

Planning Prioritization Framework Version 4

ICANN Org
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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 non-policy 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 ICANN'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. The pilot for this framework was initiated May 2022 and the resulting recommendations were considered for the FY23 ICANN Operating Plan and Budget. Since the pilot, an annual planning prioritization process has been held at the beginning of each new planning cycle.

1.2 Purpose of the Planning Prioritization Framework

The planning prioritization framework is supporting the prioritization step of 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 framework also features a process to retire non-policy recommendations which can be initiated in exceptional cases, based on a set of specific criteria.

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

- Creating a process to collect and document the top priorities for 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 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 to include lessons learned from the FY25 prioritization cycle, and to feature a process to retire non-policy recommendations. The design of this framework will continue to evolve through the annual planning cycle and will be an iterative process, as needed.

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 planning prioritization process regarding the recently prioritized board-approved Specific Review recommendations (page 6). Updated Section 2.1: Participants: Renamed the second participating member to Planning Prioritization Group from “alternate member” to “secondary member” (page 6). Updated the 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 current 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

Version 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added Appendix A for “Process for Retirement of Non-Policy Recommendations”. • Removed Appendix B for “Summary of Lessons Learned From the Pilot and Org Comments” 	February 2024
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2. Planning Prioritization Framework V4

2.1 Framework Description

Scope of Activities

The scope of activities to be included in this prioritization process is the Board-approved org implementation work, such as Policy Development Process (PDP) recommendations, Specific Reviews recommendations, and the implementation of other non-policy and advice work.

1. **Implementation activities from ICANN Bylaws-mandated Reviews:** This includes the implementation of the ICANN Bylaw-mandated Specific Review Recommendations. Once the ICANN Board adopts the specific review recommendations, org then begins the implementation design and implementation process.
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. If these activities result in a project for org and resources need to be allocated then it will be subject to prioritization.
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 applies to any activity that was previously prioritized, for which implementation has not yet commenced within two years since its last prioritization.

In addition, the Planning Prioritization Group will be invited to assess the rationale supporting

suggestions of the retirement of non-policy recommendations, as well as early input received from SO/ACs, as referenced in Appendix A which describes the process for retirement of Non-Policy Recommendations. Non-policy recommendations refer to community recommendations developed outside of a policy development process, such as Specific Reviews or Cross-Community Working Groups.

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 the members to share a perspective of priorities by stakeholder groups to ensure broad community input. Key outcomes of the planning prioritization process are for the community to provide input to the org on prioritization and on any recommendation proposed for retirement.

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 as well as on retirement. 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.

The leadership of ICANN's stakeholder groups will be asked to each nominate one member to participate in the Planning Prioritization group process. The leadership will also each be requested to identify a secondary member that should also attend the group meetings. The secondary member will step in should the primary member be unable to participate due to unforeseen reasons.

The community Planning Prioritization Group will have up to nine working members, not including secondary members. One primary member and one secondary member will be nominated 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)*

Only one member of each stakeholder group is needed for the Planning Prioritization Process. If any one of the stakeholder groups elects not to participate it will reduce the size of the working Planning Prioritization Group.

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. ICANN org's Implementation Operations team will facilitate any discussions related to recommendations proposed for

retirement. The ICANN Board (through the committee or working group delegated with such responsibility) will have two Board liaisons to the Planning Prioritization Group.

Frequency

The planning prioritization step, including possible recommendations proposed for retirement, 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. For activities that are prioritized and included in the annual Operating Plan and Budget, this timing also provides the org Planning liaisons enough time to develop detailed resourcing estimates to include in the draft Operating Plan and Budget.

Additionally, where feasible, the nominated 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 yearly planning cycle.

Recommendations Proposed for Retirement

For any recommendation proposed for retirement, ICANN org will produce an issue paper with rationale for retiring recommendations, as documented in Appendix A.

The Planning Prioritization Group is expected to assess the paper and rationale. The Planning Prioritization Group's input is then included in a subsequent public comment proceeding to inform Board consideration.

Techniques

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.

As for recommendations proposed for retirement, the Planning Prioritization Group will be requested to follow the techniques and requirements set forth in Step 5 of Appendix A.

