Project Overview for the End User Survey RFP

Request for Proposal

14 January 2022

1   INTRODUCTION

1.1   About this Document

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers organization ("ICANN org") is soliciting proposals to identify a supplier qualified to develop and conduct a survey to assess the end-user's experience with the Internet.

This document provides an overview of the Request for Proposal ("RFP"). It aims to provide background and pertinent information regarding the requirements for responding to the RFP. The RFP itself comprises this overview as well as other documents that are hosted in the ICANN Sourcing (SciQuest) tool. Indications of interest are to be received by emailing End.User.Survey-RFP@icann.org by 23:59 UTC on 7 February 2022.

Complete proposals must be electronically submitted by 23:59 UTC on 7 February 2022 using the ICANN org sourcing tool (SciQuest), access to which will be granted after receipt of an indication of interest to the email address above.

1.2   About the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)

The ICANN org is a non-profit public benefit corporation dedicated to preserving the operational security and stability of the Internet; to promoting competition; to achieving broad representation of global Internet communities; and to developing policy appropriate to its mission through bottom-up, consensus-based processes. More specifically, the ICANN org:

1. Coordinates the allocation and assignment of the four sets of unique identifiers for the Internet, which are
   a.   Domain names (forming a system referred to as the Domain Name System, or "DNS")
   b.   Internet Protocol ("IP") addresses
   c.   Autonomous System ("AS") numbers
   d.   Protocol port and parameter numbers.
2. Coordinates the operation and evolution of the DNS root name server system.
3. Coordinates policy development reasonably and appropriately related to these technical functions.

See www.icann.org for more information.

2   SCOPE

2.1   Project Background

The At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC), in collaboration with over 250 At-Large Structure organizations across the globe, acts in the best interest of individual end-users within the ICANN community and the context of ICANN Policy Development. Advocating for the interests of end-users, the ALAC advises on the activities of ICANN, including Internet policies developed by ICANN's Supporting Organizations.

As part of their ongoing efforts to gain knowledge of issues of interest to individual end users, the ALAC is seeking to collect the perspectives of targeted end users on the topics of Universal Acceptance (UA) and Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) through an end-user survey that would include professional design, distribution of questions, gathering of responses and provision of the data results and initial analysis.

UA is a fundamental requirement for a truly multilingual and digitally inclusive Internet. UA ensures that all valid domain names, including long new TLDs and IDNs, and all valid email addresses, including those in local languages and scripts, can be used by all Internet-enabled applications, devices, and systems. Technically, they must accept, validate, store, process, and display all valid domain names and all valid email addresses consistently, and correctly.

UA-ready websites, applications, and services lead to better user experiences. When a company is UA-ready, email addresses in any script from any domain name can be used. When a site is UA-ready, it will allow customers with new TLDs and IDNs to successfully use the site and its forms.

Issues such as UA, string confusion and semantic expectation are areas where more knowledge would be helpful to the ICANN community. For example, **the research, conducted by the CCT Review Team[1], revealed an individual user preference for a more semantic web**, where the generic Top Level Domain (gTLD) and IDN country code Top Level Domain (ccTLD) is more closely related to the purpose of the corresponding websites. This is especially true in otherwise "highly regulated" areas such as finance and healthcare. One could expect these preferences to vary by region, culture, gender and other factors and knowing them would allow the ALAC to even better represent these interests.

At the same time, the introduction of new generic top-level domains (gTLDs) and IDN ccTLDs into the Internet ecosystem through the New gTLD Program has enabled the

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[1] The review team for the CCT Review ("CCT Review Team") examined the extent to which the expansion of gTLDs has promoted competition, consumer trust and consumer choice. It also assessed the effectiveness of the New gTLD Round's application and evaluation process, as well as the safeguards put in place to mitigate issues arising from the New gTLD Round.

largest expansion of the Domain Name System (DNS). In addition to fostering innovation, competition, and consumer choice in the domain name industry, this expansion has unlocked the potential to reach communities and users around the world that face linguistic barriers to the Internet.

