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| RDS-WHOIS2 RTSubgroup Report: Plan & Annual Reports |
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| DRAFT FOR SUBGROUP USE TO DOCUMENT DRAFT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (IF ANY) |
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# Topic

Subgroup 1 - WHOIS1 Rec 15-16 Plan & Annual Reports is tasked with investigating, analyzing, and drafting recommendations (if needed) to address the following Review objective:

Consistent with ICANN’s mission and Bylaws, Section 4.6(e)(iv), the Review Team will (a) evaluate the extent to which ICANN Org has implemented each prior Directory Service Review recommendation (noting differences if any between recommended and implemented steps), (b) assess to the degree practical the extent to which implementation of each recommendation was effective in addressing the issue identified by the prior RT or generated additional information useful to management and evolution of WHOIS (RDS), and (c) determine if any specific measurable steps should be recommended to enhance results achieved through the prior RT’s recommendations. This includes developing a framework to measure and assess the effectiveness of recommendations, and applying that approach to all areas of WHOIS originally assessed by the prior RT (as applicable).

The specific [WHOIS1 Recommendation](https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/final-report-11may12-en.pdf) to be assessed by this subgroup appears below:



To address this review objective, the subgroup agreed to:

* Cross check with other subgroups about whether the Action Plan properly addressed the WHOIS1 recommendations; and
* Assess the effectiveness of the already-published WHOIS Annual Reports (e.g., relevance of provided information, quality of the underlying facts).

# Summary of Relevant Research

To conducts its research, all members of this subgroup reviewed the following background materials, posted on the [subgroup's wiki page](https://community.icann.org/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=71604726):

* + [WHOIS Review Team (WHOIS1) Final Report](https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/final-report-11may12-en.pdf) (2012) and [Action Plan](https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/implementation-action-08nov12-en.pdf)
	+ [WHOIS Review Team (WHOIS1) Implementation Reports](https://community.icann.org/display/WHO/WHOIS%2BReview%2BImplementation%2BHome), including
		- [Executive Summary of Implementation Report](https://community.icann.org/download/attachments/54691767/WHOIS%20Recs%201_16%2030Sept2016.pdf)
		- [Detailed implementation Report](https://community.icann.org/download/attachments/54691767/WHOIS%20Quarterly%20Summary%2031December2016.pdf)
	+ WHOIS1 Implementation Briefings on Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 15, 16: [PPT](https://community.icann.org/download/attachments/63145823/WHOIS1%20Implementation%20briefings%201%2C%202%2C%203%2C%206%2C%207%2C%209%2C%2015%2C%2016.pptx?version=1&modificationDate=1511776488000&api=v2), [PDF](https://community.icann.org/download/attachments/69279139/WHOIS%20Briefing%20-%2003October2017%20-%20V2.0.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1506780907000&api=v2)
	+ [Answers to RDS-WHOIS2 Questions on Implementation Briefings](https://community.icann.org/download/attachments/63145823/WHOIS1-Implementation%20Briefings_final.docx?version=1&modificationDate=1510566466000&api=v2)
	+ Documents cited in briefing on Recommendations 15-16 include
		- [ICANN Five Year Strategic Plan](https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/strategic-plan-2016-2020-10oct14-en.pdf)
		- [FY 2013 operating plan and budget](https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/adopted-opplan-budget-fy13-24jun12-en.pdf)
		- [FY14 Operating Plan and Budget](https://www.icann.org/en/about/financials/adopted-opplan-budget-fy14-22aug13-en.pdf)
		- FY[15](https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/adopted-opplan-budget-fy15-01dec14-en.pdf) Operating Plan and Budget
		- [FT 16](https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/adopted-opplan-budget-fy16-25jun15-en.pdf) Operating Plan and Budget
		- [ICANN FY 2017 Operating Plan and Budget](https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/adopted-opplan-budget-fy17-25jun16-en.pdf)
		- [FY 2018 operating plan and budget](https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/adopted-opplan-budget-fy18-15aug17-en.pdf)
		- [Action Plan](https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/implementation-action-08nov12-en.pdf) adopted by the Board
		- [2013 WHOIS Annual Report](https://whois.icann.org/en/file/improvements-annual-report-04nov13-en)
		- [2014 WHOIS Annual Report](https://whois.icann.org/en/file/improvements-annual-report-12dec14-en)
		- [2015 WHOIS Annual Report](https://whois.icann.org/en/file/2015-annual-report-whois-improvements)
		- [2016 WHOIS Annual Report](https://whois.icann.org/sites/default/files/files/improvements-annual-report-01sep17-en.pdf)