Framework for Systems and Tools

Existing reports such as the "ICANN Rolling Five-Year Roadmap for Policy, Review, and Cross-Community Working Groups" work will be used for monitoring and reporting activities that

are eligible to be prioritized. This report is published as an appendix in the Five-Year Operating Plan and on the [Planning and Finance Community wiki](#).

Summary Planning Prioritization Framework V4

Design Element	Framework V4
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 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. One each from:</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. This will assist ICANN org determine the final prioritized list of activities and continue</p>

Design Element	Framework V4
	the development of the annual Operating Plan and Budget.
Frequency	<p>The “frequency” element defines when, and how often, consideration of items to prioritize and retire is needed.</p> <p>The process takes place once a year during April and May. Following the prioritization process, 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 also allows the community to provide further input via the draft plan Public Comment proceeding.</p> <p>Additionally, in the event a midyear planning prioritization process is needed, where feasible, the Planning Prioritization Group remains available until the next group is commenced.</p>
Retirement	<p>The Planning Prioritization Group will be invited to assess the rationale supporting suggestions of the retirement of non-policy recommendations, as well as early input received from SO/ACs, as referenced in Appendix A. The Planning Prioritization Group’s input is then included in a subsequent public comment proceeding to inform Board consideration.</p>
Prioritization Techniques	<p>The “techniques” element describes techniques or models that can be used to help prioritize.</p> <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>
Systems and Tools	<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.

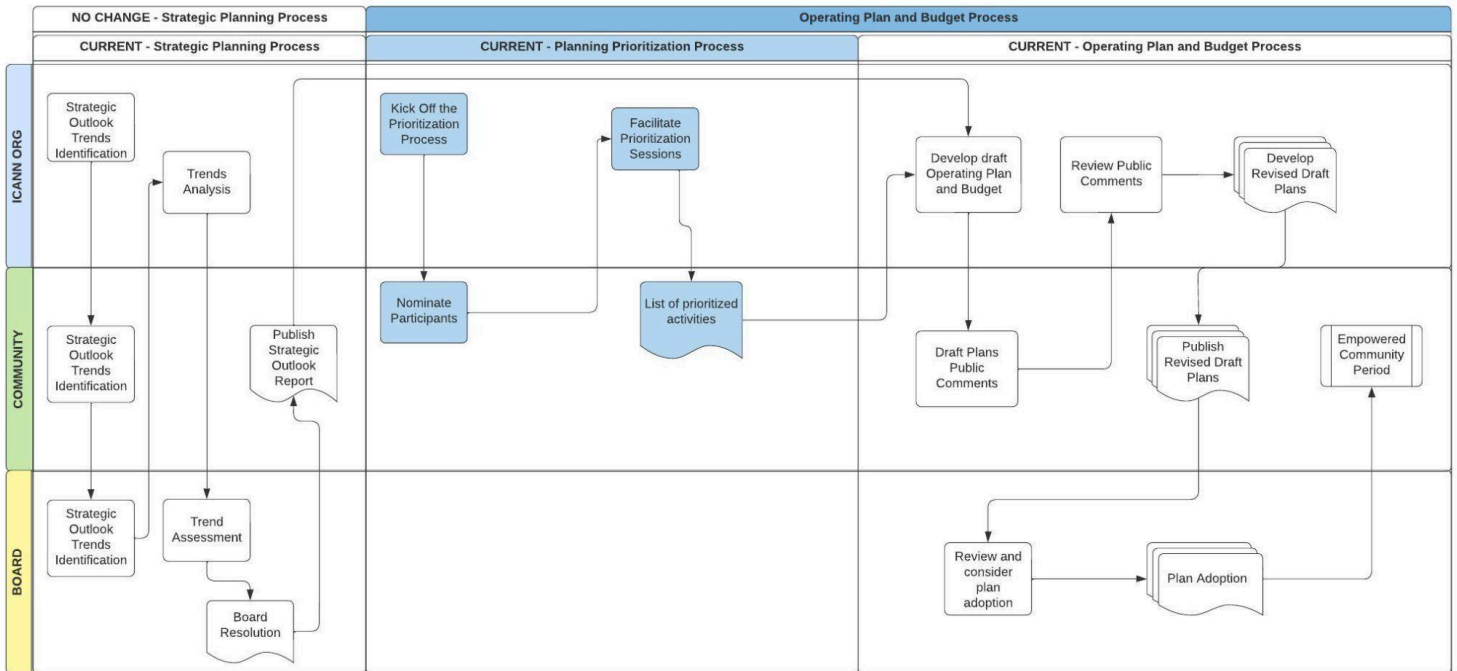


Figure 2: Overall Planning Process Flow

When not in development of the next Strategic Plan, the strategic planning process consists of an annual 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.