By allowing users to access the Internet in their chosen online identities and local languages (non-ASCII characters and scripts), private sectors, governments, and civil societies have the ability to better serve their communities and take advantage of significant business opportunities.

The At-Large community is seeking to increase the knowledge and understanding of how end users use IDNs and face Universal Acceptance challenges. Over a series of meetings, community members evaluated relevant topics and questions, utilizing ICANN org resources and expertise. The selected End User Survey topic (IDNs and UA), is of significant interest to the ALAC/At-Large community and ICANN.

An At-Large Individual Internet User Poll
The topics of UA and IDNs are the focus of the poll. The poll will allow ALAC to collect the perspectives of targeted end users about IDNs and UA in Hindi language, in selected regions of India, within the limitations of the estimated support allocation.

A polling effort would necessarily include:

1. Identification of key issues
2. Professional question construction
   a. To facilitate demographic distinction
   b. To minimize bias
3. Fielding a professional survey
4. Provision of data and initial data analysis

Within the At-Large, an End User Survey Working Party (EUS-WP) has been formed to provide additional guidance to the survey provider to be selected via this RFP.

2.2 Objectives

The objective of this RFP is to identify a qualified provider or providers to design and conduct a survey to assess an end user's experience with the Internet. By surveying specific respondent groups identified by the At-Large working party, ICANN aims to bolster the data collection efforts of At-Large related to end-users on the topic of Internationalized Domain Names and Universal Acceptance.

Through the issuance of this RFP, the ICANN org Policy Development Support function solicits proposals from qualified suppliers for the provision of the services.

2.3 Scope of Work

The selected provider(s) will be expected to closely consult and collaborate with the ALAC/At-Large End User Survey Working Party and ICANN staff throughout the duration of the project, including participation in various working sessions via remote participation.

The scope of work is expected to include the following:

- Demonstrable understanding of the assignment
- Familiarity with IDNs and UA required (knowledge and expertise preferred), surveying in India
- Examination of relevant documentation, reports, and records relevant to gathering the required data
- Provision of a detailed project management plan, including timeline indicating the estimated survey launch dates, and how long each phase of survey design, implementation, and report of result will take
- Development and design of survey, incorporating individual respondent selection criteria and criteria identified by the At-Large working party
- Identification of methods for reaching the specific respondent groups (estimated two or three) identified by the At-Large working party, especially for target groups that include potential respondents not familiar with ICANN or ALAC
- Development of either a master survey, which can be appropriately customized (e.g. additions, modifications, or deletions of suggested draft questions) for each respondent group or multiple surveys, each targeting a different respondent group. Whichever method is used, questions must be clear and targeted appropriately to cover the At-Large working party's questions for which the data is being sought; survey should be in Hindi (and translated to English), unless otherwise expressly stated in the RFP requirements
- Development of survey questions (estimated 10 to 12 – final number to be determined) based on guidance, input and suggested draft questions from the At-Large End User Survey Working Party and ICANN staff, so as to generate as many useful responses as possible
- Proposal of a suitable methodology and tools to execute the survey(s)
- Administration of a survey in accordance with industry best practices
- Administration of the survey in accordance with proposed timeline and methods
- Provision of updates periodically to keep the At-Large working party and ICANN staff informed of progress
- Present to the At-Large working party and ICANN staff detailed findings and initial analysis of data in English.

