Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2019-2023

January 2019

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Executive Summary

.au Domain Administration Ltd (auDA) is the administrator and industry self-regulatory policy body for the .au country code Top Level Domain (.au ccTLD), one of the most trusted and secure domains in the world.

auDA is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, which operates under Terms of Endorsement from the Australian Government. The International Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) – the global organisation responsible for the coordination and administration of the Internet – has delegated the management of the .au ccTLD to auDA, under a sponsorship agreement. auDA's role as the administrative authority of the .au ccTLD makes it a custodian of the .au namespace, a key component of Australia's digital economy, to ensure it is administered effectively and in the interests of all Australian Internet users.

Following a comprehensive 2017/18 review into auDA led by the Department of Communications and the Arts, auDA has developed a public Stakeholder Engagement Strategy to articulate how it will engage with stakeholders in all levels of operation and decision making (as per recommendations 18-23 of the review).

The purpose of this strategy is to build trust and confidence in .au and in auDA, and to facilitate decision-making processes by outlining the principles and supporting frameworks for regular, multi-stakeholder engagement between auDA, its stakeholders and the Australian and global Internet community.

auDA's Stakeholder Engagement Strategy is multi-faceted and stakeholder-centric. It is underpinned by multi-stakeholder engagement principles based on values adopted by ICANN and the Internet Society. Multistakeholder includes the full participation of governments (State and Federal), the private sector, civil society (http://www.un.org/en/sections/resources-different-audiences/civil-society/), the technical community, academia, and Internet users in their respective roles and responsibilities. auDA is committed to ensuring its stakeholder engagement process encompasses its stakeholders in an open, efficient and transparent manner (with respect to any relevant confidentiality arrangements that exist).

auDA's stakeholders are categorised into five groups – members, community, business, government and international. Each stakeholder group has bespoke interests which auDA intends to understand and incorporate better into its decision-making processes.

auDA's Stakeholder Engagement Strategy is an integrated four-step process which utilises a range of modes of engagement to engage with stakeholders. These modes of engagement vary in degree, depending on context, time available from and interests of stakeholders.

auDA needs to balance the conflicting requirements of its many stakeholders and where needed be capable to chart a course where the interests of stakeholders are appropriately taken into account in solutions that provide a net benefit to the whole Australian and global Internet community.

The Stakeholder Engagement Strategy provides transparency in relation to auDA's proposed operating rhythm. This operating rhythm describes how auDA will make its decisions using information collected from and developed with stakeholders during the engagement process. auDA commits to embracing the 'if not, why not?' philosophy in providing stakeholders with reasoning, when it does not follow the advice of a particular stakeholder.

auDA is committed to improving the effectiveness of its stakeholder engagement over time and has developed a range of KPIs to track its performance against this strategy, as articulated in the separate Transparency and Accountability Framework. Ultimately, it is for auDA's stakeholders to decide if stakeholder engagement is appropriate and effective, and to guide our quest for improvement.

auDA has high aspirations for its Stakeholder Engagement Strategy. By 2023 it expects to be a global leader in Internet governance multi-stakeholder management, consistent with the stakeholder engagement roadmap described in this strategy. auDA will invest in the skills and capability necessary to achieve such ambitions and has a recruitment and capacity building plan to match its Stakeholder Engagement Strategy.

auDA strives to make progress such that even when stakeholders tell us that they may not always agree with our decisions or approach, they will still agree that the process has been **robust**, **transparent** and **fair**.

1(a) Introduction and Purpose

What is auDA?

.au Domain Administration Ltd (auDA) is the administrator and industry self-regulatory policy body for the .au country code Top Level Domain (.au ccTLD), one of the most trusted and secure domains in the world. The .au domain is a critical part of Australia's digital infrastructure. It is a prized national asset, a source of competitive advantage for the Australian businesses, individuals and organisations that rely on it, and an integral component for shaping Australia's future in the digital, mobile and 4th Industrial Revolution world.

The Commonwealth of Australia has endorsed auDA as the appropriate organisation to hold the delegation of authority by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) for administrative authority of the .au ccTLD. auDA promotes, administers and continuously builds trust in the .au ccTLD brand, a domain identity that instils credibility and assurance in the Australian organisations that use it.

Government has therefore entrusted auDA with a public interest role in Australia's digital infrastructure, one that comes with a responsibility to be effective in engaging, listening to and acting on behalf of a wide stakeholder base.

auDA's role

auDA is the custodian of the .au namespace, a key component of Australia's digital economy. It is responsible for effectively administering the .au ccTLD in the interests of all Australian Internet users. In this respect its mission is to be a responsible and effective manager and promoter of the .au ccTLD. auDA's long-term success will be determined by the value of the .au brand. This brand will only be valued if it is trusted by the Internet community, indicated by whether Australian businesses decide to opt

for a .au domain or an alternative. Choosing the .au option will depend on the value proposition which .au provides and this must be drawn from values of trust, security, certainty, and ease of doing business. auDA must embrace the challenge of making such 'moments of truth' count as much as the whole experience of being a .au domain user, so that .au domains are selected in favour of other domains when performing an Internet search, and continue to provide satisfaction thereafter.

