

Registries Stakeholder Group Statement

Issue: **Evolving ICANN's Multistakeholder Model Work Plan**

Appendix C to the Draft FY21-25 Operating & Financial Plan and Draft FY21 Operating Plan & Budget

Date statement submitted: **25 February 2020**

Reference url: <https://www.icann.org/public-comments/draft-opplan-budget-fy21-25-2019-12-20-en>

NOTE: This comment is on the **Evolving ICANN's Multistakeholder Model Work Plan**, Appendix C to the Draft FY21-25 Operating & Financial Plan and Draft FY21 Operating Plan & Budget. The RySG comments on the FY21-25 Operating & Financial Plan and Draft FY21 Operating Plan & Budget are submitted separately.

Registries Stakeholder Group comment:

Overarching Comment

The Registries Stakeholder Group (RySG) appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the Evolving ICANN's Multistakeholder Model (MSM) Work Plan. The RySG understands the importance of maintaining and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the MSM and the lasting effects it will have on ensuring ICANN's long-term viability. As such, we have been actively involved in providing input and feedback into earlier stages of the Evolving ICANN's MSM initiative¹.

We are cognizant of the fact that developing this Work Plan involved multiple, lengthy consultations with community members and we appreciate the work that went into gathering this information. However, given the time and resources that went into earlier stages of this initiative, the RySG is

¹ RySG comment on the Evolving ICANN's Multistakeholder Model – Issues Identification Exercise, 13 June 2019, https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/ec8e4c_0d1a48997c8644b483258d84d65988d2.pdf .

RySG comment on the Next Steps to Improve the Effectiveness of ICANN's Multistakeholder Model, 14 October 2019, https://84e2b371-5c03-4c5c-8c68-63869282fa23.filesusr.com/ugd/ec8e4c_9c5bcb53e74d4b7b8e2de50cfa532297.pdf .

somewhat disappointed in this Work Plan as a final product. It is extremely light on substance and offers little guidance beyond suggesting which community group should take lead on developing solutions - which is sometimes even so broad as to be entire SOs or ACs.

Fortunately, upon reviewing the Work Plan, the RySG observes that most of the issues are currently being addressed via other community efforts, most notably the GNSO's PDP 3.0 and the Third Accountability and Transparency Review (ATRT3). As such, we suggest that these efforts be allowed to run their proper course before the ICANN community takes on the additional work that will be required to fulfill this Work Plan. The community is already burdened with a great deal of work at present, and so realizing efficiencies where existing efforts can address the issues outlined here is the prudent approach. We suggest that this Work Plan be revisited once those efforts are complete.

Feedback on the questions for Public Comment

1. Are the right entities suggested to take the lead in developing an approach or solution to an identified issue? If not, which entity would be appropriate?

ISSUE A. Consensus + Representation and Inclusivity ([p. 341](#))

Suggested entity: GNSO as the lead, working with other ACs and SOs

As the Work Plan document notes, the GNSO's PDP 3.0 effort has considered and offers some improvements to address this issue. The RySG supports the analysis of ISSUE A in the Work Plan and agrees that the GNSO Council is well situated to take the lead and build on the work it has done in PDP 3.0, and encourage other ACs and SOs to adopt and adapt those solutions.

Addressing the other issues identified in the Work Plan, such as increasing trust, a better prioritization and scoping of work, would contribute and have a positive effect on the consensus building within the ICANN community.

ISSUE B. Prioritization of Work + Effective Use of Resources ([p. 345](#))

Suggested entity: AC and SO Chairs in the lead, working with the ICANN Org CEO and ICANN Board Chair.

As general principle for all future work the RySG supports the suggested approach in the Work Plan. We note that the topic of prioritization was also raised in the ATRT3 Draft Report, and we reiterate herein many of the comments we made in response to the Review Team's draft recommendation regarding prioritization.

The prioritization of work should be community-led: in the hands of the SO and AC Leaders, based on bottom-up input from their respective communities and in dialogue with the ICANN Org CEO and ICANN Board Chair to assure that staff and budget constraints are fully taken into account.

As mentioned earlier, the RySG sees value in a more natural and streamlined prioritization process in which ongoing work is designed as a spiral, with small concrete projects (better scoped, budgeted and managed) that people can participate in as time allows but that overlap to avoid decisions being made in a vacuum. Such an approach would be easier to manage by SO/AC Leaders.

We fear, however, that expecting SO/AC Chairs to establish a fully detailed overview of all ongoing work in the community and adequately prioritize in the shortest possible time is too complex and demanding next to their other responsibilities. The RySG therefore sees value in establishing an ad hoc alumni group of former leaders who could come together to work on prioritization of all already ongoing work, in support of the SO/AC leaders. This “Alumni Leadership Group” could include former leaders of ICANN Supporting Organizations, Constituencies, Stakeholder Groups, Advisory Committees and policy development process (PDP) working groups. This group’s mandate should be limited in time and focus on the mapping and prioritizing of already started work and not become a permanent standing-type committee (like the one suggested in the ATRT3 recommendations, which in our opinion, would make planning and prioritization more complex and slow it down). The Alumni Leadership Group could develop recommendations and best practices for scoping future work efforts.