3   SELECTION CRITERIA

The decision to select a provider as an outcome of this RFP will be based on, but not limited to, the following selection criteria:

1.   Demonstrated understanding of the assignment

2.   Knowledge and expertise
   a.   Demonstrated experience in conducting similar types of studies
      i.   in India
      ii. in the Hindi language
      iii. Including rural respondents
      iv. Survey design
   b.   Basic knowledge of ICANN functions, the DNS, the domain name registration process and public use of the Internet
      i.   Knowledge of IDNs
      ii. Knowledge of unicode/local language computing/localization
   c.   Geographic and cultural diversity, multilingualism (especially diversity in written scripts)
   d.   Suitability of proposed CVs
      i.   Fluency in English and Hindi
      ii. Experience in India (particularly rural areas)
      iii. Experience with those *not* using the internet
3.   Proposed methodology
   a.   Design approach
      i.   Clearly articulated rationale for proposed methodology.
      ii. The methodology ensures that a statistically significant sample of public use of (and satisfaction with) the Internet will be examined.
      iii. Data collection methodology, analysis and presentation tools are appropriate and accessible to ICANN staff and community.
      iv. Proposal to include how the provider will ensure sufficiently diverse population (geographic, economic, educational, age demographic)
      v.   Knowledge and experience in survey design.
   b.   Implementation approach
      i.   Suitable project management plan, including proposed timeline.
      ii. Engagement model requires appropriate levels of coordination with ICANN ALAC-designated representatives.
      iii. Level of responsibility for designated key staff.
      iv. Experience in conducting surveys.

4.   Flexible approach, including but not limited to meeting the timeline by launching work in March 2022 and provision of data and initial data analysis by May 2022, allowing for shifting definitions and incorporating community input.

5.   Availability of raw data and the license to publish that data in raw form for the ICANN community.

6.   A demonstrated understanding of and commitment to ICANN's requirements for transparency and accountability. See: https://www.icann.org/resources/accountability

7.   Reference checks (see template); both for applicants and any partner firms.

8.   Financial health

9.   Conflict of interest (see template)

10. Proposals should demonstrate having served in territories of similar size and demographics

11. Equal opportunity - Encourage proposals from minority- and women-owned companies, non-profit organizations, and non-governmental organizations.

4   BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS

In order to be considered, providers must demonstrate their ability to meet the following business requirements:

A.   Ability to provide a complete response based on the specifications of ICANN org by the designated due date (see below).

B.   Availability to participate in finalist presentations via conference call / remote participation (see below).

C.   Ability to execute a professional services agreement using ICANN org's Contractor Consulting Agreement (see attached).

D.   Ability to begin work and complete all project work deliverables as per the timeline described (see below).

E.   Ability to conduct periodic status update calls during survey(s), frequency to be determined.

F.   Ability to develop work methods, data-gathering mechanisms, and evaluation/assessment approaches as appropriate for the activity.

G.   Ability to maintain confidentiality around sensitive data and to execute a Non-Disclosure Agreement.

H.   Ability to conduct work in a collaborative manner using remote tools.

I.   Ability to work efficiently and effectively under pressure and a stringent timeline.

J.   Ability to meet the following project activity and deliverable milestones (Note: the ICANN org reserves the right to modify the timeline at any time as necessary):

Activity/Deliverable	Estimated Dates
1. Project kickoff	18 February - 18 March 2022
2. Working session via remote participation with the ICANN org project team, At-Large working party, and the ICANN Staff to discuss work plan, timeline, methodology, and survey targets, design, and questions	18 March 2022
3. **Deliverable 1: Delivery of draft inception report**, which should include project work plan, detailed methodology, survey targets, outreach plan, and proposed survey design and questions, etc.	1 April 2022
4. Working session via remote participation with the ICANN org project team, At-Large working party, and ICANN org to discuss the draft inception report and finalize survey(s) for launch	12 April 2022
5. **Deliverable 2: Launch End User survey(s)**	2 May 2022
6. Working session via remote participation with ICANN org project team, At-Large working party, and ICANN Staff to the preliminary findings of the End User survey(s)	24 May 2022
7. Close End User Survey	1 June 2022
8. Working session via remote participation with the ICANN org project team, the At-Large working party and the ICANN Staff to discuss the draft report for the End User survey findings	7 June 2022
9. **Deliverable 3: Delivery of final report for End user survey findings**	**30 June 2022**
10. Working session via remote participation with the ICANN org project team, the At-Large working party and the ICANN Staff to discuss the final report of end-user survey findings	30 June 2022
11. Finalization of all deliverables – target date	30 June 2022

5   RFP TIMELINE

The following dates have been established as milestones for this RFP. The ICANN org reserves the right to modify or change this timeline at any time as necessary.