This subgroup also requested additional materials and briefings from the ICANN Org:

* [Written briefing on recommendations 15-16](https://community.icann.org/download/attachments/63145823/Written%20Implementation%20Request%20for%20Recommendations%2015_16.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1521191472507&api=v2)
* [Clarifications pertaining to operating plan and annual report](https://mm.icann.org/pipermail/rds-whois2-reports/2018-July/000023.html)

In addition, this subgroup agreed to base its analysis in part upon Subgroup 1 key findings for all other WHOIS1 Recommendations, to be posted here: <https://community.icann.org/x/3ARyB>

Finally, the subgroup applied the RDS-WHOIS2 review team's [agreed framework](https://community.icann.org/download/attachments/71604697/FinalRDS-WHOISRT2Effectivenes.docx?version=1&modificationDate=1519138360000&api=v2) to measure and assess the effectiveness of recommendations.

# Analysis & Findings

## Detailed and Conprehensive Plan

The ICANN Board adopted an [Action Plan](https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/implementation-action-08nov12-en.pdf) to implement the first WHOIS ReviewTeam recommendations on 8 November 2012, which outlined the ICANN Board's proposed action items to address WHOIS1 recommendations respectively, and the rationale behind those action items. To implement Rec #15, according to the [Written briefing on recommendations 15-16](https://community.icann.org/download/attachments/63145823/Written%20Implementation%20Request%20for%20Recommendations%2015_16.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1521191472507&api=v2), the Board agreed that gTLD WHOIS should be a strategic priority. The Board directed the CEO to incorporate a work plan for the improvement of WHOIS into the operating plan, and directed the CEO to provide resources and budget to carry-out these activities, to provide annual public reports on implementation of these activities and related efforts.

WHOIS work has been reflected in ICANN's annual operating plan, beginning with the fiscal year 2013 operating plan. In [FY 2013 operating plan and budget](https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/adopted-opplan-budget-fy13-24jun12-en.pdf), WHOIS Program was the fourth budgeted project ($969K) within ICANN, after IDN Variant Management Projects ($1,250K), New Compliance System/CRM ($1,200K), and Enhance Multi-lingual strategy ($980K). A list of various types of Whois initiatives were included in the WHOIS Program, including implementation of first WHOIS ReviewTeam recommendations regarding measures to increase accuracy, crafted studies to inform the implementation of these recommendations and a roadmap for additional WHOIS accuracy initiatives, technical work on the WHOIS protocol, and synthesis with contractual compliance activities and reporting.

The [FY14 Operating Plan and Budget](https://www.icann.org/en/about/financials/adopted-opplan-budget-fy14-22aug13-en.pdf) had a totally diffierent reporting format, and there was no indication of the exact budget and resources allocated for WHOIS Program. WHOIS work was reflected in 'The WHOIS core function/service &improvements Portfolio' in ICANN's annual operating plan and budget of [2015](https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/adopted-opplan-budget-fy15-01dec14-en.pdf), [2016](https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/adopted-opplan-budget-fy16-25jun15-en.pdf), [2017](https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/adopted-opplan-budget-fy17-25jun16-en.pdf) respectively, and in 'Registration Data Services (WHOIS) Portfolio' under objective 2.1 'Foster and Coordinate a Healthy, Secure, Stable, and Resilient Identifier Ecosystem' in [FY 2018 operating plan and budget](https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/adopted-opplan-budget-fy18-15aug17-en.pdf), with only a total budget indication.

The annual operating plan is the business plan for ICANN as a whole, and WHOIS imporovement is only part of it. Going through the above annual Operating Plan and Budget, there has been no, details of the implementation plan of the action items outlined in the Action Plan. The work plan, deliverables and reports with regards to implementation have been scattered among different action items, e.g. WHOIS ARS project, and some have been incorporated into other WHOIS initiatives and policy developments.

