

Registries Stakeholder Group Statement



ICANN Draft FY23-27 Operating and Financial Plan and Draft FY23 Operating Plan and Budget

Date statement submitted: **7 February 2022**

(comment submitted via the ICANN Public comment platform)

Reference url: <https://www.icann.org/en/public-comment/proceeding/draft-fy23-27-operating-and-financial-plan-and-draft-fy23-operating-plan-and-budget-15-09-2021> .

Background¹

Documents for input

- [Draft FY23–27 Operating and Financial Plan and Draft FY23 Operating Plan](#)
- [Highlights of the Draft FY23-27 Operating & Financial Plan and Draft FY23 Operating Plan & Budget](#)
- [Draft FY23 Budget](#)

RySG comments on previous Draft Budgets

- [RySG comment on the Draft FY23-27 Operating & Financial Plan and Draft FY22 Operating Plan & Budget](#)
- [RySG comment on the ICANN Draft FY21-25 Operating & Financial Plan and Draft FY21 Operating Plan & Budget](#)
- [RySG comment on the ICANN Draft FY20 Operating Plan and Budget and Five-Year Operating Plan Update](#)
- [RySG comment on the ICANN Draft FY19 Operating Plan and Budget and Five Year Operating Plan Update](#)

Registries Stakeholder Group comment

Summary of Submission:

The Registries Stakeholder Group (RySG) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Draft FY23-27 Operating & Financial Plan and Draft FY23 Operating Plan & Budget.

We appreciate ICANN’s effort to provide comprehensive and detailed documentation in a structured way, but remain concerned about the ability of the volunteer community to process the huge amount of information, and effectively comment.

The RySG provides overarching comments as well as comments on individual operating initiatives.

¹ Background: intended to give a brief context for the comment and to highlight what is most relevant for RO’s in the subject document – it is not a summary of the subject document.

Introduction

The Registries Stakeholder Group (RySG) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Draft FY23-27 Operating & Financial Plan and Draft FY23 Operating Plan & Budget. This comment is structured as follows: the RySG first provides overarching comments on the document and process, then lists different issues that would benefit from further clarification and detail, and finally, we focus on individual projects and budget items of concern to the RySG.

I. Overarching comments

- **Presentation and complexity**

The RySG appreciates ICANN's effort to provide comprehensive and detailed documentation, and efforts to thoroughly plan and track expenditure. We acknowledge the important improvements in recent years to how the information is presented and shared with the community. This said, the ICANN planning and budget documents remain a massive and challenging amount of information to deal with from a community and volunteer perspective.

As mentioned as well in our comments on the 2021 documents, the plans do provide a substantive overview of the full range of actions and initiatives, but miss providing information on progress, ongoing activities, work already done and priorities for the upcoming financial year(s), that allows the community to gain insight and perspective.

To assist the community in processing the documentation and facilitate a more efficient and effective public comment process we want reiterate some of our earlier suggestions:

- While replicating the documents' structure and content, and indicating new initiatives (with a delta (Δ)) provides transparency, a red-line or comparison version that shows what has changed from year-to-year would be extremely helpful.
- For items that were initiated in prior years, we recommend including a brief narrative that updates on achievements, ongoing actions and plans for the upcoming years, and situates the current state of initiatives compared to its ultimate goal(s).
- We suggest that ICANN compiles specific questions for key issues that ICANN is seeking community guidance on. These questions should intend to enhance the focus for specific comments, but not limit or exclude commenting on other issues.

- **Prioritisation**

The RySG welcomes the continued focus in FY23 on the implementation of CCWG-WS2 recommendations and the Enhancing the Effectiveness of ICANN's Multistakeholder Model work plan, but is looking forward to the rollout of the planning and prioritization framework that was launched at the end of FY21.

- **Further Transparency and Accountability Improvements**

There are some areas where information is provided but more granular transparency may be beneficial to some groups. Could ICANN provide a clear avenue for requests for specific information?

- **Supplemental Fund for Implementation of Community Recommendations (SFICR)**

More detail around the use of funds in the SFICR would be welcome. For example: \$20m has been set aside in the SFICR for use should the Board approve the SSAD implementation plan. Current estimates out of the ODA suggested that the goal is to have the SSAD operate on a cost recovery basis. What then, are the expected uses for the dedicated SFICR funds?

II. Comments on individual items

Operating initiative 1: Support the Evolution of the Root Server System.
FY23-27: p. 14-15 / FY23: p. 138-139

RySG comment:

- RySG members have a strong interest in the ongoing strength of the Root Server System (RSS), and have previously expressed our support for the plan to Evolve the Governance of the RSS.
- We continue to believe the community, including the customers of the RSS, should continue to drive the definition and setting of requirements, as well as future solutions, and not only involve interaction between ICANN and root server operators.
- The RySG appreciates ICANN’s Root Name Service Strategy and Implementation report (OCTO-16) providing additional information about the pros and cons of the hyperlocal root configuration and call attention to the RySG comments to that report.
- The RySG would also appreciate additional clarity about how the activities of the root server operators will be funded.

