique identifier systems and advance ICANN's mission.

In May 2025, ICANN announced its first cohort of 23 funded projects, representing all ICANN geographic regions. Examples include:

- Supporting government-led digital transformation in Africa: A grant of approximately USD 398,000 to the African Telecommunications Union supports IPv6 deployment through awareness, technical assistance, capacity building, and government engagement in approximately 30 African countries.

- Strengthening inclusive Internet governance: A USD 350,000 grant to the Digital Natives Academy Charitable Trust in New Zealand supports culturally tailored DNS and Internet governance education for Māori communities.
- Promoting multistakeholder participation: A USD 500,000 grant to the Global Network Initiative supported national dialogues, research, and greater Global South civil society and technical community participation in Internet governance processes.

Technical Training

ICANN delivers technical training and capacity building activities to strengthen the knowledge and technical capabilities of governments, regulators, network operators, country-code top-level domain (ccTLD) registries, and other Internet stakeholders. These activities cover DNS operations, Domain Name System Security Extensions (DNSSEC), and Internet infrastructure security. Examples include:

- Rwanda: In June 2024, ICANN and the U.S. Telecommunications Training Institute (USTTI) held a workshop in Kigali involving participants from 11 African countries, including representatives of government ministries, regulators, and startups.
- Portugal: In May 2025, ICANN collaborated with the operators of the .PT ccTLD to deliver hands-on DNSSEC training covering cryptographic key management, DNSSEC validation, zone signing, and troubleshooting.
- Global Internet service provider community: A joint ICANN–ISPCP training initiative launched in 2024 delivered nine webinars and two hands-on workshops, reaching more than 500 participants by July 2025.

Coalition for Digital Africa

Launched in December 2022 as an ICANN initiative, the Coalition for Digital Africa brings together African, regional, and international partners to strengthen Internet infrastructure, support meaningful connectivity, and develop technical and institutional capacity across the continent. The Coalition’s work focuses on DNS infrastructure, meaningful connectivity and capacity development. Through these efforts, it helps strengthen Internet security and resilience, supports African participation in multistakeholder Internet governance, and contributes to the growth of Africa’s digital economy. Examples include:

- Building government and policymaker capacity: In November 2024, ICANN and Smart Africa formalized a collaboration to strengthen Internet governance knowledge among African governments and lawmakers, supporting their informed participation in global Internet governance processes.
- Strengthening DNS infrastructure and local technical capacity: The Coalition supports the deployment of L-Root infrastructure and capacity development for African ccTLD registries. These activities contribute to DNS resilience and strengthen local technical capabilities.
- Promoting DNSSEC adoption: In partnership with the African Telecommunications Union, the Coalition has supported DNSSEC roadshows, technical training and follow up assistance to strengthen DNS security expertise and deployment among African ccTLD operators. This work has contributed to successful DNSSEC deployments, including in Burkina Faso and Cameroon.
- Advancing digital inclusion: In collaboration with the Association of African Universities, ICANN has worked with African academic institutions to improve Universal Acceptance readiness of their websites and email systems and support the integration of UA into academic curricula. By March 2026, more than 300 universities operated UA compliant email systems and over 130 university websites were UA ready.

ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee

ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) provides a mechanism through which governments and intergovernmental organizations participate in ICANN's multistakeholder processes. For more than two decades, the GAC has provided advice to the ICANN Board on public policy matters within ICANN's remit, lending its voice in policy considerations that help strengthen the domain name system. Under the ICANN bylaws, the ICANN Board must consider the GAC's advice and either adopt or engage in formal consultations to resolve any differences.

Composed of Member governments and Observer organizations such as the ITU, the GAC offers a platform for governments to collaborate, share best practices and discuss public policy challenges within the multistakeholder model. Furthermore, the GAC participates in regular sessions held during ICANN meetings where they also engage with various ICANN constituency groups and hold High Level Government Meetings (HLGM). These meetings bring together the ministerial and senior government representatives, fosters high level dialogue on current public policy issues and strengthens mutual understanding among all parties on the role of governments in ICANN's multistakeholder process. The GAC is an example of stakeholder collaboration aligned with the objectives of C1.

