
ICANN85 | Prep Week – Preparing for ICANN’s Annual Strategy Review
Tuesday, February 24, 2026 – 11:30 to 12:30 AM IST

KELLY MEDINA

Hello and welcome to the ICANN85 prep week session on preparing for ICANN's annual strategy review. My name is Kelly Medina and I am a participation manager for this session. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Community Participant Code of Conduct, the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior, and the ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy. Interpretation for this session will include English, Spanish, and French. Please select the relevant language from the Zoom toolbar.

We have allocated time for questions throughout the presentation as designated by our presenters. If you would like to speak during this session, please raise your hand in Zoom. When there is an opportunity for questions, presenters will call upon you, then you may unmute your microphone to speak. Please state your name for the record, the language you will speak is speaking a language other than English, and speak at a reasonable pace. Today's presentation is published on the ICANN85 prep week schedule page. I will now hand over to Becky.

BECKY NASH

Thank you very much, Kelly. Hello, everyone. This is Becky Nash from the ICANN Org planning team. Today, we have an agenda,

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which is a prep week session, which is an informational session to help community members to prepare for an ICANN85 public session as it relates to strategic planning.

So, the agenda today is first, we're going to have a short overview of ICANN's Strategic Plan for FY 26-30. Then we're going to move into a section on the annual strategy review program and detail out the steps that are involved in evaluating the strategy, such as the environmental scan sessions and how to prepare for the session, and what to expect during the session, and what to expect after the session.

So with that, let's go ahead and get started. So, before going into the annual strategy evaluation program, we first wanted to provide a short overview of ICANN's FY 26-30 Strategic Plan. Every five years, ICANN develops a new Strategic Plan. The current plan went into effect at the beginning of this fiscal year, which is FY 26, and the fiscal year for FY 26 started on July 1, 2025, and runs through June 30, 2026. But since this is a five-year plan, the Board-adopted five-year plan runs through FY 2030.

So, the strategic planning process is led by the Board Strategic Planning Committee on behalf of the ICANN Board, and I would like to acknowledge that we do have several Board members here attending, including the chair of the Board strategic planning committee, Amitabh Singhal, and we welcome him and other Board members to this session.

The community played a crucial role in the development of the Strategic Plan, and then throughout the five years that the plan is in effect, the community plays a crucial role in the review of the plan.

So, the Strategic Plan provides a roadmap where the ICANN ecosystem defines where it is now, where we are going, and how we will contribute to fulfill ICANN's mission along the way. So, we have a shared vision, as noted here. ICANN's 2030 vision is, as the trusted stewards of the internet unique identifier systems, ICANN is dedicated to strengthening the single global interoperable internet for all. This is the vision for 2030, and this is supported by strategic objectives, goals, and strategies, and the four strategic objectives are summarized here, and this is what we're going to cover in the next few slides.

So, if we go to the next slide, we wanted to provide a structure of the plan highlighting that there are four strategic objectives, and the objectives for FY26-30 did evolve from our previous Strategic Plan as well.

On the slide, we are just highlighting each of the objectives is supported by a number of strategic goals, and then those goals are supported or outlined in strategies, and then finally, at the bottom of each of these tables, we're just highlighting how the five-year operating plan links to ICANN's Strategic Plan, and this is where the five-year operating plan along with the one-year operating plan, we report out the activities to achieve the strategies and goals, and

those are called strategic initiatives. This is the overall structure of ICANN's Strategic Plan.

So now we're just going to cover very briefly as an introduction the elements of ICANN's Strategic Plan. So, the first strategic objective is one to ensure that ICANN continues to evolve, improve, and promote our multi-stakeholder model. So, this is the approach to internet governance, and you can see that we have three goals outlined here along with the individual strategies to support the strategic objective.

So if we go to the next slide, we just wanted to highlight here that one of the strategic objectives, enhanced organizational excellence, is also focused on ensuring that ICANN continues to evolve and aims towards enhancing organizational excellence. This reflects improvements on how ICANN operates and improvements to our processes and capabilities so that ICANN remains relevant, efficient, effective, and accountable.