Before the implementation of the Planning Prioritization Process, the Operating Plan and Budget process started with the development of the draft Operating Plan and Budget using a set of planning assumptions, which are reviewed with the community via webinars and other engagement sessions. The draft plans were 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 Planning Prioritization Framework improves the overall planning process by enhancing the Operating Plan and Budget process. As illustrated by Figure 2, the planning prioritization process step is embedded in the current Operating Plan and Budget process, prior to the org

developing the draft plans. This step provides the community with an opportunity to review, evaluate, discuss, and prioritize activities that the org can take into consideration while developing detailed work plans and resource allocations in the Operating Plan and Budget process. The details of the planning prioritization process is illustrated below in Figure 3:

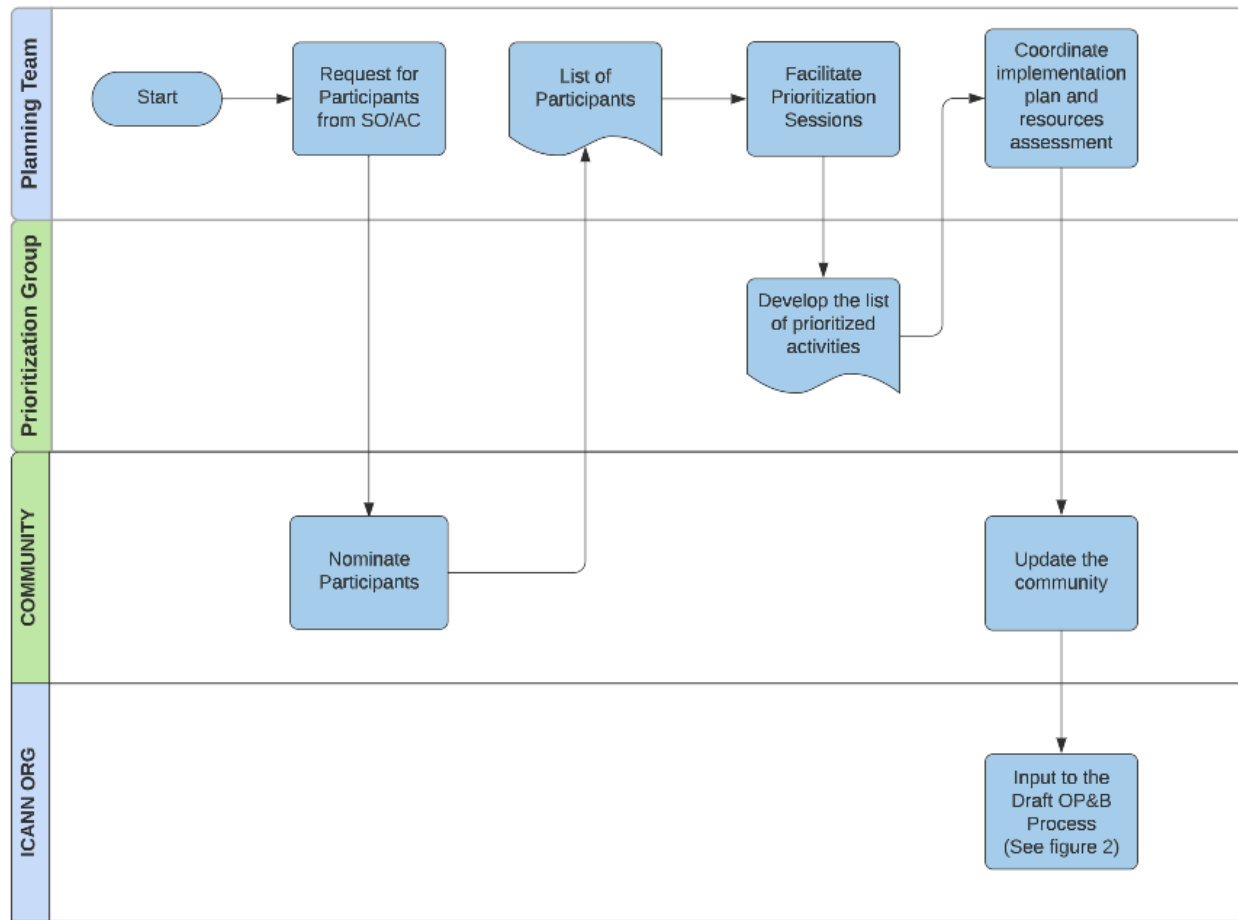


Figure 3: *Planning Prioritization Process Flow*

- The ICANN's planning team kicks off this process by requesting participation from the SO/ACs, via the Chairs of the SO/ACs.
- The leadership 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.

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- 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 annual 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 and . 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.

Additionally, in the event a midyear planning prioritization process is needed, where feasible, the Planning Prioritization Group remains available until the next group is commenced as part of the subsequent planning cycle.

For the planning prioritization process, the org will receive this input and will evaluate and develop implementation plans to suggest inclusion of activities into the draft Operating Plan and Budget subject to a public comment period. This is step two of the prioritization process.

As documented in Appendix A, for recommendations proposed for retirement, the org will include the input provided by the Planning Prioritization Group into a subsequent public comment proceeding to inform broader community consideration.

3. Conclusion

The implementation of this framework has enhanced ICANN’s overall planning process. Since the pilot was initiated in May 2022, an annual planning prioritization process has been held at the beginning of each new planning cycle providing org input on the suggested level of prioritization for consideration when developing the draft Operating Plan and Budgets.

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.

Appendix A - Process for Retirement of Non-Policy Recommendations

A.1 Scope

To implement the [Board approved](#) Third Accountability and Transparency Review (ATRT3) Recommendation 5¹, and considering the numerous times the ATRT3 Final Report stresses the procedural gap of not having a process to retire approved recommendations², ICANN org has produced a retirement process.

