Introduction to the Draft ICANN Operating Plan
For Fiscal Year 2007-2008

This draft version of the ICANN 2007-2008 Operating Plan is being submitted for community input and feedback. Ultimately, this plan and an approved ICANN budget will guide ICANN's work and deliverables for the 2007-2008 fiscal year.

In accordance with ICANN's planning cycle, ICANN has developed its Strategic Plan during the first half of the present 2006-2007 fiscal year (July – December). After community consultation, the current Strategic Plan (see: http://www.icann.org/strategic-plan/consultation-process-2006-07/) was adopted in Sao Paolo in December, 2006. During the second half of the fiscal year, ICANN points its planning activities toward the annual Operating Plan and Budgeting, i.e., the one-year plan that works to accomplish the objectives set out in the three-year Strategic Plan.

A key element of the Operating Plan for 2006-2007 was a focus on projects. A key benefit of that approach was to better identify tasks, resources and deliverables of plan elements, as well as providing a proven management methodology for implementing them. In developing an Operating Plan this fiscal year, it was found that the sum of ICANN work could be better described by:
- Including "business as usual" activities. Most of ICANN work is included in these activities that are not project-related. Projects can't exist outside of the demands of this other work.
- Projects are undertaken to improve an existing activity or establish a new activity. Therefore each project is associated with an ICANN activity so that the benefits of the project can be quantified by improvements in performance.
- Identifying fewer undertakings as "projects." The formal project management methodology will then be applied only to the most resource intensive projects where those methods will improve efficiency. Other continuous improvement efforts are identified in the plan as an aspect of ongoing work.

The 2007-2008 Operating Plan, continues the project management approach, while explicitly identifying ongoing business activities of interest to the community. This plan identifies:

Activities: Specific deliverables or service elements provided by a functional area. (Example: IANA processing root zone change requests).

Standard/Metric: What the measure of success should be for that activity. (Example: Days to completion of a change request.) Due to the nature of the work, this standard or metric is often a qualitative statement of what ICANN intends to measure. ICANN will continue to identify quantitative measures for many of these activities over time.

Existing Work: Identifying specific initiatives under way that improve or add to an activity. (Example: significant formalisation of the contractual compliance processes.)

New Work: Identifying initiatives in the new fiscal year that will improve or add to an activity. (Example: IANA work to coordinate delegation request reporting.)

Projects: Work and tasks that rise to the level of a project to address a particular activity area. (Example: Implementation of the anticipated consensus policy for designation of new top-level domains.)

The complete plan is presented twice, organized from two different perspectives:

1. The first plan presentation is organized by ICANN functional area. This presentation aids understanding of how various activities are interrelated. Further, the interests of a particular constituency might fall within the domain of a specific ICANN function.
2. The second plan presentation is organized by strategic objective, mapped directly from ICANN's strategic plan. This presentation shows how ICANN activities support ICANN's strategic imperatives.

This plan will be updated and revised based on community feedback received during and after the ICANN meeting in Lisbon. The plan will then be costed to develop the annual expense budget that will be submitted for approval at the ICANN meeting in San Juan. Obviously, there will be some iteration between the Operating Plan set of activities and projects and the ICANN Budget – projects and activities will be amended/dropped/tailored to ensure the work provide an adequate return on investment and is adequately funded.

This Operating Plan intends to clearly describe: the totality of ICANN work in terms of business as usual and new projects, start to explicitly identify metrics, and enable better resource planning and budgeting. In preparing the 2008-2009 Operating Plan, it will be useful to review this approach, in order to provide for continual improvement of the planning process.