ISSUE C. Culture, Trust and Silos ([p. 347](#))

Suggested entity: ALAC taking the lead, working with the other ACs and SOs

The RySG is of the opinion that breaking down cultural and attitude barriers that prevent collaboration and the ability to compromise in order to reach decisions and produce outputs has the most chance of success when done on a case-by-case basis at the level where community members work together to address a specific issues. This requires strong leaders who are skilled in fostering compromise and consensus. ICANN Org should provide additional resources, such as training or professional mediators. It also requires that participants in major work processes such as PDPs have the authority, incentive and the willingness to compromise. SO and AC leaders bear the responsibility of selecting the best people to cooperate on solutions across communities.

Initiatives could be taken at community level, lead by ALAC and the different SOs and ACs to foster a cultural shift to mitigate the fear of the “slippery slope” - members of the community routinely believe that if one compromises on one item, one will be forced to compromise on other items - and to tackle the vision that staying in a silo and not working to compromise on a solution is the safest position for those in favor of a status quo (for whatever reason). However, we are skeptical about their effectiveness in the short term.

Changing and streamlining the work processes, with smaller projects that are consecutive but overlapping (see our suggestions for ISSUE B), might have a positive influence on the cooperation and trust among different communities, make it easier to compromise and incrementally move forward.

ISSUE D. Complexity ([p. 350](#))

Suggested entity:

1. *ICANN Org to develop a solution regarding accessibility to and ease of use of information and data.*
2. *AC and SO Chairs as the lead, working with the ICANN Org CEO and ICANN Board Chair, to develop a solution to the complexity of ICANN's processes, procedures and bylaws and how the Community communicates through and develops documentation.*

As the RySG has stated in earlier comments on the Evolving ICANN's MSM initiative, complexity should not be seen as an issue that needs to be resolved, but rather a challenge to which the ICANN community needs to rise. We can support the analysis under ISSUE D. Complexity, in the Work Plan, and the suggested approach as it contributes to better equipping ICANN community members to take on the complexity.

We'd also like to refer to our feedback on ISSUE B on Prioritization and ISSUE E on Precision in scoping, as a better, more streamlined work process with smaller, clearly scoped projects, will have a positive effect on the complexity of the MSM work.

We want to stress that the analysis that the complexity of the bylaws, processes and procedures are due to excessive use of acronyms and technical and other jargon, is not a request to open up bylaws, processes and procedures. This is either being done elsewhere (for example PDP 3.0) or not an issue at the moment.

ISSUE E. Precision in scoping work ([p. 352](#))

Suggested entity: to be determined

The Work Plan does not suggest which community entity would be best equipped to tackle ISSUE E, which is somewhat concerning given the overall lack of detailed guidance contained in the plan. We have commented previously that precision in scoping work is something that often must be ensured on an individual basis - each work effort that is initiated should be scoped in a way that makes the work achievable on a reasonable timeline. While this work will generally fall to whatever group charters or initiates each work effort, we suggest that the Alumni Leadership Group described above and in our earlier comments could be helpful in developing recommendations or best practices for scoping work efforts, which can then be promulgated throughout other parts of the community. The Alumni Leadership Group's recommendations could be based on lessons learned from SSAC's practice for precision focus and the PDP3.0 initiative already acknowledged in the Evolving ICANN's MSM Work Plan, as well as best practices in other parts of the community and beyond.

ISSUE F. Roles and Responsibilities ([p.354](#))

Suggested entity: ICANN Board in coordination with the ICANN Community and the ICANN Org CEO

As the RySG noted in its previous comments on the Evolving ICANN's MSM initiative, we do not believe this issue is a standalone challenge to the effectiveness and efficiency of the MSM in its own right, but rather an issue that contributes to other, more insidious issues like Precision in Scoping the Work. We do not believe that the Work Plan needs to address the topic of Roles & Responsibilities separately, but rather that each solution that ultimately gets developed should include clearly delineated assignments of responsibilities to specific parties.

2. How can the ICANN community effectively coordinate the work of developing approaches and solutions?

Please see our Overarching Comment as it relates to coordinating the development of approaches and solutions with community efforts already in progress.

3. How should the six issues included in the work plan be prioritized?

High Priority issues:

ISSUE B. Prioritization of Work + Effective Use of Resources

ISSUE E. Precision in scoping work

Lower Priority issues:

ISSUE A. Consensus + Representation and Inclusivity

ISSUE C. Culture, Trust and Silos

ISSUE D. Complexity

The RySG considers the following issues not a priority that need to be addressed in order to improve the effectiveness of the ICANN MSM:

ISSUE F. Roles and Responsibilities (see our comments above)