On the next slide, we have the third strategic objective, which is evolving the Internet-Unique Identifier Systems. So, as technology changes and new demands emerge, ICANN must continue to coordinate in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to ensure the Unique Identifier Systems remain relevant, robust, and resilient, and we have several goals and strategies to support this strategic objective.

And then the fourth strategic objective focuses on strengthening the stability and security of the internet's unique identifier systems.

Security and stability is at the center of ICANN's mission, and now more than ever with today's growing complexity of technology, the landscape for security and stability is even more critical than ever before, and we have these goals and strategies to achieve this very important strategic objective.

So now we're going to talk about the Annual Strategy Review Program, which complements the adopted strategic planning cycle. So, this strategy review program is designed to strengthen ICANN's agility and adaptability by systematically reviewing both our external environment and internal capabilities.

We just want to highlight that this program is one of the activities in our five-year Strategic Plan that supports the strategies and goals in operational excellence. The program provides a structured way to assess whether our Strategic Plan remains aligned with current macro and internal realities, highlighting that this is a five-year Strategic Plan and the annual strategy review program is a key step along the way during the five years.

So, as I noted before, the Board strategic planning committee oversees this program on behalf of ICANN's Board. The review of the annual strategy review concludes with the Board strategic planning committee making a recommendation to the Board on whether there are updates to the Strategic Plan that are needed to reflect changes in the external environment and ICANN's internal capabilities.

So if we go to the next slide, we just wanted to highlight that the annual strategy review is a multi-year process. So, again, each five years, there is a new five-year Strategic Plan and then during the period, there is an opportunity to evaluate if there are any major trends, both externally or internally, that require the Board to evaluate any changes to the Strategic Plan.

So, each year, this program will evolve. Many of you may be aware that we had a previous program called the strategic outlook trends identification. This new program is very similar but has evolved in order to manage the environmental scan sessions and the strategic discussion within the Board.

So, the major steps are based on doing an environmental scan, both doing research and running sessions with a diverse group of participants, meaning the community, the Board, and the Org, and then it is at the level of the Board, the strategic planning committee that will conduct structured strategic discussions and coordinate with relevant other Board committees and then also be sure to discuss this with the entire Board in order to identify whether there are any significant shifts in the assumptions used to develop the Strategic Plan that warrant further investigation.

And the last step in this process is to evaluate and synthesize the data and then to have a decision-making process that the Board strategic planning committee develops and runs with the Board to present its findings to the ICANN Board and either to make a recommendation for Board consideration to evaluate changes to

the Strategic Plan or that the Strategic Plan remains unchanged and is still valid for the period ahead.

So, we can pause at any time for questions. This is given an overview of the program and if we don't have any questions or comments, we will now move into an overview of the annual strategy review program. I do see a question here. Judith, please go ahead.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN

Hi, it's Judith Hellerstein for the record. If you can go back earlier when during the review, you talked about the inclusion and the diversity goals and strategic things. So, while you are the planning team, it's more looking at the and goal 1.1 and 1.2 is, they did a couple months ago the Public Comment on the times of the meetings and then people wrote back and then ICANN made a decision that they would change them in a way that made them less inclusive and weakened these strategic goals 1.1 and 1.2 that were directly talking about those.

And so, I'm just curious if we are going to go with these goals, then we probably need to do a closer scan on how is the rest of the Org abiding by these goals when by other comments and public comments that come out where the community says it's important but then ICANN goes against their own plan.

So, I'm just curious on this. And I didn't, it was about the times in 29 to 33 for the meetings, but you're not the meetings team. But as

we're discussing these strategic plans and 1.1 and 1.2 are so important to ICANN's Strategic Plan, I would be interested in hearing how we could make these more of an importance so that rest of ICANN Org actually abides by them.