The importance of stakeholder engagement

A critical aspect of auDA's role is therefore to have open and transparent relationships with the stakeholders that make up Australia's society. Given the dynamism and uncertainties associated with the growth of the Internet, and its increasing socio-economic importance, an active and engaged multi-stakeholder approach is a must. auDA's operating rhythm must centre around a multi-stakeholder model of engagement, i.e. a clear, systematic and efficient way to facilitate day-to-day engagement with its stakeholders. auDA recognises that it must make important changes to attain the engagement required, starting with a clear plan and including programmes to develop its capabilities, skills and organisational structure to sustain stakeholder engagement, and become admired for it.

This Stakeholder Engagement Strategy (SES) represents a foundation from which auDA intends to create an industry-leading approach to multi-stakeholder management. Even when final, this should be seen as a 'live' document and can therefore be amended and updated as required where areas for improvement have been identified.

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1(a) Introduction and Purpose (cont'd)

Multi-Stakeholder Internet Governance

Multi-stakeholderism involves governments, the private sector, and civil society engaging in co-governance and decision making.

auDA's Stakeholder Engagement Strategy is multi-faceted and stakeholder-centric. It is underpinned by engagement principles consistent with those adopted by the Internet Society* including:

- Open, inclusive and transparent participation
- Consensus-based decision making
- Collective Stewardship and empowerment
- Pragmatic and evidence based approaches
- Voluntarism
- Permissionless innovation

Purpose of the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

This is a Stakeholder Engagement Strategy drafted by auDA in January 2019.

The purpose of this document is to outline the principles and supporting frameworks for regular, multi-stakeholder engagement between auDA, its stakeholders and the Australian and global Internet communities more broadly. Increased engagement between auDA and its stakeholders is paramount to protecting and enhancing the future of the .au ccTLD.

The Stakeholder Engagement Strategy supports auDA's Strategic Plan 2019-2023 and should be read in conjunction with auDA's Strategic Plan, Accountability and Transparency Framework and other governing documents.

The Strategy sets out the framework to fulfil the ambitions of the stakeholder engagement roadmap referred to at the end of this document. The approach to stakeholder engagement outlined in this document includes:

- auDA's stakeholders;
- engagement principles;
- stakeholder engagement process, including modes of engagement of auDA's operating rhythm;
- stakeholder engagement success measures; and
- stakeholder engagement roadmap.

The degree of transparency that auDA will maintain with its stakeholders is of central importance to ensuring auDA and the .au ccTLD remain trusted by the Australian Internet community. In this spirit, the document outlines auDA's commitment to a philosophy of '**if not, why not?**' providing stakeholders with clarity and transparency in regards to decision-making outcomes, when it does not follow the advice of a particular stakeholder.

This document represents a Stakeholder Engagement Strategy which is in-draft, upon which auDA will seek stakeholder input through a wide, open and engaging series of consultations. These consultations will include government stakeholders, including the Department of Communications and the Arts.

* Source: Internet Society website, https://www.internetsociety.org, Policy Brief: Internet Governance, Oct 2015, , https://www.internetsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/ISOC-PolicyBrief-InternetGovernance-20151030-nb.pdf

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1(b) Australia's Internet in Context

With a rapidly expanding digital economy, there is a need in Australia for a trusted custodian of the .au ccTLD, which can not only foster growth in the Internet space and address the interests of a broad stakeholder base, but also provide security and protection to Internet users. auDA is that custodian, and a proactive and strong engagement philosophy, which encourages openness and collaboration, is key to allowing auDA to achieve its vision for the .au ccTLD.

Enabling secure growth in Australia's digital economy

The Internet is a core component of the global economy and everyday life – over two-thirds of people with Internet access (globally) say they cannot imagine a life without the Internet.[1] Australia is no exception – the Australian Internet is the backbone of Australia's digital economy and the Internet has implications for Australia's GDP, trade competitiveness, job growth, security, privacy and trust:

- Continued growth in .au ccTLDs and Australia's digital economy provides the prospect of an additional 4% growth in Australia's GDP between 2018 and 2023 (according to industry analysis), and to generate over 200,000 employment opportunities. [2]

- At the same time, a technologically-enabled and digitally connected world introduces a range of security risks for the Australian Internet – the number of targeted cyber attacks in Australia increased by 80% in 2017-18.[3]

- With increasing amounts of personal data online, 38% of Australians believe their online privacy is out of their own control, with over 1 million Australians subject to identity crime each year.[4,5]

To foster this growth, auDA seeks to facilitate the opportunities and environment the Australian digital economy requires to grow and remain secure.

