



The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers

17 November 2013

Mr. Roelof Meijer
Chair of the ccNSO Strategic and Operating Plan Working Group

Dear Mr. Meijer and the members of the ccNSO SOP WG:

Thank you for sharing your concerns about ICANN's planning processes. We acknowledge and appreciate the substantive and useful feedback and guidance you provided on this topic since 2008. The experience and leadership of you and the other members of the SOP WG in this area has helped us improve on past planning efforts and set ICANN on a much more effective course.

Your overarching objective of ensuring that ICANN has a responsive and structured planning process is one we share and are striving for. Until now, ICANN has budgeted for a level of effort, rather than for "planned to achieve" objectives. Previous strategic, operational and budget plans, for the most part lacked targeted, measurable objectives, clear timelines for achievement, detailed action plans and metrics. This, and the structure of the processes, made it difficult for ICANN to substantively respond in detail to various comments received from many parts of the ICANN community, and we acknowledge these past shortcomings.

As the organization has reached a new level of strength and maturity, with thanks to the community's input in general, and the ccNSO SOP WG in particular, ICANN is currently implementing a comprehensive, integrated effort for strategic, operational and budget planning. The first step of this process—creating a new Vision and Five-Year Strategic Plan—began in April 2013 with a high-level public conversation about ICANN's future challenges and opportunities, and has evolved to the current discussion about the draft "Vision, Mission and Focus Area Goals" and the addition of strategic details for ICANN's Strategic Plan. We have structured the process to be iterative and cumulative, amassing community input and guidance along the way.



Earlier this year, we published a planning timeline (with milestones) structured around opportunities for community discussion and input in order to yield: ICANN’s long-term, strategic direction; measurable objectives; priorities and milestones; success factors and resource requirements; metrics and measuring methodology; and a budget with the necessary detail to be responsive to community needs. The current draft “Vision, Mission & Focus Area Goals” text for a Five-year Strategic Plan, for example, responds to the ccNSO SOP WG’s request for this type of strategic document and it reflects the brainstorming input provided by the WG and several ccNSO executives, among many others.

We updated this timeline in early October to bring the Strategy Panels in line with the processes for development of the strategic and operating plans and budget. This was done after careful consideration and Board deliberation, and we think the benefits of extending the period for public comment and plan development outweighed the consequences of changing an established schedule.

As a result of extending the timeline for the strategic planning process, the FY2015 Operating Plan and Budget will be transitional, and FY2016 will be the first year to fully reflect the envisioned alignment of the Five-year Strategic Plan and the Operational Plan and Budget.

While the foundation for institutionalizing a responsive and structured planning process is being built, I hope ICANN can continue to count on the SOP’s guidance and leadership to refine and implement this process.

Again, thank you for your valued input.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Fadi Chehadé", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Fadi Chehadé
President & CEO, ICANN