SPECIFIC REVIEWS PROCESS OVERVIEW

Introduction

The process for Specific Reviews consists of seven phases: Pre-Planning, Initialization and Selection, Planning, Conducting the Review, Board Consideration, Implementation, and Ongoing. The length of this entire process is approximately 48 months.

The Bylaws provide for four specific reviews: Accountability and Transparency Review (ATRT),[1] Security, Stability, and Resiliency Review (SSR),[2] Competition, Consumer Trust and Consumer Choice Review (CCT),[3] and Registration Directory Service Review (RDS).[4] ATRT, SSR, and RDS are on a five-year cycle, computed from the moment the ICANN Board passes a resolution to initiate the review and direct the community to establish a review team. This step begins the "Initialization & Selection" phase. CCT is conducted only "after a New gTLD Round has been in operation for one year".[5] All targeted timeframes for the different review phases are subject to a several factors. Many of these factors cannot be controlled by either the review team, the ICANN Board, or the ICANN organization; therefore, variances can be expected.

Process Phases and Descriptions

Phase 1: Pre-Planning   Targeted timeframe[1]: 2 months

Pre-Planning for a Specific Review entails the ICANN organization appointing a project lead. The project lead coordinates with ICANN departments and SO/AC leadership on the skills needed for the review, as well as its timeline, and potential topics to inform its scope.

The project lead prepares for initiation of the review by developing a project timeline, securing internal resources, identifying needed skills, and allocating the budget envelope. The project lead also gathers information and data related to the implementation of recommendations from the previous iteration of the review. Then they present that information to the review team.

Phase 2: Initialization and Selection   Targeted timeframe[1] - 6 months

The Initialization and Selection Phase of a Specific Review is where the ICANN Board passes a resolution to initiate the Review. The Board resolution also directs the ICANN community to establish a review team (RT) and, once composed, for the RT to draft its terms of reference and

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[1] Bylaws, Article 4, Section 4.6(b).

[2] Bylaws, Article 4, Section 4.6(c).

[3] Bylaws, Article 4, Section 4.6(d).

[4] Bylaws, Article 4, Section 4.6(e).

[5] Bylaws, Article 4, Section 4.6(d)(ii).

[1] All targeted timeframes based on Bylaw-mandated five-year cycle

work plan. ICANN organization[6] provides support throughout this process. The Board resolution marks the five-year countdown for the start of the next Review.

During this phase, ICANN organization publishes the call for volunteers and solicits applications from the ICANN community, including an indication of which SOs and ACs they seek nomination from. Each SO and AC separately evaluates applications and nominates its candidates for the RT based on its own processes. Each SO/AC may nominate up to seven applicants.

The SO/AC chairs then meet and make the final selection of the candidates to the RT, subject to the relevant provisions of the ICANN Bylaws (Article IV, Section 4.6 (a)(i)(A-C)).

The ICANN Board also selects one director or liaison as a member of the RT.

Following selection of the RT, ICANN organization announces the RT and its members, and the RT is formed.

A potential risk in this phase is the possibility of a lack of sufficient qualifications, diversity or representation of the ICANN community within the RT.

Phase 3: Planning   Targeted timeframe[1] - 6 months
During this phase, the RT develops its approach to the Review. The RT prepares the terms of reference and work plan, as requested by the ICANN Board. It also prepares its project plan, team structure, the topics to be addressed, the Review timeline, and its budget owners (a designated RT member). ICANN Bylaws and Operating Standards are consulted in addressing these elements.

For its part in the Planning Phase, ICANN organization communicates the project budget envelope, as derived through ICANN's annual budgeting process, to the RT. ICANN organization also coordinates the collection of RT members' statements, declarations of interest, and non-disclosure agreements (if needed).

The RT delivers its adopted Terms of reference and work plan to the ICANN Board. The ICANN Board receives the reports and confirms their adherence to ICANN's Bylaws and mission. This step concludes the Planning Phase of the process.

There is a risk in this phase that an unclear scope could lead to a duplication of work or non-alignment with relevant Bylaw provisions.

Phase 4: Conducting the Review   Targeted timeframe[1] - 12 months
Conducting the Review begins with the RT's data collection and analysis, including assessment of implementation of prior review recommendations. The RT consults with the ICANN community if and when appropriate.