BECKY NASH

Judith, thank you very much for your feedback and comments there. It does appear that you have feedback as it relates to the strategic objective 1 and several of the activities that support the achievement of these strategies.

One question that we would pose and if we could go to slide 11 would be, is there something that has changed in our environment that we would want to highlight as a shift to promote any evaluation of a change to the strategy? I think your feedback here may be something that you would want to discuss in this session at ICANN85 about a trend that impacts, meaning what is the actual impact to the data that you're presenting to us.

From the standpoint of the adopted Strategic Plan, that is something that we've organized our work in our strategic activities to execute upon that plan. And if you believe that there's been some shift in the environment, then I think participating and sending us that information is really important and that can be something where a major trend can be documented based on stakeholder input.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN

Right, yeah, thank you. Because stakeholders have spoken, they are for this, but it seems like ICANN Org by certain statements they make put in opposition to this. So, I was going to be making a comment that the executive Board, the ICANN meets the executive orgs on that Monday. But as you were talking about this, I was thinking about how these are so important and they were highlighting of these strategic priorities.

And then it seems like some parts of the Org don't think that's as important as others. So, I was glad to see that they're very important for you, but it should be maybe talked about if we're going to go forward with these same ones and they're so important to everyone, then why are we finding different views in the rest of Org? That was in the nutshell, that's my question, but thanks.

BECKY NASH

Thank you for your feedback. And I just again would like to highlight that the annual strategy evaluation is a multi-year process where each year there is strategic thinking around whether or not the strategic objectives, goals, and strategies are still relevant to ICANN overall. But thank you so much for your feedback and we do look forward to your participation in the annual environmental scan.

So, if we go to page 12, we'd like to inform the participants on how to prepare for this session, which is again the first of three years of

a program. So, I'm going to pass to my colleague Victoria now. Thank you.

VICTORIA YANG

Thank you very much, Becky. Good day, everyone. My name is Victoria. I am the Senior Manager on the planning team and I will take you through the rest of the presentation.

So, from the process overview of the program in the earlier slides, you can see that the environmental scan is basically the very first step of this program. The objective is really to hear from different stakeholder groups so that we can have a deeper perspective of the trends that is relevant to the Strategic Plan.

And this is done via both engagement with internal stakeholders and external stakeholders. Internally, we have sessions with our subject matter experts from different functional teams and those who lead the execution of the strategic initiatives. We also have sessions with our executive teams as well. And externally, we have sessions with the community. There will be a Board session as well during the upcoming Board workshop.

So, the community session is a public open session during ICANN85 on Tuesday afternoon. The objective of this prep week session is to share information so community can prepare for it. Later this week or early next week, the planning team is going to share two documents on the ICANN85 schedule under the Tuesday session.

The two documents include the instruction document and a pre-reading report.

The instruction basically includes information similar to what we are sharing with you here in this session. However, the pre-reading report, which is going to include several trends that are very relevant to the strategic objectives. So, community can read those reports on your own and reflect on your own prior of joining the session so that we can streamline and make the session more interactive and also efficient. So, please make sure you track the session page early next week to download the prep material.

So, what to expect during the session? It's a brainstorming session. So, any characteristic that you can think of that is associated with a brainstorming session is going to be open, interactive. It's really just for discussion. It's open mic. Our goal is to hear from as many people as possible during the session because we believe a broad perspective will help to surface insights and identify areas that may require deeper discussion and follow-up.

This will enhance the effectiveness of the next phase of discussion by the BSPPC. And we do encourage everyone to stay at the strategic level, speak from evidence or your experience, share your perspective and any strategic implications of the trends. And if I may now take the example of Judith, your question, one of the enhancements of the current Strategic Plan is the inclusion of strategy.

If I may flip back to the question that you were asking earlier, inclusive is a very big word. It can include very broad perspective that they all can be some element of inclusivity. I think the advantage of including the strategy is the Board actually narrowed down already which aspect of inclusivity that they want to improve within the multi-stakeholder model.