Enabling growth in .au registrations

There is scope for a greater degree of penetration of Internet usage in Australia especially from a small and medium business perspective.

Approximately 49% of small businesses in Australia do not currently own a domain for a website [6]. This has led to a lower density of penetration of the .au ccTLD in Australia, where there are approximately 8 persons per domain name when compared to peer nations such as New Zealand and the United Kingdom, where there are approximately 6 persons per domain (.nz only excluding .tk in New Zealand, .uk only in United Kingdom).[7]

Social media and marketplace platforms such as Facebook, Amazon and eBay also offer services which are competitive with the .au ccTLD, offering small businesses an online micro-site presence through the .com generic TLD (gTLD).
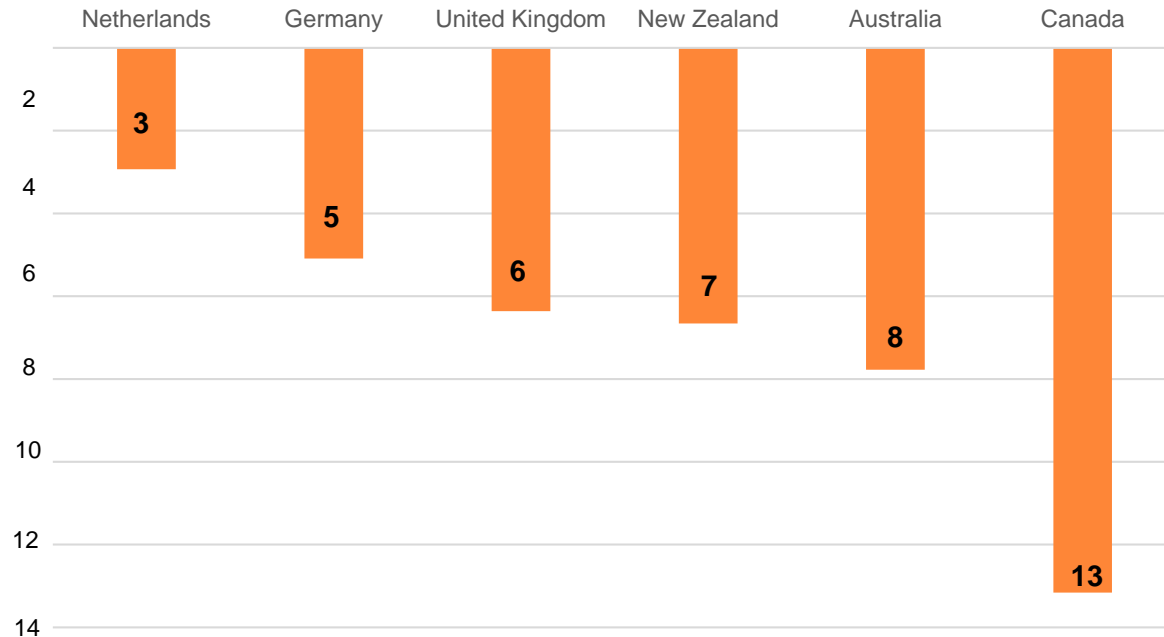
There is potential for the .au ccTLD space to enhance services to current .au users, as well as to grow the footprint by registering a greater proportion of small and medium businesses in Australia, for example in targeting better uptake and penetration across different socio-economic, ethnic and remote groups and communities throughout Australia.

auDA, must ensure the value of the .au domain name is communicated to and understood by Australian households and businesses. Helping businesses understand the value of .au websites (in terms of trust, security and accessibility) can result in a greater number of websites with a registered .au domain, and therefore a greater number of stakeholders for auDA to engage with in future decision-making processes.

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1(b) Australia's Internet in Context (cont'd)

Figure: Persons per ccTLD count, by country, 2017/18

	Netherlands	Germany	United Kingdom	New Zealand	Australia	Canada
	3	5	6	7	8	13

Note: the United States has been omitted from this chart as .com gTLD and .us ccTLD counts are not reflective of US-administered domain penetration.