The RT has the option to decide that third-party independent expertise is necessary to provide advice to the RT. If so, and if the budget allows, ICANN organization follows ICANN

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[6] ICANN's Multistakeholder Strategy and Strategic Initiatives department leads ICANN organization's coordination effort on Specific Reviews.

[1] All targeted timeframes based on Bylaw-mandated five-year cycle

procurement procedures to identify and engage the expert, in collaboration with the RT. The RT provides input into scope, selection criteria, milestones, and timeline for the intended work during the procurement process.

Once data collection and analysis are completed, the RT formulates its findings based on research, observations, and input.

The RT consults with ICANN organization subject matter experts regarding all initial findings, including feasibility of future implementation, validity of any problems detected, and potential conflict of the recommendations with existing policies or recommendations.

The RT formulates its recommendations based on inputs from the community and subject matter experts, as well as its research and analysis, briefings, and other documentation. The RT then checks its findings against the Review's Terms of reference, and drafts its report. During this phase, the ICANN Board and the ICANN organization can provide feedback to the RT.

Once the RT has prioritized its recommendations and aligned on its draft report, the ICANN organization publishes the report for public comment. The ICANN organization then compiles a report of public comments, and coordinates community consultation. The RT reviews the report of public comments and feedback from ICANN organization's subject matter experts and the ICANN Board. The RT then has the option to make modifications before publishing its final report. Depending on the substance of feedback received, the updated draft report can be submitted for another round of public comment

Following publication of its final report, the RT identifies one or two RT members to remain available for clarification through implementation planning. The RT disbands the larger team.

Throughout Phase 4, the RT provides periodic status updates to SO/AC leaders, and the Organizational Effectiveness Committee of the ICANN Board. Concurrently, ICANN organization publishes a Quarterly *Fact Sheet*, which includes information on volunteer participation, budget status, review progress, and other related information.

There are several potential risks during this phase including:
   - The risk that a qualified review team is not convened or the review takes longer than expected.
   - The risk that the RT's requests for resources exceed the available budget. In that case, the RT would need to seek ICANN Board approval for more funds.
   - The risk of a report or other publicly archived RT correspondence being published without proper redaction of confidential information.
   - The risk of the final report not adequately considering input received during the public comment period.

Phase 5: Board Consideration   Targeted timeframe[1] - 6 months

Acknowledgement of receipt of the Final RT Report by the ICANN Board signals the start of the Board Consideration Phase of the review. The Board directs ICANN organization to post the report for a final public comment period. ICANN organization then manages the public comment, and compiles a report of public comments following the close of the comment period.

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[1] All targeted timeframes based on Bylaw-mandated five-year cycle

ICANN organization produces an action plan. The action plan will include consideration for feasibility, resources, usefulness, budget, and timeline, with input and clarifications provided by one or more designated RT members, as needed.

The ICANN Board reviews the resulting action plan, along with the Final RT Report and the report of public comments. The ICANN Board then approves or rejects the recommendation(s) made, providing rationale for its decisions. Approval is accompanied by direction from the Board to ICANN organization or another appropriate group to begin implementation of the recommendations. The Board's decision marks the conclusion of the Board Consideration Phase of the reviews process.

A potential risk in this phase would be if the community were dissatisfied with the Board's action on the recommendation(s).

Phase 6: Implementation   Targeted timeframe[1] - 18 months
ICANN organization initiates the Implementation Phase of the Review by determining the detailed implementation timeline, budget, and resources, and then drafting the implementation plan.

The ICANN organization and ICANN community begin the implementation of recommendations, and continue with the implementation until it is completed.

If there are any issues identified during the implementation, the ICANN Board and ICANN organization assess the situation and determine the next course of action.

Ongoing, on both a quarterly basis and an annual basis, ICANN organization reports on the implementation progress to the Board and the community. ICANN organization follows standard operating procedures to monitor, maintain, and measure implementation progress, and to provide continuous maintenance.

A potential risk at this point would be if an impasse were reached due to issues being identified that hinder implementation from progressing, and the issues cannot be resolved. The Bylaws do not specify how such an impasse would be addressed, nor do they indicate how the community would participate in the process. However, the evolving Operating Standards could provide possibilities on how to overcome such an impasse.

Phase 7: Ongoing
At completion of implementation, the community and ICANN organization incorporate outcomes of implementation into standard operating procedures, as applicable.

[1] All targeted timeframes based on Bylaw-mandated five-year cycle