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Latin America and Caribbean Islands Regional Large Organization
LACRALO
Comments on the Draft LAC Regional Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years
2026-2030

Introduction

LACRALO appreciates and welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Draft LAC Regional Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2026-2030 . The Public Comment opened on October 09, 2025. The LACRALO Leadership, led by Lance Hinds, Chair of LACRALO, confirmed that it would be in the interest of end users in the LACRALO region to submit a regional statement in response to this Public Comment. Alvaro Aguilar, Lance Hinds, Claire Craig, Sandra Rodriguez, volunteered to be the penholders and developed this draft. The LACRALO Statement was shared for comments and consensus with LACRALO membership on 21 November. It was then approved by consensus on 24 November and submitted.

For LACRALO, these initiatives can help address long-standing challenges, such as low sustained participation by individual Internet end users, by intentionally lowering barriers to engagement and supporting generational renewal within ICANN processes.

LACRALO welcomes the opportunity to respond to this public comment. Several of our participants collaborated with GSE LAC in the drafting and development of this plan, and we were pleased to see it published.

LACRALO comments on the Draft ICANN LAC Regional Strategic Plan
(FY2026–2030)

Submitted by the Latin American and Caribbean At-Large Organization (LACRALO)

General Assessment

The draft strategy aligns well with ICANN's global objectives and responds to key regional realities. LACRALO appreciates the Plan's emphasis on inclusion, capacity building, resilience, and multi-stakeholder engagement. However, we note areas where the perspective of end users and At-Large Structures (ALSes) could be more explicitly integrated to ensure that community engagement leads to sustained, informed, and impactful participation.

The plan, for example, acknowledged the involvement of the LAC Strategy Council, but, in the interest of transparency, may consider specifically identifying the members or groups that make up the council. The role of LACRALO, if it exists, should be specified as this document impacts the capacity development initiatives for the RALO.

Then there is the economic reality to be considered. While the plan mentions CROP funding (\$4000 USD total), it doesn't acknowledge the economic constraints that make sustained volunteer participation difficult. Many potential contributors in the region cannot afford the time investment without institutional support.

This is also the question of regional diversity. The plan treats LAC as relatively homogeneous, but the Caribbean faces very different challenges from Central America, which differs from South America. Island nations have unique infrastructure constraints.

Comments by Strategic Objective

1. Evolve and Promote ICANN's Multistakeholder Model

Strengths

- The explicit focus on SIDS, Indigenous groups, youth, and other underserved communities aligns strongly with the LACRALO's and by extension, the At-Large mandate.
- The plan appropriately recognizes the need for reducing barriers to participation and for enhancing accessibility across languages and levels of technical literacy.
- The inclusion of a regional participation map can support better coordination with At-Large Structures and individual members.

Gaps / Recommendations

1. Formal Recognition of At-Large as a Key Access Point for End Users

The plan frequently references “community groups” but does not explicitly mention At-Large/LACRALO in key sections. LACRALO recommends explicitly recognizing the At-Large community as a central regional conduit for end-user perspectives.

2. Sustainable Engagement Models

Many new participants exit after first exposure. LACRALO recommends:

- Creation of a “Regional Onboarding Continuity Track” aligned with At-Large capacity-building initiatives
- Joint GSE–LACRALO guidance for newcomers transitioning into PDP participation.

3. Next-Generation Engagement

Youth engagement efforts would be strengthened by:

- Formal collaboration with LACRALO’s capacity-building and education initiatives.
- Developing long-term mentorship pipelines with At-Large leaders, not only GSE staff.
- Developing a level of information that will convince youth that ICANN is relevant and plays a critical role in their growth and advancement.

2. Collaborate with Stakeholders to Evolve the Internet’s Unique Identifier Systems

Strengths

- Strong emphasis on Universal Acceptance (UA) and IDNs, which are crucial for linguistic and cultural inclusivity in LAC.
- The plan’s focus on encouraging LAC applications in the New gTLD Program generally aligns with At-Large advocacy for greater regional and cultural representation over the long term.

Gaps / Recommendations

1. Digital Inclusion Framed Beyond Technical Readiness

While UA and IDNs are essential, digital inclusion also requires addressing affordability, accessibility, and awareness gaps. LACRALO recommends a more explicit connection between UA and broader digital inclusion concerns affecting end users.

2. Consumer-Facing Education

The plan largely targets technical and institutional stakeholders, but end users—especially SMEs, civil society, and community networks—need targeted education on:

- UA-compatible services,
- the value of domain names,
- the opportunities in the New gTLD Round.

3. IANA Functions Outreach

Engagement with ccTLDs is welcomed, but cross-education for end users about ccTLD policies and best practices would improve trust and transparency.

3. Strengthen Stability and Security of Internet's Unique Identifiers

Strengths

- Clear priority on DNS security, routing resilience, and coordination with LACNIC and CERTs.
- Inclusion of KINDNS, best practices, and regional forums is valuable for strengthening operational security.

Gaps / Recommendations

1. End-User Safety and DNS Abuse Awareness

The current approach focuses heavily on institutional actors. LACRALO encourages integrating:

- public-reach DNS abuse awareness programs,
- messaging for vulnerable digital populations,
- collaboration with ALSes on consumer-level security hygiene.
- Invite government entities to participate in At-Large Activities to increase perspectives on DNS stability and security.

2. Community-Level Reporting and Feedback Loops

Establish regional mechanisms for end users to feed observations on DNS abuse and security threats into ICANN processes through At-Large channels.

3. Root Server Awareness

Deployment of root server instances is important, but users also need more accessible information on how this improves resilience and trust. In some parts of the region the core concept of the root server will need to be explained.

Cross-Cutting Recommendations

1. Coordination with At-Large Structures

LACRALO proposes annual coordination sessions with GSE to align the Regional Strategic Plan with At-Large strategic priorities and policy hot topics.

2. Support for Community Networks

Community networks, which directly serve many underserved populations, should be explicitly included as partners in outreach, UA readiness, and DNS awareness.

Conclusion

This strategic plan represents important progress in regional engagement, but it sometimes reflects a predominantly technical and operational perspective on Internet governance. For ICANN to truly fulfill its commitment to serving end users—the ultimate beneficiaries of the DNS—this plan must:

- Elevate end user voices from passive stakeholders to active co-designers of regional strategy.
- Measure outcomes/ impact, not just activity by tracking how end user participation influences policy.
- Resource end user capacity with the same commitment given to technical community development.
- Protect end user interests proactively, not just respond to security threats.

ICANN has to also make the case that they are very relevant if not critical to socioeconomic growth and advancement. Engagement has to be extended in order to make the case for ICANN as a developmental partner. The At-Large community has to interact more with regional organizations and related organisations.

From an LACRALO perspective, the drafted plan also reflects a strong alignment with the organization's historic priorities: meaningful participation, digital inclusion, capacity building, and security for end users.

Active involvement of LACRALO in implementing these strategies—not just as a beneficiary but as a co-creator—will be vital to ensuring regional objectives are achieved and that the Internet remains open, secure, and inclusive for all in Latin America and the Caribbean.

LACRALO stands ready to collaborate with the GSE LAC team in strengthening these dimensions and ensuring this strategic plan genuinely serves the diverse end user communities across Latin America and the Caribbean. We recommend incorporating these suggestions through formal consultation with LACRALO leadership before plan finalization.

Submitted on behalf of the end users of Latin America and the Caribbean.