1: 'Life Without the Internet', 2016. Accessed online at https://www.ipsosglobaltrends.com/life-without-the-internet/
2: Australian Computer Society, 2018. 'Australia's Digital Pulse 2018'. Accessed online at https://www.acs.org.au/content/dam/acs/acs-publications/aadp2018.pdf
3: '2018 state of cyber resilience' report. Accessed online at https://www.accenture.com/au-en/insights/security/2018-state-of-cyber-resilience-index
4: Department of Home Affairs. 'Identity Crime in Australia – infographic'. Accessed online at https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/crime/Documents/infographic-identity-crime-australia.pdf
5: University of Sydney, 2017. 'Majority of Australians say online privacy beyond their control'. Accessed online at https://sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2017/11/27/majority-of-australians-say-online-privacy-beyond-their-control.html
6: Telstra, 2018. 'Small business intelligence report'. Accessed online at https://smarterbusiness.telstra.com.au/2018-telstra-small-business-intelligence-report
7: Based on information collected from https://domain-recht.de/domain-statistiken

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1(c) auDA's Responsibilities

auDA has a range of responsibilities, prescribed by three separate but interconnected mandates - Terms of Endorsement (ToE) from the Australian Government, its sponsorship agreement with ICANN, and the auDA Constitution.

The **ToE** require auDA to:

- Ensure stable, secure and reliable operation of the .au domain space

- Respond quickly to matters that compromise DNS security

- Promote principles of competition, fair trading, and consumer protection

- Operate as a fully self-funding and not-for-profit organisation

- Actively participate in national and international technical and policy namespace fora

    - to ensure that Australia's interests are represented, and

    - to identify trends and developments relevant to the administration of the .au namespace

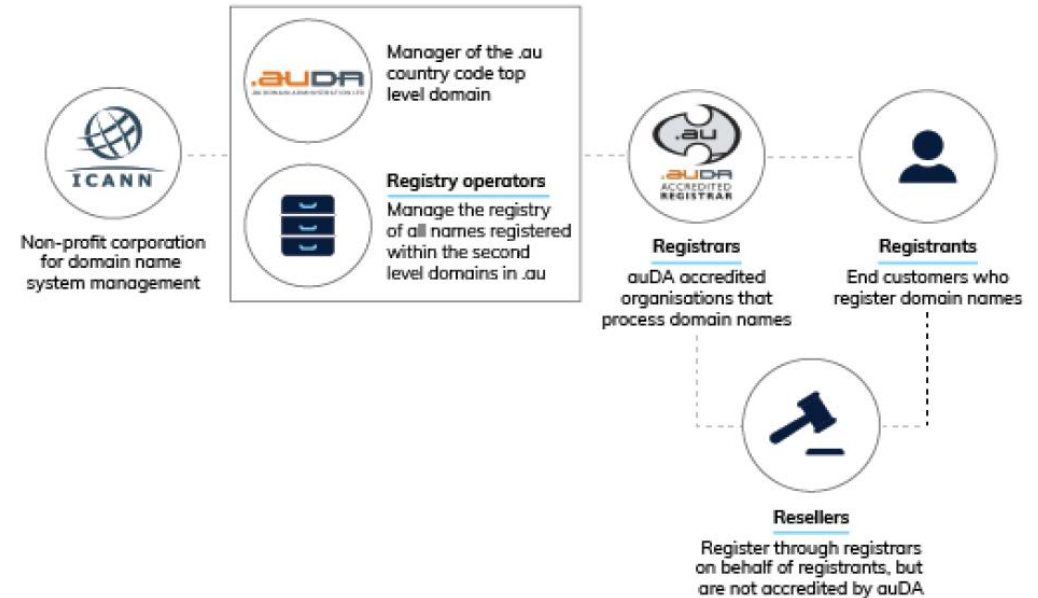- Establish appropriate dispute resolution mechanisms

In addition, under its constitution auDA is required to develop and establish a **policy framework** for the development and administration of the .au ccTLD including:

- Rules governing the operations of second level domain registries

- The creation of second level domains

- Rules governing the accreditation of registrars and registry operators

- Rules governing the registration of names within second level domains and access to second level domain registries, and

- Ensuring that registrars have equal access to second level registry services.

- manage the operation of **critical technical functions** including the .au nameservers, the .au registry, and WHOIS services, and provide a **complaints handling process** for dealing with complaints about the eligibility of registrants to hold particular domain name licences.

For auDA to deliver on its responsibilities, it must maintain active and open lines of stakeholder communication. This ensures stakeholder needs and interests are acknowledged and, where appropriate, incorporated into policy decisions.

Figure: auDA's domain name registration process

ICANN
Non-profit corporation for domain name system management

Manager of the .au country code top level domain

Registry operators
Manage the registry of all names registered within the second level domains in .au

Registrars
auDA accredited organisations that process domain names

Registrants
End customers who register domain names

Resellers
Register through registrars on behalf of registrants, but are not accredited by auDA

2. Stakeholder Engagement Strategy – Overview

auDA's Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

auDA's Stakeholder Engagement Strategy is designed to build trust in the .au ccTLD and to facilitate auDA's decision-making processes. The strategy is designed to support auDA's stakeholder engagement roadmap.

