ICANN Business Constituency (BC) Comment on
[Africa Regional Plan for Fiscal Years 2026-2030](#)
6-Jun-2025

Background

This document provides input from the ICANN Business Constituency (BC), from the perspective of business users and registrants. We advocate for ICANN policy that:

1. promotes end-user confidence because it is a safe place to conduct business
2. is competitive in the supply of registry and registrar and related services
3. is technically stable, secure and reliable.

General Comment:

The ICANN Business Constituency BC acknowledges the strategic ambition reflected in the Africa Regional Plan for FY2026 - 2030 and supports its alignment with ICANN's global Strategic Plan. We thank the team that worked on the development of the draft, particularly the 13 community members of the African Regional Plan Working Group (ARPWG 2025) and the ICANN Global Stakeholder Engagement (GSE) team for Africa. We recognize that the successful implementation of this plan will require strong coordination, stakeholder buy-in, and measurable impact across the continent. Below is the BC's position on each of the four strategic objectives, considering the business community's interests, priorities and expectations.

Strategic Objective 1: Evolve and Promote ICANN's Multistakeholder Model to Sustain its Inclusive Approach to Internet Governance.

The BC strongly supports the evolution and promotion of ICANN's multistakeholder model especially in underrepresented regions like Africa. For this model to remain robust, participation must not only be inclusive but also meaningful. The BC recommends the under listed;

1. Enhance outreach to African private sector actors, including MSMEs, to ensure their voices are heard in Internet governance debates
2. Support the capacity development programs that equip new stakeholders with the skills and knowledge to effectively participate in ICANN processes

3. Integration of business stakeholders into local Internet Governance Forums (IGFs) and ICANN At-Large structures to foster alignment between local and global Internet policy agendas.

In addition, we comment the following on specific sub-sections under **Section 3.1**.

- We recommend that the "Proposed Activities" section of Sub-goal III (3.1.1.3): *Foster an appealing environment for the next generation* include specific initiatives aimed at increasing the number of ICANN Fellows and NextGen participants from the African region. Examples would be
  - Working to get more ICANN in-person meetings in the African region
  - Engagement and awareness creation programs with African universities and youth groups about the Fellowship program
  - Work with Fellowship alumni from the African region to organize youth-targeted outreach programs.
- **Section 3.1.3.2 Subgoal: Strengthen collaborative efforts to promote the multistakeholder model**
  The BC generally supports the goal of building regional partnerships that promote and evolve the multistakeholder model. However, we understand that the multistakeholder model is promoted more through increased participation of diverse stakeholders, one of which is the business and commercial community. In this regard, we suggest that the African GSE team takes the following actions:
  - Look for a more sustainable source of funding to build more meaningful partnerships across Africa. The BC **opposes** the use of CROP funding for this purpose, as the CROP funding has an [already predefined purpose and procedures](#) of use.
  - Establish meaningful partnerships with commercial and business entities across Africa. As we have raised during our [2020 comment on the ICANN Africa Regional Plan for FY 2021-25](#), we recommend that the African GSE team "*Collaborates with Business Associations and Chambers of Commerce to boost business awareness and investment in the DNS industry*". Businesses are facing more diversified challenges and risks in cybersecurity now more than ever. We believe African businesses should step forward in policy discussions around the safety and stability of the DNS. We believe more decisive actions against DNS Abuse are required now more than ever. In this regard, we call for the African GSE team to partner with businesses and commercial entities across Africa to bring more participation in DNS policy and advice development.

Strategic Objective 2: Enhance Organizational Excellence

BC supports the goal of increasing ICANN org's operational efficiency and responsiveness in Africa. In doing so, we emphasize the need for;

1. Localized engagement mechanisms that address African business realities, such as limited bandwidth, language diversity and time zone challenges.
2. Clear performance benchmarks and KPIs for regional offices and engagement staff
3. Transparent feedback loops where stakeholders, including businesses, can assess and influence ICANN's regional operations and service delivery.
4. Regional Engagement in Africa - Need for Broader African Representation: BC suggests expanding ICANN Africa Engagement Offices to all regions of Africa, ensuring more equitable access and participation from underrepresented regions. Currently, the limited regional presence results in uneven outreach, capacity development and policy input.
5. ICANN Learn Courses in Internet Governance Schools - BC recommends that ICANN Learn courses be integrated into Internet Governance curricula globally to build capacity in a consistent and accessible manner.

