

Planning Prioritization Framework Version 3

ICANN Org Planning Function
March 2023



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1. Introduction and Overview to the Prioritization Framework

1.1 Background

Prioritization continues to be critical in supporting the needs and demands of the ICANN organization's (org) global community. Due to the large volume and complexity of implementation work resulting from policy and review work, there is a need for ICANN to prioritize the implementation work.

ICANN's [Adopted Strategic Plan for FY21–FY25](#) includes the Strategic Objective: Improve the effectiveness of ICANN's multistakeholder model of governance. One of the targeted outcomes supporting this objective is that ICANN stakeholders collaborate to define prioritization mechanisms, which ensure that cumulative workload is reasonable at any time, and that ICANN priorities reflect the community's collective needs. In addition, one of the six main topics articulated by the community for [Enhancing the Effectiveness of ICANN's Multistakeholder Model](#), "Prioritization of the work and efficient use of resources," was underscored as one of the most pressing by a majority of community members. Moreover, the need to prioritize the org's work was reinforced in the [Third Accountability and Transparency Review Team \(ATRT3\) Final Report](#), which included a recommendation for a community-led process to prioritize community recommendations. "Planning at ICANN" is one of the 15 operating initiatives in ICANN's Five-Year Operating and Financial Plan since the adoption of the FY21–25 plan. One of the deliverables of this operating initiative is a Planning Prioritization Framework (the "framework") to enhance and improve ICANN's overall annual planning process.

1.2 Purpose of the Planning Prioritization Framework

The planning prioritization framework is a project that will serve as a guide for the prioritization step during the annual planning process. The framework describes and outlines what to prioritize, who will prioritize, when to prioritize, how to prioritize, etc., so that the community, org, and Board can collaborate efficiently and effectively during this process.

The implementation of this framework aims to enhance ICANN's overall planning process. It is also anticipated to yield the following additional benefits:

- Creating a process to collect and document the top priorities for the ICANN
- Enabling the ICANN ecosystem to have informed discussions about synergies and tradeoffs in resource allocation decisions
- Reducing the risk of misalignment among competing views for prioritization by creating a process to with agreed-on criteria and methods
- Positively impacting the efficient use of resources, if properly managed, to address the issues identified by the ICANN community
- Increasing ICANN's ability to plan for and to complete work in an efficient and timely manner

1.3 Document Version Log

This framework was updated after a pilot was conducted where many aspects of the project were validated. The design of this framework will continue to evolve through the annual planning cycle and will be an iterative process. Input from the ICANN ecosystem will be utilized throughout the development of this new step in the planning process.

Version #	Description of Changes	Publication Date
Version 1	Initial draft	February 2022
Version 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added Section 1.3 for a brief summary of the pilot, its achievements, and key learnings (page 4). Updated the framework to mention the scope for the FY24 planning prioritization process regarding the recently prioritized board-approved Specific Review recommendations (page 6). Updated the framework to rename the alternate member to secondary member (page 6). Updated the FY24 Planning Process timeline Section 4.1 (page 13). Added Appendix A for the pilot (pages 14–15). Added Appendix B for “Summary of Lessons Learned From the Pilot and Org Comments” (pages 15–19). Added Appendix C for the framework community consultations and the pilot (pages 19). 	August 2022
Version 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated Section 2.1: Scope of Activities. The update addresses prioritized activities that have not been worked for over two years. Updated Section 2.1: Participants: The update removed the specifications of the Board liaisons. Updated Section 2.1: Frequency. The update suggests the community Planning Prioritization Group remains available until a new Planning Prioritization Group is formed, in the event a midyear planning prioritization process is needed. Removed the appendix, which summarized the community consultation during the development of the framework. Updated Figure 3: Planning Prioritization Process Flow. 	March 2023

2. Planning Prioritization Framework V3

2.1 Framework Description

Scope of Activities to Prioritize

The scope of activities to be included in this prioritization process as a step in the annual planning process is the Board-approved org implementation work, such as Policy Development Process (PDP) recommendations, Specific Review recommendations, and the implementation of other nonpolicy and advice work.