Operating initiative 2: Facilitate DNS Ecosystem Improvements.
FY23-27: p. 16-17 / FY23: p. 140-142

RySG comment:

- We would welcome additional information and engagement with ICANN Org about the kind of research ICANN intends to undertake regarding the use of artificial intelligence to understand abuse trends in domain registration.

- There are several “Considerations” that may impact the proposed work on this initiative. It would be helpful to have a bit more information on the expected impacts or potential solutions associated with the “Considerations”.

Operating initiative 3: Evolve and Strengthen the Multistakeholder Model to Facilitate Diverse and Inclusive Participation in Policymaking.

FY23-27: p. 18-20 / FY23: p. 143-145

RySG comment:

- This is a critical issue for ICANN as it is a fundamental aspect of the bottom-up, multistakeholder model of policy making and Internet governance.
- ICANN’s multistakeholder model will be further strengthened by increased transparency into the activities undertaken by ICANN Org and the CEO, including interactions with governments or regulators and how the community and ICANN org can coordinate on our support of the MSM. We appreciate ICANN’s continued efforts to increase transparency on these issues.

Operating initiative 4: Evolve and Strengthen the ICANN Community’s Decision-making Processes to Ensure Efficient and Effective Policymaking.

FY23-27: p. 21-23 / FY23: p. 146-148

RySG comment:

- Similar to Initiative 3, this is another critical issue for the viability of ICANN’s multistakeholder model.
- The RySG continues to emphasize that a critical aspect of facilitating effective decision-making in the policy process is properly scoping work efforts to include specific objectives with precise and manageable tasks.
- ICANN should consider providing increased training and support for chairs and leaders of ICANN work efforts (including Reviews, PDPs, CCWGs, etc.). Registries are appreciative of the continued strong staff support that provides resources for Chairs to be able to accurately summarize discussions and drive toward decisions as it is also critical to efficient and effective work of PDPs and WGs.
- While we agree that diverse membership and efficiency of the SOs and ACs is important to a strong MSM measures of progress on efficiency and effectiveness should review the full lifecycle of decisions, and therefore also include measures related to Board activity that contributes to the progress on work items, and not only the "Completion of implementation of Board-approved recommendations from Organizational Reviews."

Operating initiative 6: Promote and Sustain a Competitive Environment in the Domain Name System.

FY23-27: p. 25-27 / FY23: p. 151-152

RySG comment:

- As ICANN is examining competition within the Domain Name System, it is imperative to examine other markets within the industry in order to fully understand the competitive landscape, and eventually promote and sustain competition.

Operating initiative 8: Root Zone Management Evolution.

FY23-27: p. 30-31 / FY23: p. 155-156

RySG comment:

- As ICANN is considering user management improvements to allow more parties to be authorized as TLD managers, the RySG continues to urge ICANN to proceed with caution and put parameters in place that will prevent wide-scale DNS changes that may pose stability risks to the root.
- Staff retention is an absolute necessity for the success of PTI / IANA functions.

Operating initiative 9: Evaluate, Align, and Facilitate Improved Engagement in the Internet Ecosystem.

FY23-27: p. 32-33 / FY23: p. 157-158

RySG comment:

- The RySG believes that an effective GAC is a crucial part of an effective multistakeholder model for ICANN.
- The RySG appreciates ICANN's work to continue to improve transparency around ICANN's engagement with governments and intergovernmental organizations and forums.

Operating initiative 10: Improve Governmental and Intergovernmental Organization (IGO) Engagement and Participation in ICANN Through Targeted Engagement

FY23-27: p. 34-35 / FY23: p. 159-161

RySG comment:

- As with initiative 9, the RySG believes that an effective GAC is a crucial part of an effective multistakeholder model for ICANN.

Operating initiative 11: Monitor Legislation, Regulation, Norms, Principles, and Initiatives in Collaboration With Others That May Impact the ICANN Mission.

FY23-27: p. 36-37 / FY23: p. 162-163

RySG comment:

- Monitoring is useful to understand what is coming and we appreciate ICANN's efforts in this area and to engage with the community to determine the type and level of engagement based on topical guidance and look forward to continued work on transparency and community engagement in this area.

Operating initiative 13: Implement New gTLD Auction Proceeds Recommendations As Approved by Board

FY23-27: p. 39-40 / FY23: p. 166-167

RySG comment:

- The RySG looks forward to progress on the Auction Proceeds recommendations. More insight into the timeline for these items would be beneficial.

Operating initiative 14: Planning at ICANN.

FY23-27: p. 41 / FY23: p. 168

RySG comment:

- We appreciate the commitment to the ongoing work that ICANN Org has engaged in with the ICANN community and the Board as it works on researching and developing prioritization efforts in this regard. We view this work as essential and look forward to continued coordination and cooperation in these efforts.

Operating initiative 15: ICANN Reserves.

FY23-27: p. 42 / FY21: p. 169

RySG comment:

- As noted above, the RySG supports the ongoing activity to replenish the Reserve Fund from surplus operating funds. The RySG would like to stress that diligent cost control of ICANN's expenditure remains a critical concern of this group in relation to an effectively functioning ICANN organization.
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