Strategic Objective 3: Collaborate with Relevant Stakeholders to Evolve the Internet's Unique Identifier Systems

As a constituency focused on the secure and reliable use of the DNS, the BC calls for:

1. Closer collaboration with African businesses and registrars to expand the DNS industry and improve the adoption of gTLDs and ccTLDs.
2. Support for innovations such as Universal Acceptance (UA) and the promotion of local-language domain names that reflect the continent's linguistic diversity.
3. Regular consultations with commercial users and ISPs to ensure that the evolution of the Internet's unique identifiers meets the needs of African economies

● In particular to Section **3.3.1.2 Subgoal II: Proactively collaborate with relevant and diverse external stakeholders to promote Universal Acceptance**, we comment the following:

The BC recognizes the efforts of the African GSE team to promote UA Readiness and adopt IDN ccTLDs. We understand that effecting changes in policies and procedures requires a concerted effort between community members, policy makers/regulators and registry/registrars. The BC sees the importance of reassuring that national and regional

laws are kept in alignment to ICANN policies and procedures. We also believe the DNS business-user community plays an active role in the process of upholding DNS policies and practices to internationally acceptable standards.

To further enhance the efforts for Universal Acceptance and achieve the 2026-30 goals, we suggest that community consultations are made among end users and several key players of the DNS industry. To this end, we encourage the African GSE team to use events like the UA Day to create a space for active consultation between policy makers, ccTLD registrars and the end user community. We advise for more efforts to be made towards networking community members with the responsible policy making/reinforcing body and ccTLD registrars.

- In particular to Section **3.3.1.3 Subgoal III: Cultivate consumer choice, competition, inclusivity, and innovation**, we comment the following:

  The BC supports the goal of empowering digital consumers and entrepreneurs through expanding access and awareness to domain name opportunities. We believe under-served African regions should have increased access to domain name business opportunities through the new gTLD program.

  The BC is concerned that raising the required funds that enable businesses to apply for and profitably run a gTLD business is challenging in most under-served African regions. Self-evident to this is the low number of new gTLD registrations from Africa in the 2012 round (17 out of close to 2000 applications). To this end, we suggest the African GSE team explores more into other trajectories of investment such as joint ventures with investors and government organizations to increase the funding capability and profitability of new gTLD businesses. We further believe the Applicant Support Program (ASP) should be tailored towards supporting applicants not only during gTLD application periods but also throughout the life cycle of sustainably and profitably running the gTLD business.

Strategic Objective 4: Strengthen the Stability and Security of the Internet's Unique Identifier Systems

The BC emphasizes that security is a foundational requirement for business confidence in the digital economy. We advocate for:

1. Expanded DNSSEC and cybersecurity capacity building targeting businesses and technical operators.
2. Public-private partnerships that help develop incident response frameworks across African countries.
3. Greater emphasis on data resilience, DNS abuse mitigation, and secure routing protocols that safeguard the integrity of Internet infrastructure in the region.

In conclusion

The BC reaffirms its commitment to ICANN's mission and recognizes the Africa Regional Plan FY2026–2030 as a positive step toward a more inclusive and digitally empowered continent. We appreciate the collaborative efforts that have gone into developing this comprehensive draft and acknowledge the dedication to shaping Africa's digital future. The BC looks forward to continued engagement as the plan moves from draft to implementation, ensuring that the voice of business remains an integral part of the continent's Internet governance journey.

Summary

The BC welcomes the Africa Regional Plan FY2026 - 2030 and commends its alignment with ICANN's global strategic priorities. We underscore the importance of meaningful multistakeholder engagement, tailored capacity development and private-sector inclusion across Africa. The BC supports greater regional representation through expanded ICANN Africa Engagement Offices and the integration of ICANN Learn into Internet Governance education. We also call for localized strategies to improve DNS adoption, Universal Acceptance, and cybersecurity resilience. Ensuring operational excellence, inclusive policy processes, and secure infrastructure will be vital to advancing Africa's digital economy and sustaining ICANN's global legitimacy. The BC remains committed to contributing constructively to the plan's implementation.

This comment was drafted by Segun Omolosho and Asteway Negash. It was approved in accordance with our [Charter](#).