Take 1.1.1 as example. This really focuses on the stakeholder group inclusivity. So, the ICANN's community structure was established in the 1980s when ICANN was first created. The ecosystem has evolved. Our macro environment has evolved. So, looking forward and strategically, we have to keep thinking whether or not our structure is still relevant or is still representative of today's ecosystem.

And if not, do we have a process? Do we have a mechanism in place that we can evolve to make the multi-stakeholder model more inclusive from the stakeholder group representative perspective?

That's one of the enhancements in the current Strategic Plan is the inclusion of the strategy which helped to narrow down the strategic goal so that we can be more focused and work on things that we identified during the Strategic Plan development. Now I see Michael's hand is up. So, please jump in and share your perspective.

MICHAEL PALAGE

Sure. So, Michael Palage, for the record. Victoria could not agree more on your last statements about integrating new stakeholders into the ICANN community. And this has actually been a theme that I raised during the Review of the Reviews as well as in the last session about potential capture. And the fact that in so many instances, the people determining the reviews are those with the entrenched power, why would they want to give up power?

The last time there was a fundamental re-shift of ICANN power was ICANN Evolution Reform 2.0, which happened in 2003. And I think that therein lies the problem. And this maybe ties back into Judith's comments about while this sounds good and people can agree to it, if it is not properly implemented, it's just words not backed up by action.

So, what I would encourage as part of the Strategic Plan for any Board members that are on here, ICANN needs to look at data. And they actually do have incredible amounts of granular data regarding who is participating, who is showing up at the ICANN meetings, who's participating in a policy. And not only that, not only to look at who's showing up, but when comments are submitted.

One of the things that ALAC is very good at is if you look at ALAC Public Comments, they tell you who submitted it, who was involved in drafting it, how the votes were. All too often in other ICANN stakeholder groups, it's like, we, this stakeholder group, without actually reflecting who actually voted upon it.

So, if we truly want if you will, inclusiveness, we really need transparency as to who is actually speaking, because I really do believe the issue of capture is something that is not properly being addressed. Thank you.

VICTORIA YANG

Michael, thank you so much for sharing your insights. And I think that's exactly the perspective we want to hear during the session. So, I'm really looking forward of you joining the session on Tuesday. And for those who have conflict and couldn't join, please, you can send emails as well to the planning inbox, which I will share later, and I want to emphasize that this is a prep week session that our goal is to share what to expect during the session, how you prepare for the session, so that when you come, we can dive into discussion and the session can be more efficient.

But yes, that's what you shared is exactly what we want to hear, you know, different perspective and implications. And again, we want to emphasize like what we said on this slide, we encourage everyone to stay at the strategic level, thinking about the strategic implications when we think about five or 10 years from now, right?

After all, the program is really here to enhance ICANN entire ecosystem to be more agile, so that when the environment shift, we stand ready to act, right? Judith, I see your hands up, please. Go ahead.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN

Yes, it's Judith Hellerstein for the record. Yeah, I couldn't agree more with what Michael was saying and what you were saying. If we want to attract more people, especially within that, you know, at least within At-Large and mostly also NCSG and some others, it's mostly our volunteers. And if we want to be more open, and we put this in our comments to the ICANN plan and ICANN strategy, we want to be more open, we need to figure out a better way also of recognizing our volunteers.

And for each group to do a better job of volunteer recognition, instead of just once a year, but like maybe different groups do like other different types of volunteer recognition, whether it's ICANN swag or others or something like that, so that because the volunteers are the core of it, and we're spending our time and effort, and many times volunteers often aren't recognized appropriately. And that leads to burnout, and that leads to it, and we're not going to be able to achieve these 1.1 and 1.2 and onwards without that. So, that's also what I wanted to also emphasize here.

VICTORIA YANG

Thank you for sharing. Becky, please go ahead.

BECKY NASH

Yes, thank you. Thank you very much, Judith, for your perspectives. And we do encourage participation in the session, where your voices will be heard, and there will be discussion.