## Annual Status Reports

The implementation of the Action Plan was summarized as part of WHOIS annual reports. ICANN published the first [WHOIS Improvements Annual Report](https://whois.icann.org/en/file/improvements-annual-report-04nov13-enhttps%3A/whois.icann.org/en/file/improvements-annual-report-04nov13-en) on 4 Nov 2013. The Report provided an overview ofthe WHOIS1 recommendations and implementation activities, as well as links to deliverables for eachimplementation activity.The Annual Reports on WHOIS Improvements for [2014](https://whois.icann.org/en/file/improvements-annual-report-12dec14-en), [2015](https://whois.icann.org/en/file/2015-annual-report-whois-improvements) and [2016](https://whois.icann.org/en/file/2016-annual-report-whois-improvements) were produced by ICANN separately afterwards, which outlined the activities of all WHOIS policy related working streams. In each of the annual report, all implementation activities regarding the Board approved action plan were enumerated with links to deliverables.

The WHOIS Improvements Annual Report provids the overview of the WHOIS policy development, and could serve as a good reference of what has been done to improve Whois. So far, all the published WHOIS Improvements Annual Reportswere activity-based rather than outcome-based, and there was no the relevant information of figures and analyses included as recommended by Rec #16. There has been no review about the effectiveness of the implementation of the Action Plan in addressing the WHOIS1 recommendations as well.

The annual report for 2016 was published till 1 September 2017, and there has been no annual report afterwards. According to [clarifications pertaining to operating plan and annual report](https://mm.icann.org/pipermail/rds-whois2-reports/2018-July/000023.html) provided by ICANN Org, the annual report for 2016 showed completion of implementation of WHOIS1 recommendations, thus there will be no further annual reports.

# Problem/Issue

As mentioned in the subsection 3, the action items outlined in the Action Plan went into different implementation tracks, and the annual status reports were generated from different tracks as well. The annual status reports were more activty-based, without efficient underlying facts, figures and analyses as recommended by Rec #16. The overseeing of the different implementation tracks [place holder, pending ICANN Org's reply on the additional question arised during the plenary call on 19 July].

Addditionally, taking into account of [Subgroup 1 key findings on WHOIS1 Recommendations](https://community.icann.org/x/3ARyB) 1-14, to this subgroup, the plan and annual report were not organized in a methodical and coordinated way. The implementation of several WHOIS1 recommendations (e.g. Strategic Priority, Data Accuracy) failed to meet the objectives.Some action items went a long way towards the intended objective, e.g. Identify accuracy check of WHOIS ARS project, Across-Field Address Validation provision of the WHOIS Accuracy Program Specification in the 2013 RAA, and have not yet been addressed.There has been a prolonged process to regulate and oversee privacy and proxy service, which is still ongoing till today. There has been no effectiveness review and measurable outcomes of the implementation. As a result, the Whois improvement could not be measured.

# Recommendations

Recommendation: ICANN should conduct plan and reports in a measurable way. Metrics should be developed to track the effectiveness of the implementation of each recommendation. And impact evaluation of implementation should be included in the annual report.

Findings: See problem/issue above.

Rationale:The intention behind this recommendation is to ensure that the plan and report on implementation of recommendations generated by this Review Team be pragmatic and efficient.

Impact of Recommendation: Given plan and annual report is regular activity of ICANN anyway, this recommendation will not impose extra workload for ICANN. Metrics tracking will impact Registrar, Registry, Compliance Team, etc., while the whole community will benefit from the implementation of this recommendation.

Feasibility of Recommendation: The measuring of implementation should not be easy, the challenging part would be the design of the metrics.

Implementation:

The ICANN Board should take the lead to develop the structure and metrics for plan and report. A overview of the recommendations generated by this review team will be the ground for the design.The envisioned implementation timeline should be within 6 months.

Priority: [If only 5 recommendations could be implemented due to community bandwidth and other resource constraints, would this recommendation be one of the top 5? Why or why not?]

Level of Consensus