Activity	Estimated Dates
RFP published	14 January 2022
Participants to indicate interest in submitting RFP proposal	14 January - 7 February 2022
Participants to submit any questions via ICANN Sourcing tool	21 January 2022
ICANN responds to participant questions	28 January 2022
Participant proposals due by	7 February 2022 23:59 UTC

| Evaluation of responses | 7 - 18 February 2022 |
| Final evaluations, contracting and award | by 18 March 2022 |

6   TERMS AND CONDITIONS

General Terms and Conditions

1. Submission of a proposal shall constitute Respondent's acknowledgment and acceptance of all the specifications, requirements and terms and conditions in this RFP.
2. All costs of preparing and submitting its proposal, responding to or providing any other assistance to ICANN in connection with this RFP will be borne by the Respondent.
3. All submitted proposals including any supporting materials or documentation will become the property of ICANN. If Respondent's proposal contains any proprietary information that should not be disclosed or used by the ICANN org other than for the purposes of evaluating the proposal, that information should be marked with appropriate confidentiality markings.

Discrepancies, Omissions and Additional Information

1. Respondent is responsible for examining this RFP and all addenda. Failure to do so will be at the sole risk of the Respondent. Should Respondent find discrepancies, omissions, unclear or ambiguous intent or meaning, or should any question arise concerning this RFP, Respondent must notify the ICANN org of such findings immediately in writing via e-mail no later than three (3) days prior to the deadline for bid submissions. Should such matters remain unresolved by the ICANN org, in writing, prior to Respondent's preparation of its proposal, such matters must be addressed in Respondent's proposal.
2. The ICANN org is not responsible for oral statements made by its employees, agents, or representatives concerning this RFP. If Respondent requires additional information, Respondent must request that the issuer of this RFP furnish such information in writing.
3. A Respondent's proposal is presumed to represent its best efforts to respond to the RFP. Any significant inconsistency, if unexplained, raises a fundamental issue of the Respondent's understanding of the nature and scope of the work required and of its ability to perform the contract as proposed and may be cause for rejection of the proposal. The burden of proof as to credibility rests with the Respondent.
4. If necessary, information supplemental to this RFP will be provided to all prospective Respondents receiving this RFP. All supplemental information issued by the ICANN org will form part of this RFP. ICANN is

not responsible for any failure by prospective Respondents to receive supplemental information.

Assessment and Award

1. The ICANN org reserves the right, without penalty and at its discretion, to accept or reject any proposal, withdraw this RFP, make no award, waive or permit the correction of any informality or irregularity, or disregard any non-conforming or conditional proposal.
2. The ICANN org may request a Respondent to provide further information or documentation to support Respondent's proposal and its ability to provide the products and/or services contemplated by this RFP.
3. The ICANN org is not obliged to accept the lowest priced proposal. Price is only one of the determining factors for the successful award.
4. The ICANN org will assess proposals based on compliant responses to the requirements set out in this RFP, any further issued clarifications, and consideration of any other issues or evidence relevant to the Respondent's ability to successfully provide and implement the products and/or services contemplated by this RFP and in the best interests of the ICANN org.
5. The ICANN org reserves the right to enter into contractual negotiations and, if necessary, modify any terms and conditions of a final contract with the Respondent whose proposal offers the best value to the ICANN org.

Appendix A: ICANN At-Large Review RFP: Qualitative Questionnaire

- ● ALAC Questionnaire
- ● Conflict of Interest (COI)
- ● Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA)
- ● ICANN Contract