The SES is based on multi-stakeholder models of Internet governance as well as following the design principles embodied in the AA1000 global standard. It is designed to encourage regular engagement between auDA and its stakeholders. The SES focuses auDA leadership priorities to proactively identify challenges and opportunities, offering a useful framework for stimulating stakeholder engagement and offering perspectives where helpful.

Engagement and decision-making processes are stakeholder-centric. auDA's key stakeholders are grouped into five distinct stakeholder categories:

- members (associate and governing);
- community (Australian Internet users);
- business, including registrars and resellers;
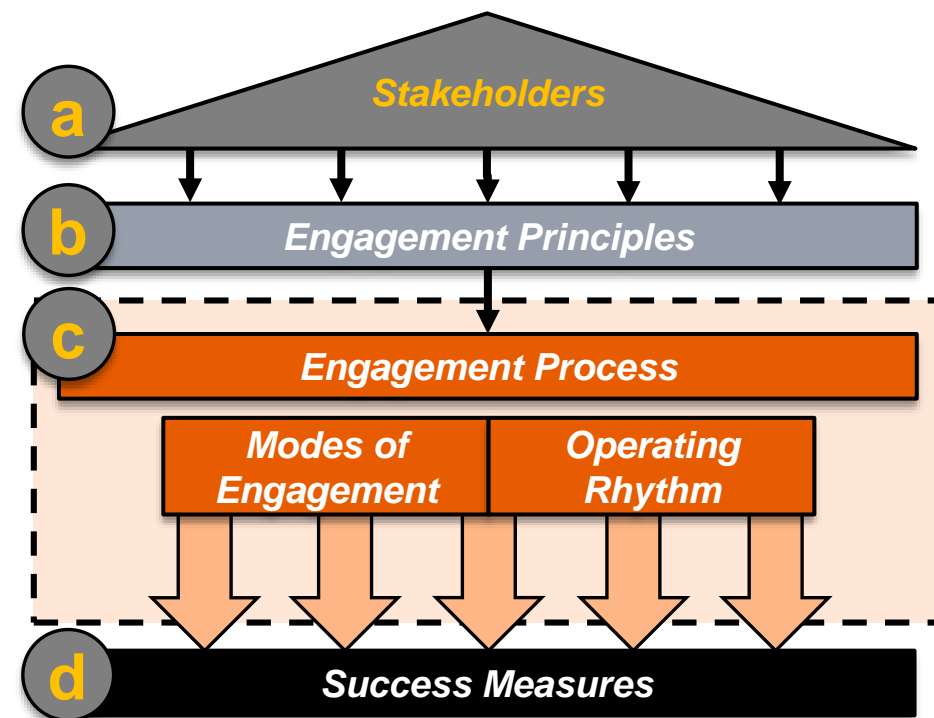- government; and
- international.

Stakeholder engagement is underpinned by six

engagement principles - inclusive, accessible, transparent, balanced, flexible and accountable. These principles guide auDA's overall engagement process with stakeholders.

The engagement process adopted by auDA involves defining the need for engagement, identifying and stimulating the involvement of the relevant stakeholders, engaging appropriately, and then measuring outcomes. The engagement process must encourage multi-stakeholder dialogue.

auDA's modes of engagement outline how auDA will engage with its stakeholders to collect information, whilst auDA's operating rhythm describes the process to analyse and filter this information to reach decisions.

auDA will develop a range of KPIs to measure the timeliness, quality and achievements of stakeholder engagement against this strategy. This is reflected in auDA's complementary Transparency and Accountability Framework.

a *Stakeholders*

b *Engagement Principles*

c *Engagement Process*

Modes of Engagement | *Operating Rhythm*

d *Success Measures*

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2(a) auDA's Stakeholders

auDA operates in a multi-stakeholder environment with both local and global stakeholder groups. It depends on this network to identify and understand challenges and opportunities for the Australian Internet community, and to remain constantly updated with the latest developments, opportunities and threats.

In order to capture the widest range of views and perspectives, auDA draws its stakeholders from a broad canvas across five categories:

- **Members:** This stakeholder group includes auDA's Governing and Associate members. As set out in auDA's Constitution, Governing members are members of the organisation and comprise the Nomination Committee, which is responsible for identifying and approving the appointment of Board Directors, and to receive and consider notices of concern from other Governing or Associate members. Associate members are individuals and organisations who are eligible to hold a .au ccTLD.

- **Community:** Stakeholders which form the 'at-large' Australian Internet community are grouped into this category. This includes those that use .au websites, representative bodies of Internet users and the broader Australian public.