Figure 1: ICANN Org Implementation Activities

1. **ICANN Bylaw-mandated activities:** This includes the ICANN Bylaw-mandated Specific Reviews and Organizational Reviews. The initiation of such activities is required under the Bylaws, and the activities are carried out by the community or other stakeholders, but supported by the org.
2. **Community-led mission-driven activities:** This includes PDPs and advice. This type of work is usually initiated and led by the community. For clarity, this includes org implementation of all consensus-based policies that are developed by the community and adopted by the Board, including approved outcomes of ccNSO and GNSO policy development processes.
3. **Org-led strategic activities:** This includes strategic projects with specific deliverables, initiated and led by the org.
4. **All implementation activities:** This includes implementation activities of all Board-approved recommendations from either the community, org, or other stakeholders. These can be recommendations from all three types of activities mentioned above.

Examples of work to which the prioritization process would not apply includes:

1. All continuing operations in functional activities.
2. Smaller projects that do not significantly affect the org and that may be at the discretion of an internal function or community group.

The process also includes any activity that was previously prioritized, for which implementation has not yet commenced within two years since its last prioritization.

Participants

The process will continue to utilize a group with members from the ICANN stakeholder groups, formed at the beginning of the annual planning process. This structure permits each member to share a perspective of priorities by stakeholder groups to ensure broad community input. A key outcome of the planning prioritization process is for the community to provide input to the org on prioritization. The org will receive this input and will evaluate and develop implementation plans to suggest inclusion of activities into the draft plans subject to a Public Comment period. This is step two of the prioritization process.

Given the roles and responsibilities of the community, Board, and org in the planning process, it is important that the community Planning Prioritization Group provides agreed-on input on prioritization. It is then the org's responsibility to evaluate the allocation of resources for implementation in the context of all other activities that require org planning. Therefore, it is important that the Planning Prioritization Group work together and agree on priorities.

The stakeholder group leadership will be asked to each nominate one member to participate in the prioritization process. They will also each be requested to identify a secondary member that should also attend the group meetings. The secondary member will be available should the primary member be unable to participate due to unforeseen reasons.

The community Planning Prioritization Group will have up to nine members from the following stakeholder groups:

1. *Address Supporting Organization (ASO)*
2. *At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC)*
3. *Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) Commercial Stakeholder Group (CSG)*
4. *GNSO Contracted Party House (CPH)*
5. *GNSO Noncommercial Stakeholder Group (NCSG)*
6. *Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO)*
7. *Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC)*
8. *Root Server System Advisory Committee (RSSAC)*
9. *Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC)*

If any one of the stakeholder groups elects not to participate, then the number of members will be fewer than nine (not including secondary members).

In addition, ICANN's Planning team will facilitate the meetings of the Planning Prioritization Group and other org staff will attend the meetings as observers. The ICANN Board (through the committee or working group delegated with such responsibility) will have two Board liaisons to the Planning Prioritization Group.

Frequency

Based on input received, the planning prioritization step takes place in April and May, with the output published in June or July each year. This timing permits the org to consider the prioritized activities while developing the draft Operating Plan and Budget for the next fiscal year. It also provides the org Planning liaisons enough time to develop detailed resourcing estimates to

include in the draft Operating and Financial Plans. Additionally, from the FY25 Planning process and onwards, where feasible, the Planning Prioritization Group will remain available until the next group is commenced, in the event a midyear planning prioritization process is needed to review activities that are approved by the Board during the planning cycle.

Prioritization Techniques

Based on input received, ICANN org will use the “Urgency-Importance Matrix” prioritization technique.

The use of a prioritization technique is recommended to foster constructive decision-making. The prioritization technique is used to permit discussion in meetings and via emails that will aid the members in arriving at consensus.

The Urgent and Important technique is recommended to rank the activities in an efficient manner on a relative basis. The org provides a level of prioritization as a starting point based on information available. This pre-assessment is provided to help the members react and then discuss their various viewpoints to then arrive at a consensus decision.

Additional techniques may be evaluated should the Planning Prioritization Group members and the org agree that the evaluation of additional techniques meets the needs of the process based on its usefulness and ease of use for the members.

Framework for Systems and Tools

Based on input received, there are existing reports that will be used, such as the “ICANN Rolling Five-Year Roadmap for Policy, Review, and Cross-Community Working Group” work (published as an appendix in the Five-Year Operating Plan). In addition, future discussion about providing information on the status of the planning prioritization framework will be discussed during the pilot phase of the project.