ICANN and UNESCO Collaborative Partnership

The partnership between ICANN and UNESCO is a practical example of collaboration between an Internet technical organization and an international organization, aligning closely with C1. The partnership draws on ICANN's role in coordinating the Internet's unique identifier systems, including the DNS, and UNESCO's work on cultural diversity and digital inclusion. Together, the two organizations jointly support an important WSIS priority on digital inclusion through the promotion of Universal Acceptance, which supports the use of valid domain names and email addresses, including those in different languages and scripts, across Internet enabled systems and applications.

This collaborative partnership has also culminated in a joint policy brief, titled "Advancing Universal Acceptance of All Domain Names and Email Addresses for a Multilingual Internet." and support for initiatives such as Universal Acceptance Day, further demonstrating that stakeholders in C1 can work effectively together.

C11 - International and regional cooperation

The roadmap Implementation of C11 on international and regional collaboration should extend beyond government-to-government engagements. The technical community, private sector, academia, and civil society each have roles to play. Their participation can help ensure that discussions affecting the Internet take account of its technical foundation and the importance of maintaining a single, globally, interoperable Internet. The roadmap should build on existing mechanisms to integrate multistakeholder collaboration within multilateral processes that would improve predictability and coherence in addressing global digital challenges.

8. What concrete actions, initiatives or partnerships should be included or encouraged in the roadmap? Cite good practices, case studies or lessons learned that should be reflected in the roadmap.

Please focus on practical actions that could be taken by governments, UN entities, regional organizations, civil society, the private sector, the technical community, academia or other

stakeholders. Please include examples of both successful and less effective experiences, where relevant.

The WSIS+20 roadmap must prioritize action oriented activities to address the existing gaps outlined in the WSIS+20 Outcome document. Over the decade, there has been a tendency toward creating new mechanisms and processes that duplicate current efforts and this should be minimized as the world is increasingly operating on limited resources. Internet governance challenges are multidimensional, they cannot be solved in siloed processes or exclusively top-down approaches, which conflict with the decentralized nature of the Internet. The roadmap should strengthen existing multistakeholder platforms and emphasize continuous collaboration in the implementation of policies, frameworks and technical solutions.

Some key actions:

- **Empower existing multistakeholder platforms:** Governments and UN agencies can channel resources into the IGF ecosystems and avoid duplicating efforts. The IGF is a readily available platform that can be leveraged to further dialogues and identify workable and scalable solutions to digital challenges. As a concrete example of supporting multistakeholder cooperation under WSIS Action Line C1, ICANN announced a one-time US\$1 million contribution to the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in June 2026, following the WSIS+20 decision to establish the IGF as a permanent forum. This contribution seeks to support the IGF's long-term sustainability and operational stability, including will hopefully translate to more capacity development, increased engagement of developing country governments, and greater global participation in Internet governance discussions. This initiative demonstrates how the technical community can provide tangible support to strengthen multistakeholder institutions and advance the implementation of WSIS outcomes.
- **Promote continuous stakeholder collaboration in policy development and implementation:** Raise awareness and promote stakeholder adoption of the Universal Acceptance of all valid domain names and email addresses, including Internationalized Domain Names across all Internet enabled systems, applications and devices. This is one example of technical solutions that can help promote digital inclusion. The WSIS+20 Outcome document recognizes the progress that has been made on a multilingual Internet and encourages progress on Universal Acceptance. Stakeholders have a role to play in achieving broader UA readiness.
 - **Governments** are encouraged to implement procurement policies that require support for local language domain names and email addresses on government websites and applications, thereby improving citizens' access.
 - **Technology companies** should update their software design guidelines to include default support for local language domain names and email addresses in websites, applications, and email systems.
 - **University and educational institutions** should incorporate UA concepts into their IT curricula and help build the pipeline of future talents.
 - **Civil society** should raise awareness and advocate for the practical application of local language domain names and email addresses in communities.

9. How can Action Line facilitators, UN DESA, and international and regional cooperation be strengthened for coordination, implementation, follow-up, reporting and reducing duplication?

Please include suggestions on convening, knowledge-sharing, stakeholder engagement, reporting to the CSTD, or links with the Global Digital Compact, IGF, STI Forum and other relevant processes.

N/A

Please share any relevant documents, data sources, publications, websites, initiatives or contacts or any additional comments.

Publications

- Joint ICANN and UNESCO Policy Brief: Advancing Universal Acceptance of All domain Names and Email Addresses for a Multilingual Internet ([Report](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000398138))
URL : <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000398138>