- **Business:** Stakeholders in this group are vitally important to ensuring auDA can continue to effectively enhance the value of the .au ccTLD. Stakeholders include Australian businesses which have a registered .au website, and suppliers such as registry operators and registrars and resellers of .au domain names. This group also includes domain investors.

- **Government**: Government stakeholders include parties with administrative relationships with auDA, such as the Department of Communications and Arts (DoCA). Government stakeholders also include law enforcement and security agencies, such as the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and the Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC), which enforce Australian law in the digital economy.

- **International:** International stakeholders include the global enabling bodies responsible for the coordination of international Internet governance policy (such as ICANN). International stakeholders also include domain administrators in other countries, who are important partners to collaborate with as well as peers whose experience is often of relevance.

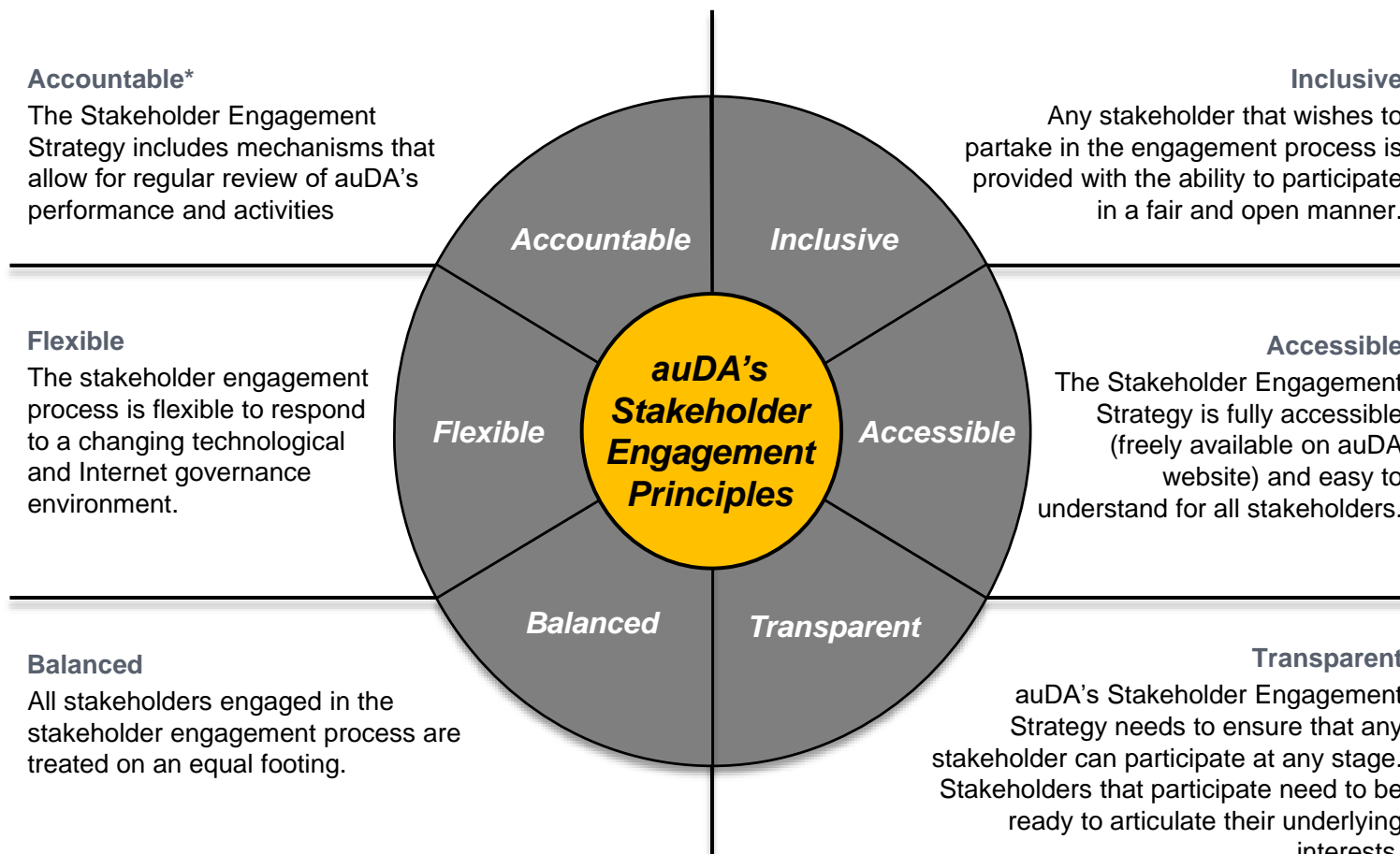| Stakeholder category	Stakeholder group	Example Representatives
Members	Governing members	Nomination Committee
	Associate members	Individual associate members and organisations
Community	Internet users	.au registrants
	Broader public	Civil society organisations
Business	DNS Industry and Registries	Afilias
	Registrars	.au ccTLD registrars, resellers
	Those with vested interests in the .au ccTLD	Internet Association of Australia, individual businesses, domains investors
Government	Policy & Regulation	DoCA
		ACMA, ACCC
	Security agencies	ASD, CIC, AFP
		Local Law Enforcement
	Consumer protection agencies	ACCC
		State-based Consumer Affairs Agencies
International	Enabling bodies	ICANN, APTLD
	Other jurisdictional domain administrators	Nominet, InternetNZ, CIRA, NTIA, etc.