So, we also have indicated that we have a briefing paper, along with several guided questions that you can prepare for the session, and that will be available very shortly. But we really do appreciate the perspectives that have been stated. But we do want to make sure that the overview of how the session will run is well understood. So, I think we've covered slide 14. Is that correct, Victoria? And let's go ahead with this next slide. Thank you.

VICTORIA YANG

Thank you. All right. So, some of the guided questions we will provide in the instruction document, as Becky mentioned, will be available shortly, either end of this week or early next week, include questions that you see on this slide. And again, we want to hear from you about your observations, your experience, right?

And when you look at some of the trends that we share in the pre-reading document, reflect, and we would like to hear if those trends, as example, if some of the trends continue to evolve or evolve at a faster pace, what would surprise us? You know, how will that impact the Strategic Plan? Is there anything that we underestimate, etcetera, or anything that we didn't think about but you think is relevant and you would like to share.

So, that's basically how we encourage everyone to prepare for the session once you read the pre-reading report. All right, a few more notes about what to expect during the session, and Becky slightly touched upon this. Many of you here who participated in the past,

the strategic outlook trend session, right? You know that those sessions are usually two hours or even longer.

We start with in-session self-silent reflection using sticky notes, either physical sticky notes using the flip chart in the session, or sometimes we do digital ones using jump Board, and then participants can highlight some of the stickies that they shared or they came up during the session.

So in order to streamline the session, and also most importantly in respect of the session length, two hours or more than two hours is a lot to ask from the community for brainstorm session. We changed the format a little bit, that's why we worked on pre-reading report and instructions that we'll be sharing.

So, we want community to read those, come prepared, and once we get into the session, we will dive straight into exchange insight and experience an open mic. One hour and 15 minutes, so we look forward to hear from you, come prepared, so that we can make sure the session is efficient and we can hear from as many people as possible.

Any questions about what to expect during the session? All right, so I'm going to move on to what to expect after the session. As mentioned, we are running the session with staff, with the executive team, with the Board, and the community. After we run all the sessions, the planning team is going to review and consolidate all the input.

The outcome of that will be presented to the BSPC, which will enable their next phase of discussion, which is more strategic focus. They will dive into strategic thinking and discussion. There are techniques that, such as the scenario-based planning or issue-based planning, might be used by the BSPC. As shared earlier, different perspective of the trend can be very helpful to enable scenario thinking or a deep dive on some of the issues, and that is why your input is very important during this process. I see Michael's hand up. Go ahead and please ask your question.

MICHAEL PALAGE

Yes, thank you, Victoria. Again, I'd like to really thank you, Becky, and the other staff that work on this particular initiative. I think you've historically done a good job.

One of the things that I had asked for, I believe it was last year or the year before, was I believe staff took all of those little post-it notes that were labeled across the room and actually incorporated them into a database. I believe that database was then made available to the ICANN Board to help prioritize.

What would be incredibly valuable for the community is for the community to see how that is documented. We're not asking for write access, but perhaps read access. As the Board is looking and potentially prioritizing or commenting on that, it would be incredibly helpful to have that iterative bi-directional flow of data because if all we do, like we did last time, is show up in a room for two hours with a bunch of sticky notes and then walk away, there's

not a constructive feedback loop or an iterative process to really make this work.

If ICANN Org does distill this into a database, let's think about how we could make it potentially open or allow the community to see what the Board is doing with this data because in that scenario, I really think it's a win-win situation.

Again, I really do appreciate the work that you have done and just a quick shout out. Unfortunately, I will not be in Mumbai next week, but for those who will be, if you generally attend, they generally have candy and other good giveaways if you stay for the whole time. I would intend encouraging that session. Thanks again. Bye.

VICTORIA YANG

Thank you, Michael. Becky, I see your hands up and I also have a few notes for Michael on his comments. Please go ahead, Becky.