Summary Planning Prioritization Framework V3

Design Element	Framework V3
Scope	<p>The “Scope of Activities” element defines what to prioritize.</p> <p>The process prioritizes Board-approved implementation work, such as PDP recommendations, Specific Review recommendations, and the implementation of other non-policy and advice work.</p> <p>The process also includes any activity that was previously prioritized, for which implementation has not yet commenced within two years since its last prioritization.</p>
Participants	<p>The “Participants” element defines who will conduct the prioritization and the roles and responsibilities of all involved parties during this process.</p> <p>The process utilizes a group with members from the ICANN stakeholder</p>

Design Element	Framework V3
	<p>groups, formed at the beginning of the annual planning process.</p> <p>The community Planning Prioritization Group will have up to nine members as follows.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Address Supporting Organization (ASO)</i> 2. <i>At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC)</i> 3. <i>Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) Commercial Stakeholder Group (CSG)</i> 4. <i>GNSO Contracted Party House (CPH)</i> 5. <i>GNSO Noncommercial Stakeholder Group (NCSG)</i> 6. <i>Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO)</i> 7. <i>Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC)</i> 8. <i>Root Server System Advisory Committee (RSSAC)</i> 9. <i>Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC)</i> <p>If any of the stakeholder groups do not wish to participate, then the number of members will be fewer than nine.</p> <p>The ICANN Board (through the committee or working group delegated with such responsibility) will have two Board liaisons to the Planning Prioritization Group.</p> <p>It is important that the community Planning Prioritization Group present a consensus-based, agreed-on list of prioritized activities to the org, to continue the development of the annual Operating Plan and Budget.</p>
Frequency	<p>The “frequency” element defines when to prioritize and how often to prioritize.</p> <p>The process takes place once a year during April and May. This timing allows sufficient time for the org to develop the detailed work plan and resourcing estimates during the annual Operating Plan and Budget development process for the next fiscal year. This will also allow the community to provide further input via the draft plan Public Comment proceeding.</p> <p>Additionally, from the FY25 Planning process and onwards, where feasible, the Planning Prioritization Group remains available until the next group is commenced, in the event a midyear planning prioritization process is needed.</p>
Techniques	<p>The “techniques” element describes techniques or models that can be used to help prioritize.</p>

Design Element	Framework V3
	<p>Prioritization is a process of making choices and making decisions. The process uses the “Urgency-Importance Matrix” prioritization technique. See the matrix in the Appendix section of this document. ICANN org will provide the list of activities in advance of the meetings and a suggested level of priority for each as a starting point.</p>
<p>Systems and Tools</p>	<p>The “systems and tools” element defines what resources are helpful to use when prioritizing.</p> <p>The following resources will be reviewed and considered during the prioritization process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ICANN Rolling Five-Year Roadmap for Policy, Reviews, and Cross-Community Working Group work 2. The Recommendations Relating to Cross-Community Working Group on Enhancing ICANN Accountability Work Stream 2 and Reviews 3. Other tools to be identified during future consultations

2.2 Prioritization and the Annual Planning Process

ICANN’s annual planning process consists of the strategic planning process, operating planning process, and budget process; often, the operating planning process and the budget process are combined into one (the “Operating Plan and Budget process”) due to the timing of the planning cycle. See Figure 2 below.