2(b) Stakeholder Engagement Principles

Stakeholder Engagement Principles

auDA's Stakeholder Engagement Strategy leverages global examples of best practice multi-stakeholder models. These examples include ICANN's Internet governance stakeholder engagement framework and UNESCO's perspectives on advancing multi-stakeholder participation in Internet governance.[8,9]

auDA's Stakeholder Engagement Strategy is underpinned by six key engagement principles designed to encourage and stimulate participation from the broadest range of relevant stakeholders in addressing challenges and opportunities for the Australian Internet community.

auDA intends to formulate a Charter and supporting Code of Conduct to embody these principles in easily accessible documents. auDA leadership will live by these principles in its day-to-day engagement with stakeholders, so that engagement processes are sufficiently proactive rather than reactive and auDA's tone of engagement (and content) builds trust, respect and credibility amongst stakeholders.

8: ICANN, 2016. 'Expected Standards of Behaviour'. Accessed online
https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/expected-standards-15sep16-en.pdf
9: UNESCO, 2017. 'What if we all governed the Internet?'. Accessed online at
https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/what_if_we_all_governed_internet_en.pdf

Accountable*
The Stakeholder Engagement Strategy includes mechanisms that allow for regular review of auDA's performance and activities

Flexible
The stakeholder engagement process is flexible to respond to a changing technological and Internet governance environment.

Balanced
All stakeholders engaged in the stakeholder engagement process are treated on an equal footing.

Inclusive
Any stakeholder that wishes to partake in the engagement process is provided with the ability to participate in a fair and open manner.

Accessible
The Stakeholder Engagement Strategy is fully accessible (freely available on auDA website) and easy to understand for all stakeholders.

Transparent
auDA's Stakeholder Engagement Strategy needs to ensure that any stakeholder can participate at any stage. Stakeholders that participate need to be ready to articulate their underlying interests.

auDA's Stakeholder Engagement Principles: Accountable, Inclusive, Flexible, Accessible, Balanced, Transparent

*Applies principally to stakeholders who have oversight and responsibility for auDA.

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2(c) Stakeholder Engagement Process

Stakeholder Engagement Process

The engagement process will enable effective planning, preparation, action and evaluation for stakeholder engagement undertaken by auDA. The engagement process is underpinned by auDA's engagement principles to ensure that engagement with stakeholders is broad, transparent, inclusive and equal. auDA will adopt this engagement process for all relevant levels of operation and decision-making procedures.

The process comprises four steps integrated in a dynamic and ongoing cycle which also provides for a platform for continuous improvement via the collection of stakeholder feedback.

In formal consultations around specific topics, auDA will work with stakeholders to plan engagement and identify stakeholder interests and needs in relation to the opportunity or challenge. auDA will then adopt the most appropriate mode of engagement (see overleaf) for each stakeholder.