BECKY NASH

Sure. I just wanted to thank Michael for his comments. First of all, you set the bar pretty high on the goodies that we will need to bring to the session. We will definitely try to make it as interactive and pleasant for everyone. We're sorry that you won't be there in person, but again, all perspectives we would like to collect and feel free to email us at planning@icann.org.

We did want to highlight that we did publish all of the data from the development of the Strategic Plan sessions and we had the community data report, et cetera. Our goal is to report back out

publicly as well on the data that is collected. Hopefully, we have that link and that satisfies that inquiry about us being transparent, which is what our goal is. We appreciate it. Thank you very much.

VICTORIA YANG

Thank you, Becky. Michael, I see your hands still up. Do you have a follow-up question? Okay. Sebastien, please go ahead.

SEBASTIEN BACHOLLET

Thank you very much, Sebastien speaking. I am pulling two calls at the same time and I am not very good at that. I don't know why. It was at the same time. Never mind.

I just wanted to ask one question. I hope that it was not already asked. What is the link between what you are doing and what Review of Reviews is doing? It seems that there are some links or some oversight of both. Maybe it could be interesting to know how you intend to take that into account. Maybe the co-chair of the Review of Reviews can help to answer this question too. Thank you very much.

VICTORIA YANG

Thank you, Sebastien. That is a really good question. Becky, I see you are about to jump in. Please go ahead. Sure.

BECKY NASH

Thank you. Thank you very much, Sebastien, for your comments. Just as a reminder, this program, which is an evolution of a

program that we have ran for several years under our previous five-year Strategic Plan, is really to foster strategic thinking throughout the period of the five-year Strategic Plan.

It has evolved to be three years during a five-year cycle in order to ensure that, collectively, we hear all voices about any emerging long-term trends that impact our strategy. This process is related to ICANN Org Board and communities' strategy, collectively. We do know that the Review of Review community group is doing some very important work, but it is not necessarily talking about emerging trends or SWOT analysis is our understanding.

We will, for sure, take that under advisement and see if any other response needs to happen on that. I hope that is clear that this is related to the strategic planning process and any evolution of external or internal trends.

VICTORIA YANG

Thank you, Becky. All right, I have these slides here on the program timeline. Very straightforward. Right now, we are in February and March. As mentioned, we are basically running the environmental scan sessions. Our goal is to finish all the sessions by the end of March, so the team can review, consolidate, analyze all the input and present that to the BSPP, who will then conduct strategic thinking and discussion from May to July.

Also, the BSPP will prepare their recommendations to the Board. We anticipate the Board make a decision either in September or

October. As you can see, the bulk part of this program is really from now until July. Very intense four to five-month working time. We look forward to your participation.

Most importantly, Call to Action. Please come join the session Tuesday afternoon, in person or remote. All welcome. One hour and 15 minutes of strategic thinking fun. As Michael mentioned, we have goodies. We look forward to hearing your perspective, your insight. This is brainstorming. It's supposed to be fun and open.

If you have conflict and still want to participate, please send emails to planning@icann.org. Again, please check the ICANN85 schedule page early next week. We'll have the prep material ready. Come prepared.

For the rest of the session, I think we'll just see if there's any questions, any additional questions about the program, about what is expected in the upcoming session. Feel free to either type your question or raise your hands.

All right. Looks like we are quite clear and there's no questions. I'm going to hand it back to you, Becky.

BECKY NASH

Great. Thank you very much, Victoria. Thank you, Kelly and team. Again, in summary, this session, the intention has been to prepare for the upcoming public session at ICANN85. We hope that this has

been helpful to clarify the evolution from the strategic outlook trends to the annual strategy review program.

We do appreciate everyone's attendance today. And again, if you cannot make it in person, please join virtually if possible. And if not, please email planning@icann.org any observations that you have about ICANN's strategy and any emerging trends under strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, or threats. So, we do appreciate everyone's participation and thank you. We will close the meeting now.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN

Thanks, all.

KELLY MEDINA

Thank you, everyone.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]