ICANN Business Constituency Factsheet

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) is a not-for-profit partnership of people from all over the world dedicated to keeping the Internet secure, stable, and interoperable. It promotes competition and develops policy on the Internet's unique identifiers. To reach another person on the Internet you must type an address into your computer - a name or a number. That address has to be unique so computers know where to find each other. ICANN coordinates these unique identifiers across the world.

The stable, predictable, and secure operation of the Internet is a critical success factor to all businesses—both large and small. Engaging with the Business Constituency (BC) at ICANN can offer helpful tips towards finding one's way into full engagement and participation in ICANN's policy decision making process. Through the BC, you'll learn about Internet policy that affects the business world, and how the Internet contributes to businesses like yours and mine—nationally, regionally, and globally.

ICANN is one of the world's most unique, and innovative approaches in multi stakeholder governance,

drawing together business, the technical community; civil society and NGOs; individuals; governments; and participants from international and intergovernmental entities to participate and collaborate to analyze challenges and issues; devise consensus, bottom up policy proposals, and manage and coordinate the Internet's unique indicators [domain names; IP addresses, root servers, protocols –technical elements upon which the Internet depends for secure and stable operations]. While they may sound mysteriously technical, their stable and secure operations is critical to online business. If the Internet, and the online world affect your business as a user, you belong at the BC, and you belong at ICANN.

We are business users of the Internet – individual entrepreneurs and micro enterprises, SMEs, large and global corporations, and associations and professional alliances of companies. The BC gives its members a significant platform for participation, engagement, policy analysis, and contribution to guide informed and accountable policy decisions and implementation.

The BC is not alone as a key Stakeholder group at ICANN, and learning more about the rest of ICANN's organizational structure and

how to be effective within ICANN is a core contribution of the BC's services to its members. We even decode all those challenging acronyms!

Involvement, engagement and leadership at all levels are critical to the effectiveness of the voice of business users within ICANN. **The BC advises and represents business user views and concerns in the development of policy that affects business directly, and in the broader governance of ICANN as an organization.** We also undertake outreach and participation into the broader business community; and many of our members are key leaders in the broader Internet governance debates. We have conducted awareness events this year in Latin America, MENA, Europe, United States and Africa. We also work throughout the year electronically to stay closely engaged in ICANN.

We ensure that there is open and frequent interaction for our members with the ICANN Government Advisory Committee and with the ICANN Board, as well as other stakeholders within ICANN. The BC has a role in electing two of the 21 members of the Generic Names Supporting Organisation (GNSO) policy Council; and in the selection of ICANN Board members, as do other parts of ICANN.

As a consensus driven, bottom-up decision-making organization, ICANN depends on a strong foundation of informed and committed stakeholders from all these groups. In short, we need you in ICANN.

Stable, predictable and secure operation of the Internet is a critical success factor to all businesses – large and small. The BC is working closely with ICANN toward strengthening outreach and participation and engagement with business users. Join us at any of our BC events and learn how we can help to 'demystify' ICANN and welcome you as an integral contributor to ICANN as a part of the BC.

Why should you join the Business Constituency?

ICANN is Important for Your Website and Business

BC's members engage both within ICANN, and outside to help to advance connecting users with content via the Internet. Coordinating domain name and IP addresses allocation are part of ICANN's core coordination functions. ICANN allocates top level names and has recently allocated over 1500 new names [also called "strings"] while maintaining the stability of the Internet. It has also prioritized allocation of non-Latin scripts in Korean, Chinese, Arabic and Cyrillic. The BC is engaged in the policy development process, and is now following the issues that accompany the rollout of all the new domain names, including any challenges in the domain name space related to fraud and misuse – key issues to legitimate businesses.

Do You Use E-Commerce and Deliver Online Services or Applications to Users?

All BC users are interested in ensuring a stable, reliable and resilient Internet and e-commerce platform for business. You can contribute to this through participating in ICANN, helping to make ICANN more effective and improving its accountability and transparency. Business users rely on a stable and secure Internet and ecommerce experience, one that serves their users and customers on a global basis. Through your participation in ICANN, and in the Business Constituency, your company will make a difference on behalf of business.

Help the Private Sector Continue to Lead in Charting the Course of the Internet Through ICANN

There is a real threat, without the voice of business users, that certain functions now performed by ICANN related to governance of domain names and IP addressing could be taken over by governments or become more 'intergovernmental' in their functioning or decision making. Any change from the private sector led, multistakeholder governance model embodied within ICANN could lead to a dramatic slowing down in decision making, and limit the voice of the commercial sector that has built and operates the Internet.

ICANN is part of an Internet Governance EcoSystem

The BC engages within ICANN in a cross community Working Group on Internet Governance and engages externally with other organizations to enhance the voice of business users.

About the BC in the GNSO

The BC is a member of the Commercial Stakeholders Group (CSG) in the Non-Contracted Parties House of ICANN's Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO). The BC was established as a constituency in 1999 and represents commercial users of the Internet.

The Generic Names Supporting Organization fashions (and over time, recommends changes to) Generic Top level Domains (gTLDs). GTLDs are usually recognized as the last few letters after the [dot], such as .com and .info; but now are widely different. Currently, there are now approximately 1500 new gTLDs on the Internet. Achieving this expansion of the "names" space was complicated and time consuming. Along with others, the BC is now engaged in assessing the effectiveness of the policies that led to this expansion. For more information about the GNSO and their policy work in relation to gTLDs, visit **gnso.icann.org.**

ICANN Public Meetings

The BC hosts face to face meetings during ICANN Public Meetings held in various cities around the world. For more information about the next ICANN Public Meeting, visit **meetings.icann.org.**

How to find out more about the BC @ ICANN

www.bizconst.org or contact the BC Secretariat: **info-bc@icann.org** or **info@bizconst.org**

How to become a BC member

- Visit our website and download the member application form.
- Review our Charter which describes the purpose of the BC. We represent the users of the ICANN unique identifiers – domain names, IP addresses.
- If you have questions about the membership form, or the activities of the BC, please email our Secretariat at **info-bc@icann.org**, and a member of the Outreach Committee will be in touch with you.

Useful Links

BC Charter: www.bizconst.org/charter.htm
BC Members: www.bizconst.org/members.htm
Join the BC: www.bizconst.org/joinus.htm
Acronym Helper: www.bizconst.org/glossary.htm