The process is intended for the retirement of community-developed Board-approved non-policy recommendations in exceptional cases and according to specific criteria. Non-policy recommendations refer to community recommendations developed outside of a policy development process, such as Specific Reviews or Cross-Community Working Groups.

The retirement process will be publicly documented in the version 4 of the planning prioritization framework, and referenced in relevant documentation, such as a revised version of the [Operating Standards for Specific Reviews](#). This living process is subject to revision as needed.

A.2 Process

STEP 1: Following consultation with the relevant org functions and staff subject matter experts, ICANN org initiates the process - on an as needed basis - to assess the possible retirement of a Board-approved non-policy recommendation, based on criteria articulated in a rationale for retirement.

¹ [...] the ATRT3 recommends the following guidance for ICANN org in the creation of a community-led entity tasked with operating a prioritization process for recommendations made by review teams, cross-community groups, or any other community related budgetary elements the Board or ICANN org feels appropriate:

• ATRT3 recommends that all SO/ACs should have the option of participating in this annual process. Those SO/ACs wishing to participate in the prioritization process shall have one member per SO/AC. Additionally the Board and the org shall also each have a member. The Board shall also take into account the following high-level guidance for the prioritization process:

- Shall operate by consensus of the individual SO/ACs, Board, and org members that are participating in the prioritization process.
- Is meant to have a continuous dialogue with ICANN org during the preparation of the budget.
- Shall consider WS2 recommendations which are required to complete the IANA transition and are subject to prioritization but must not be retired unless this is decided by the Board.
- Must be conducted in an open, accountable, and transparent fashion and decisions justified and documented.
- Shall integrate into the standard Operating and Financial Plan processes.
- Can prioritize multi year implementations, but these will be subject to annual reevaluation to ensure they still meet their implementation objectives and the needs of the community.
- Shall consider the following elements when prioritizing recommendations:
 - Relevance to ICANN's mission, commitments, core values, and strategic objectives.
 - Value and impact of implementation.
 - Cost of implementation and budget availability.
 - Complexity and time to implement.
 - Prerequisites and dependencies with other recommendations.
 - Relevant information from implementation shepherds (or equivalents). [...]

What is the intent of the recommendation? Providing specific guidance for the establishment of a prioritization process which will allow for the implementation of priority recommendations and the retirement of recommendations which are no longer relevant or will never be a priority. [...]