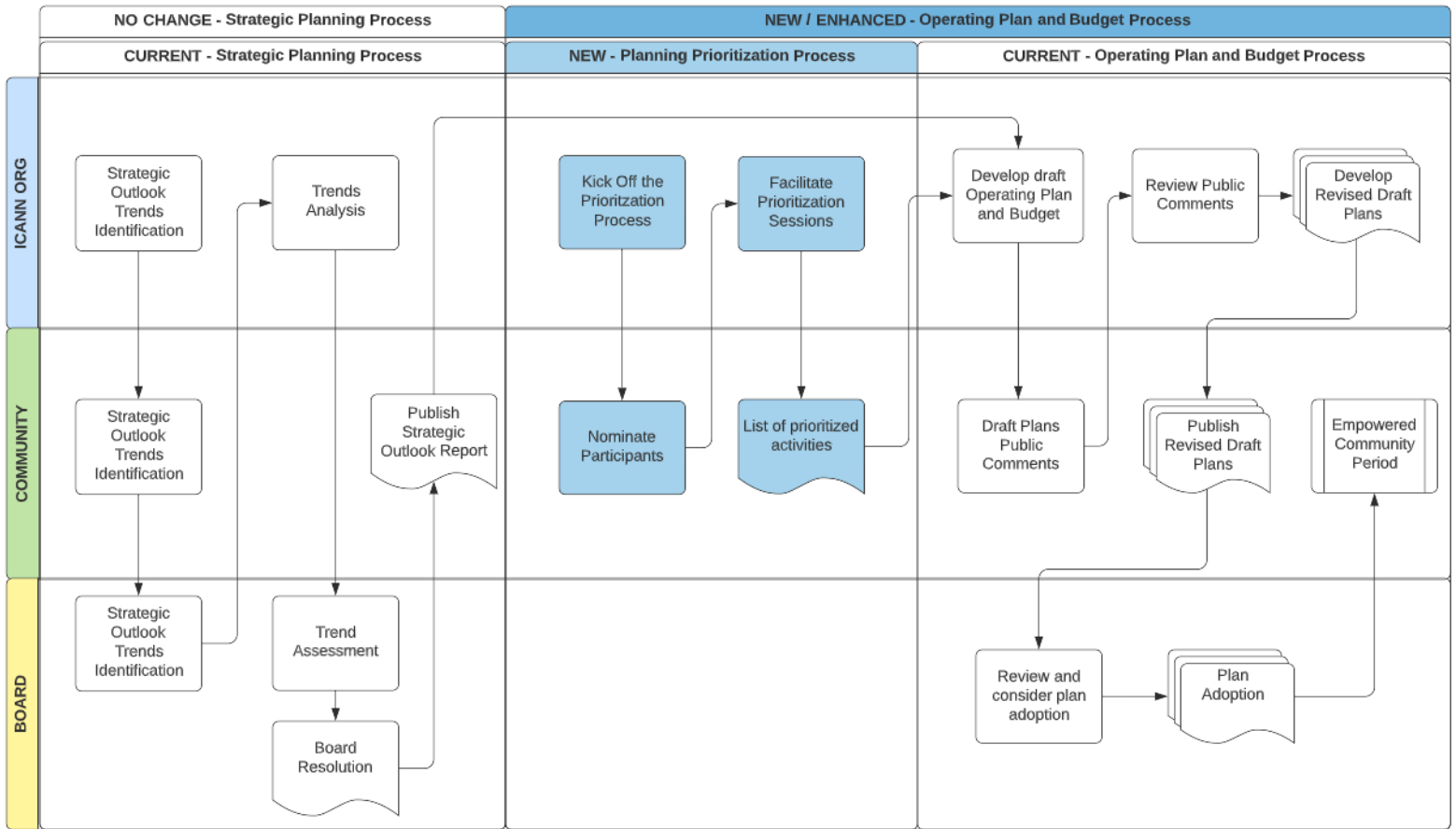


Figure 2: Overall Planning Process Flow

The strategic planning process consists of strategic trend identification, trend analysis, and trend impact assessment. The result of the impact assessment will either result in recommendations to evolve the Strategic Plan, or recommendations to take short-term tactical actions during the Operating Plan and Budget process.

The current Operating Plan and Budget process starts with the development of the draft Operating Plan and Budget with a set of planning assumptions, which are reviewed with the community via webinars and other engagement sessions. The draft plans are then published for Public Comment, giving the community the opportunity to review and comment on the draft. The org reviews and considers all comments received and, where applicable, incorporates them into the revised draft for Board consideration. Finally, communities have another opportunity via the Empowered Community to ensure the accountability and transparency of this process.

The intent of the Planning Prioritization Framework is to improve the overall planning process by enhancing the Operating Plan and Budget process. As illustrated by Figure 3 below, the new planning prioritization process step will be embedded in the current Operating Plan and Budget process, prior to the org developing the draft plans. This step will provide the community with an opportunity to review, evaluate, discuss, and prioritize activities that the org should take into

consideration while developing detailed work plans and resource allocations in the Operating Plan and Budget process. The planning prioritization process is illustrated below:

