



What is ICANN?

ICANN is a not-for-profit, public-benefit organization formed in 1998. Its staff operates the Internet's Domain Name System, coordinates allocation and assignment of the Internet's unique identifiers, such as Internet Protocol addresses, accredits generic top-level domain (gTLD) name registrars, and helps facilitate the voices of volunteers worldwide who are dedicated to keeping the Internet secure, stable and interoperable. ICANN promotes competition in the domain name space and helps develop Internet policy.

How is ICANN organized?

At the heart of ICANN's policy-making is what is called a "multistakeholder model." This decentralized governance model places individuals, industry, non-commercial interests and government on an equal level. Unlike more traditional, top-down governance models, where governments make policy decisions, the multistakeholder approach used by ICANN allows for community-based consensus-driven policy-making. The idea is that Internet governance should mimic the structure of the Internet itself – borderless and open to all.

While the ICANN Board of Directors has the ultimate authority to approve or reject policy recommendations, Supporting Organizations (SOs) are responsible for developing and making policy recommendations to the Board. Advisory Committees (ACs) advise the ICANN Board and, in certain cases, can raise issues for policy development. The SO/ACs are described in more detail later in this booklet.

ICANN staff is responsible for executing and implementing policies developed by the ICANN community and adopted by the ICANN Board.

The ICANN Ombudsman is an independent, impartial and neutral person contracted to ICANN, with jurisdiction over problems and complaints made about decisions, actions or inactions by ICANN, the Board of Directors, or unfair treatment of a community member by ICANN staff, Board or a constituency body.

The Nominating Committee is a team of community volunteers responsible for the selection of eight ICANN Board members, and portions of the At-Large Advisory Committee, the Country Code Names Supporting Organization and the Generic Names Supporting Organization.



HOW CAN I VOICE MY OPINION?

At each ICANN meeting, anyone can make comments and ask questions on the main topics directly to the Board at the Public Forum. During the Public Forum, you may speak on behalf of your organization or as an individual.

The Public Forum usually lasts several hours on Thursday afternoon of every ICANN meeting. Commenters line up behind a microphone that is placed near the front of the room to ask a question or make a comment. Attendees are encouraged to be brief and concise to enable as many perspectives to be heard as possible. You don't have to be physically present to participate – you can follow along online via ICANN's Remote Participation services and submit questions or comments to be read out in the meeting room by a staff member.

You can also provide feedback through public comment periods. See page 4.