² ATRT3 Final Report, page 97 and 101 "There is no process to retire recommendations which have been approved"; page 97 and 211 "100% of Structures and 85% of individuals supported ATRT3 making recommendations about including a process to retire recommendations as it becomes apparent that the community will never get to them or they have been overtaken by other events."

Criteria for retiring include, but are not limited to:

- Conditions that have changed since the recommendation(s) was issued and approved, and therefore, make the recommendation(s) no longer relevant nor feasible to implement. This includes, but is not limited to: existing relevance to ICANN's Bylaws-defined mission, commitments, core values and strategic objectives, and unanticipated or anticipated developments such as changes in policies, laws, and existing agreements (ENVIRONMENT CHANGE CRITERION);
- Other community recommendations, advice or policy recommendations superseding a given recommendation (OVERRIDE CRITERION);
- Further assessment showing that the cost of implementing the recommendation is significantly higher than estimated and may exceed the potential benefits of implementation (COST/BENEFIT CRITERION);
- Time to implement that would defeat the value and benefits of implementation. The implementation timeframe might be affected by dependencies with other work (TIME CRITERION);
- Lack of broad community support as implementation work progresses (COMMUNITY SUPPORT CRITERION).

The ICANN community may also identify a recommendation for retirement. Any Supporting Organization or Advisory Committee that selected members to the Specific Review or served as a Chartering Organization to the Cross-Community Working Group that generated the recommendation at issue may request that ICANN org initiate the retirement process. Any such request must be accompanied by the identification of one or more of the above criteria to substantiate the rationale for retirement.

The issue paper identifies the recommendation(s) proposed for recommendation, the criterion or criteria supporting the request for retirement, and whether the retirement request originates from ICANN org or a Supporting Organization or Advisory Committee.

STEP 2: If a recommendation appears to meet one or more retirement criteria, ICANN org produces an issue paper and sends it to the SO/AC leaders for feedback from their communities. The SO/AC leaders collate and coordinate the feedback for transmission to ICANN org, within a reasonable timeframe, for further inclusion within the issue paper.

STEP 3: ICANN org sends the updated issue paper, incorporating relevant community feedback, to the relevant grouping(s) of the ICANN Board responsible for consideration of the recommendation(s) at issue (such as a Board Caucus Group or Board Committee). Should that Board group (or groups) support the proposal for retirement, the process moves to Step 4. In the event the Board group (or groups) does not agree with the proposal for retirement, and instead supports continuing with implementation of the recommendation, the retirement proposal will be withdrawn and the process concludes. A decision to continue through the retirement process or to withdraw a retirement proposal shall be reflected in the minutes of the relevant Board Committee (or in absence of a Board Committee responsible for the issue, the

full Board). SO/AC leaders shall also be notified of the withdrawal.

STEP 4: Should the Board Committee (or full Board as noted in step 3) decide to proceed with retiring the recommendation, ICANN org is responsible for internal coordination in order to confirm that materials relating to the proposed retirement are included in the materials intended for the Planning Prioritization Group³. In addition, ICANN org will inform the SO/AC leaders, and, as relevant, the designated community group (e.g. Review implementation shepherds or Cross-Community Working Group implementation team, if any) of the formal initiating of the retirement process over the select recommendation(s).

STEP 5: The Planning Prioritization Group, facilitated by ICANN org, considers the recommendation proposed for retirement with the accompanying issue paper, and provides a determination as to whether the select recommendation(s) should remain active or be retired, and generates a rationale to support that determination.

STEP 6: ICANN org opens a standard public comment period for broader community consultation on the issue paper and the Planning Prioritization Group's determination and rationale, as reached within Step 5.

STEP 7: ICANN org prepares a summary and analysis of public comments received. The summary and analysis, along with the issue paper and Planning Prioritization Group determination, are provided to the relevant grouping of the ICANN Board for consideration and recommendation of action to a Board Committee or full Board, as relevant.

STEP 8: Should the relevant grouping(s) of the ICANN Board remain supportive of retiring the recommendation, ICANN org produces a draft Board paper for ICANN Board consideration on the proposal for retirement.

STEP 9: Upon Board's passing a resolution to retire the recommendation(s), ICANN org documents the decision on relevant web-pages and reporting, and shares the information through appropriate and relevant communication avenues.

³ Multiple recommendations can be proposed for retirement simultaneously.



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