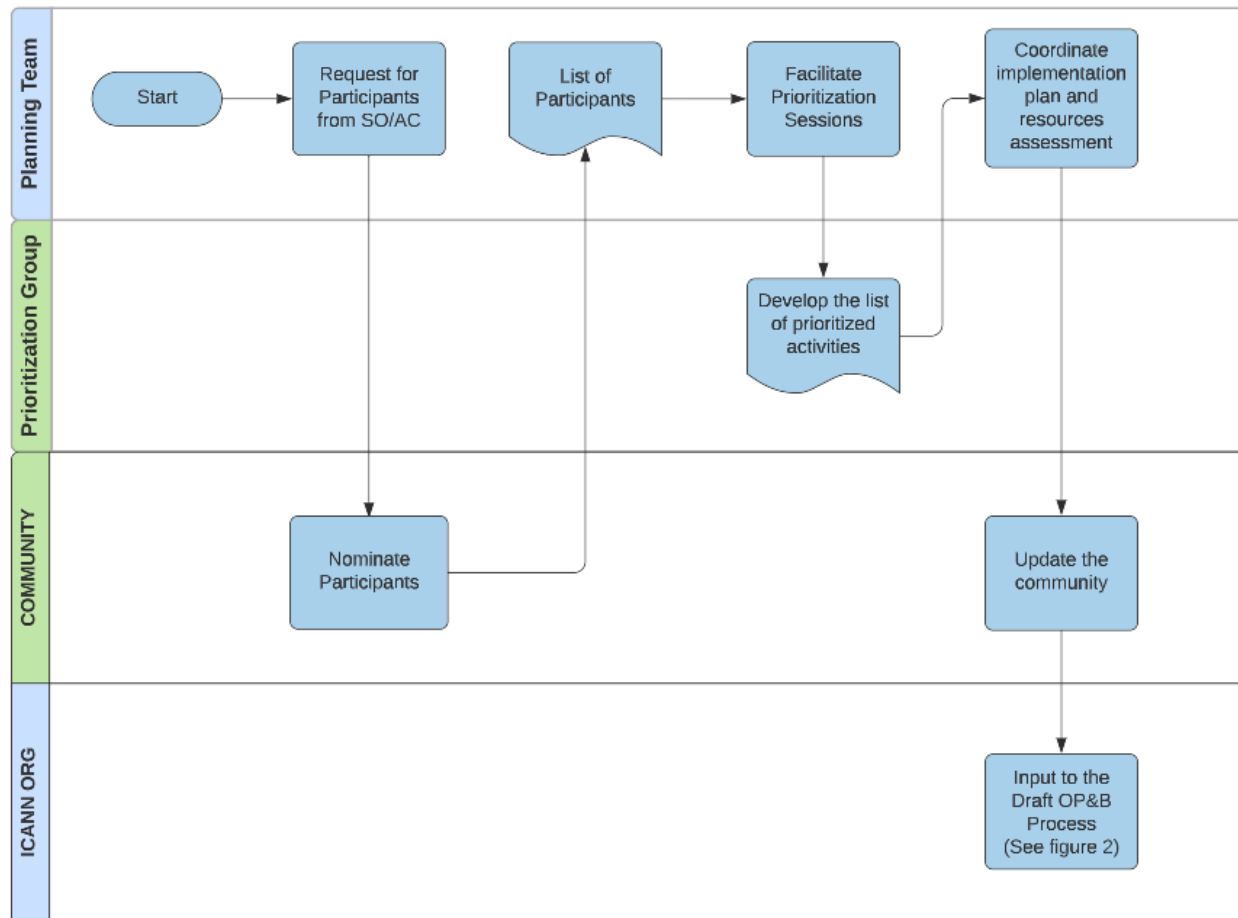


Figure 3: *Planning Prioritization Process Flow*

- The ICANN’s planning team kicks off this process by requesting participation from the SO/ACs, via the Chairs of the SO/ACs.
- The Chairs of the ICANN stakeholder groups nominate one primary member and one secondary member. The secondary member is the alternate in case the primary member nominated cannot take part for any unforeseen reasons. To enhance the effectiveness of the secondary member’s participation in the absence of the primary member, they should join each call as an observer.
- The ICANN’s planning team receives the list of participants and forms the Planning Prioritization Group; conducts a series of prioritization sessions with the Planning Prioritization Group.
- During the sessions, participants will review, evaluate, discuss, and agree on activities to be prioritized.
- The ICANN’s planning team receives and reviews the list of prioritized activities; updates the community about the list of prioritized activities.
- The list of prioritized activities will be an input to the development of the draft plans. Please see Figure 2 for a timeline of the Operating Plan and Budget process.

The prioritization process is a step at the beginning of the operating planning process. The operating planning process lasts approximately 14 months. The prioritization process will take place once a year during the April–May timeframe as noted below in Figure 3. The suggested schedule will allow sufficient time for the org to develop the detailed work plan and resourcing estimates during the annual Operating Plan and Budget development process from July through November. This will also allow the community to provide further input via the draft plan Public Comment proceeding that opens in December.

3. Conclusion

The implementation of this framework is intended to enhance ICANN's overall planning process. The design of this framework may evolve, and the org will continue to collect feedback throughout the planning process to ensure that continuous improvement is part of the framework. The process for prioritizing will continue to be open and transparent with a public mailing list and publication of the meeting agenda. ICANN org appreciates all community members for their input thus far in the project and specifically the Planning Prioritization Group members that participated in the pilot.



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