Environmental Sustainability Strategy

ICANN Org
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ICANN

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BACKGROUND

Global environmental concerns have prompted discussions among ICANN's Board, community, and org about ICANN's role and responsibility in understanding and addressing its own ecological footprint. In 2023, the ICANN Board began developing a plan to delve deeper into this issue as part of its role in overseeing ICANN's Strategic Planning efforts. Additionally, the Board asked ICANN's CEO to begin exploring the issue, leading to its integration as CEO goal 8.

CEO GOAL 8

CEO Goal 8 is to initiate the creation of ICANN's Environmental Sustainability Strategy. As ICANN's mission concerns the global Internet and the public interest, a commitment to environmental, social, and governance sustainability is in the public's interest. In FY24, ICANN will initiate the development of a comprehensive approach for implementing an environmental sustainability strategy for ICANN.

VISION

ICANN is committed to promoting the global public interest by minimizing its environmental footprint and promoting sustainable practices across all of its business operations.

The Environmental Sustainability Strategy will integrate environmental sustainability principles into ICANN's core operations, policies, and practices, in collaboration with the ICANN community and other relevant stakeholders.

While we acknowledge that our scope of influence to mitigate global environmental impacts is limited, we seek to stay informed of discussions taking place in other fora to evaluate ICANN's potential impacts.

We seek to embed sustainability principles within our workforce policies and actively promote their observance among our stakeholders, including the ICANN community, the public, our suppliers and vendors, and other parties with whom we engage.

We aim to explore various ways to strike a better balance between the environmental impacts of travel vis-a-vis the multistakeholder model, and the ways the model benefits from face-to-face interactions.

We will continuously evaluate and improve our business practices to minimize any potential negative ecological impacts. Through our ongoing commitment and reflection, we strive to uphold environmental sustainability best practices.

PRINCIPLES

Innovation in Sustainable Operations	Pursue innovative solutions to reduce environmental impact across ICANN's business operations
Collaborative Engagement	Establish and foster partnerships and collaborations for environmental sustainability efforts across the ICANN ecosystem
	Empower employees, partners, and vendors through policies and practices to prioritize sustainable sourcing.
Transparency and Accountability	Maintain transparency in reporting environmental impacts and ensure accountability for contributions to sustainability

STRATEGIC GOALS

The ultimate goal for environmental sustainability would be to set a science-based target to eventually achieve carbon neutrality in our operations. This requires first understanding our current baseline and what would need to change to meet ambitious targets, then getting buy-in from the community on areas which directly affect them.

The initial strategic goals involve:
- reducing our carbon footprint across our areas of operations
- promoting green operations across the organization, including Internet infrastructure and hardware and following sustainable Internet infrastructure management best practices
- providing environmental education and awareness

I. Assessment and Measurement		
Conduct a comprehensive assessment of current environmental impact, establishing measurable benchmarks for improvement.		
ACTIONS: Benchmark Assessment	**Audit**	Conduct an environmental audit to understand the baseline
		Determine best practices for ICANN activities to reduce our carbon footprint

II. Green Infrastructure and Operations
Implement energy-efficient technologies, optimize resource utilization, and prioritize renewable energy sources across ICANN's operations, where appropriate, with the allocation of financial resources to projects or companies that focus on sustainable practices, environmentally-friendly technologies, and the conservation of natural resources.

ACTIONS: ICANN Offices and ICANN Meetings	Energy Efficiency	Explore the integration of renewable energy sources, such as those aligned with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification standards, in applicable ICANN office locations
		Measure the sustainability impacts of flexible/hybrid work policies
		Implement energy-efficient technologies and practices
		Promote green Internet infrastructure and hardware and follow sustainable Internet infrastructure management best practices
		Set reduction targets for energy consumption
	Resource Conservation	Evaluate current amount of paper, food, energy, and material waste produced
		Raise awareness of ecological impacts of ICANN's operations to empower staff to contribute to resource conservation
		Measure greenhouse gas emissions from org non-meeting travel
		Work with vendors to prioritize sustainable sourcing
	ICANN Meetings	Measure greenhouse gas emissions from travel related to ICANN meetings
		Research and consider investment opportunities with carbon offset projects to achieve carbon neutrality
		Promote public transportation and sustainable travel options to reduce emissions impacts
		Promote remote participation at ICANN meetings, reducing the need for physical presence and travel-related emissions

		Work with vendors to prioritize sustainable sourcing
III. Stakeholder Engagement and Education Engage stakeholders through education, awareness campaigns, and capacity development initiatives to encourage sustainable practices and innovation within the ICANN ecosystem.		
ACTIONS: Communications & Reporting	**Knowledge Development**	Facilitate engagement with the ICANN community in fostering knowledge development opportunities relating to community-recognized best practices
		Collaborate with stakeholders to develop educational campaigns, workshops, and training programs focused on environmental sustainability in the context of Internet operations and usage
	Awareness and Education	Raise awareness with ICANN staff, stakeholders, and the Internet community about environmental sustainability practices and impacts
		Promote sustainable practices and partnerships
	Data and Metrics	Regularly monitor and report on sustainability performance, leveraging a multitude of channels, including the Annual Report
		Set measurable targets and regularly assess progress
	Engagement	Seek community input on sustainability efforts and incorporate feedback

CURRENT TIMELINE

#	Date	Deliverable	Status
1	**January 2024**	Org produces best practices research in environmental sustainability practices	Complete
2	**February/March 2024**	Org produces overall strategy, including vision, principles, and statement, updates Strategic Planning Committee	Complete
3	**April 2024**	Org produces potential scope of activities following discussions with several third parties that specialize in the field	Complete

4	**May 2024**	Org updates, where relevant, items #1 through #3 following discussions and inputs from Board & community, and posts on dedicated wiki page	Complete
5	**June 2024**	Org finalizes items #1 through #3 and begins next steps discussions about budget & prioritization of work in this area in FY25	In Progress

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