Public Interest Discussions at ICANN
Overview

- What is *the* Public Interest?

- Public Interest Discussions at ICANN
The Public Interest...

- How do we know when we see it?
- Can it be operationalized?
- Does it have an end point or is it made meaningful more by practice than by a specific product?
- Can tensions between private & mutual interests be anticipated?
Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation of OCT 2016:

“{…} promoting the global public interest in the operational stability of the Internet by carrying out the mission set forth in the bylaws of the Corporation {…}”

“Such global public interest may be determined from time to time.”

“Any determination of such global public interest shall be made by the multistakeholder community through an inclusive bottom-up multistakeholder community process.”
The public interest is also present in the Strategic Plan:

**Vision**
- ICANN **builds trust** through serving the public interest, and incorporating the transparent and effective cooperation among stakeholders worldwide to facilitate its coordination role.

**Objective**
- Evolve and further globalize ICANN
- Support a healthy, stable, and resilient unique identifier ecosystem
- Advance organizational, technological and operational excellence
- Promote ICANN's role and multistakeholder approach
- **Develop and implement a global public interest framework bounded by ICANN's mission.**
**2014**: Proposed Definition by the Panel on Public Responsibility Framework

**2014**: IANA Functions Stewardship Transition Announcement
- Limited bandwidth, focus on transition proposal.

**March 2016**: Transition proposal complete. Continue explore PI in a bottom-up dialogue.

**ICANN55** HIT Session to explore the public interest within ICANN

At-Large Advisory Committee WG on the Public Interest created

**ICANN57** HIT Session to explore the public interest within ICANN

**Resources available:**
- Desk research
- Wiki space: [https://go.icann.org/2mKgWLv](https://go.icann.org/2mKgWLv)
- Mailing list: publicinterest@icann.org
- Staff support

**Next Steps?**
More active participation; community leader(s) to guide the process.
Definition of the global public interest proposed by the Panel on Public Responsibility Framework (as it relates to the Internet):

“ensuring that the Internet becomes, and continues to be, stable, inclusive, and accessible across the globe so that all may enjoy the benefits of a single and open Internet. In addressing its public responsibility, ICANN must build trust in the Internet and its governance ecosystem.”
Public Interest Discussions

Definition vs. no definition
- Provides structure
- Highly context-driven

How is it understood & applied in different contexts
- Explored Europe and India

Everything ICANN does is rooted in the public interest
- Develop best practices in multistakeholder systems
- Enhance diversity in stakeholder participation

SSR of the DNS (or diversity) is but one element of the public interest
- The aggregate of all special interests = the public interest
- PI is an abstract concept, it needs adaptable process, not a fixed definition

The public interest is designed to be self-executing in the new Bylaws
- If the bottom-up, multistakeholder process is followed, and the end result is supported by consensus, then the global public interest is automatically served.
Discussions are Ongoing

- Currently working to identify way for more active engagement and participation across the community

- The creation of a loose/informal structure to help guide future work