auDA's decision-making processes will take careful account of stakeholder feedback and be driven by transparent mechanisms that address stakeholder interests.
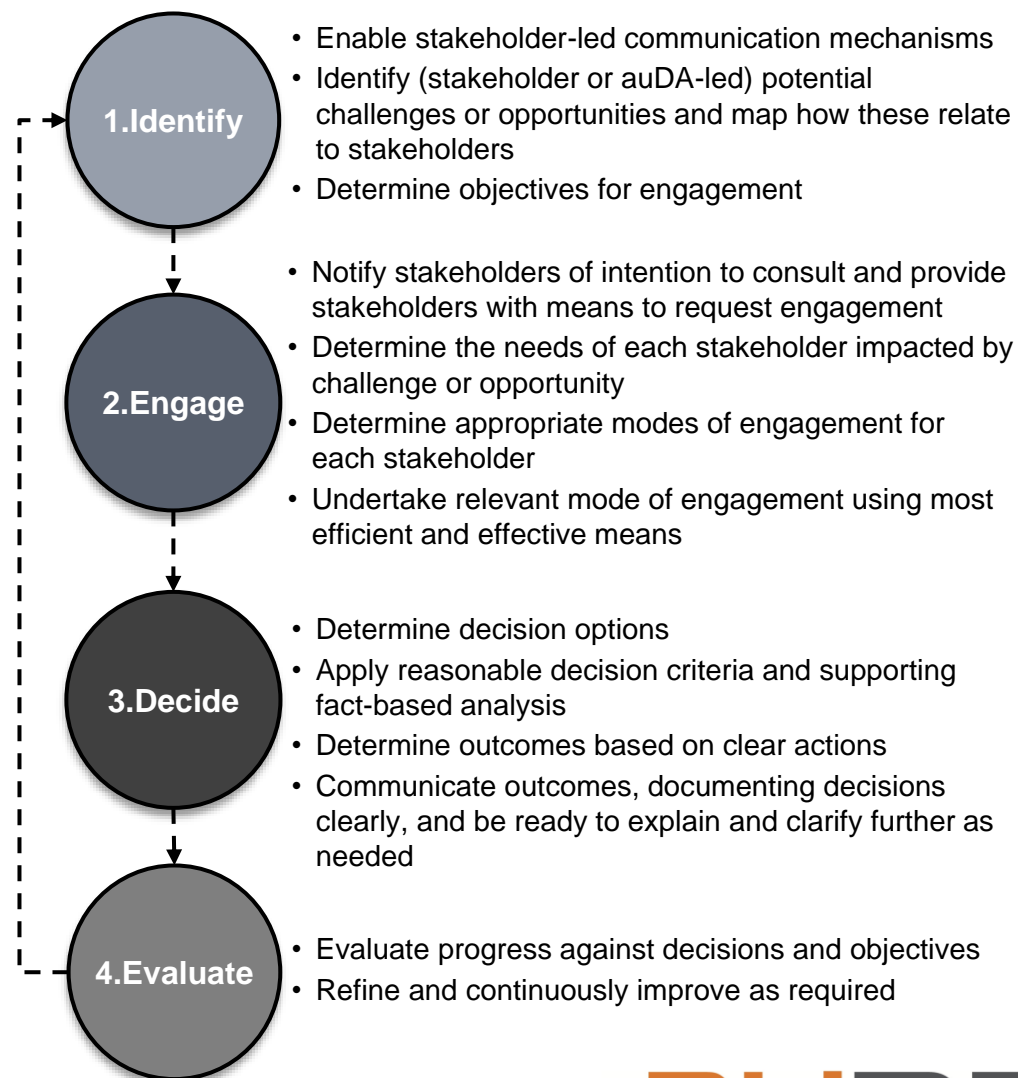
To improve transparency over decision-making, auDA commits to providing its reasoning and rationale for decisions taken. auDA will take the engagement philosophy of 'if not, why not?' for stakeholders, whereby it will communicate its reasoning and rationale for decisions taken when it does not follow the advice of a particular stakeholder.

Example tools of engagement

auDA will adopt a range of engagement tools to connect with its stakeholders. These tools include:

- The General Advisory Standing Committee

- The Technical Advisory Standing Committee

- Webinars

- Public discussion papers

- Focus Groups, Roundtables and co-design workshops

- Published decision papers with supporting rationale

The application of these tools are discussed on the following pages.

1.Identify
- Enable stakeholder-led communication mechanisms
- Identify (stakeholder or auDA-led) potential challenges or opportunities and map how these relate to stakeholders
- Determine objectives for engagement

2.Engage
- Notify stakeholders of intention to consult and provide stakeholders with means to request engagement
- Determine the needs of each stakeholder impacted by challenge or opportunity
- Determine appropriate modes of engagement for each stakeholder
- Undertake relevant mode of engagement using most efficient and effective means

3.Decide
- Determine decision options
- Apply reasonable decision criteria and supporting fact-based analysis
- Determine outcomes based on clear actions
- Communicate outcomes, documenting decisions clearly, and be ready to explain and clarify further as needed

4.Evaluate
- Evaluate progress against decisions and objectives
- Refine and continuously improve as required

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2(c) i. Modes of Engagement

In relation to step two of the Stakeholder Engagement Process ('Engage'), auDA will adopt a range of engagement modes. These modes of engagement ('Consult', 'Involve', 'Collaborate', 'Empower' and 'Inform') vary in their levels of engagement. auDA will adopt a mode of engagement which is most appropriate given the issue and the stakeholders' interests, as illustrated in the table below.

To resolve challenges or enable opportunities, auDA will at a minimum consult with its stakeholders. auDA will develop a series of regular external operating rhythm mechanisms to maximise stakeholder transparency and encourage engagement (including the development of stakeholder-led channels of communication). To communicate outcomes to stakeholders, auDA will uniformly adopt the 'Inform' level of engagement for all stakeholders. auDA will ensure that its reasoning for any decision is communicated to all stakeholders in a transparent and comprehensive manner.

	Challenge Resolution / Opportunity Enabling				Outcomes
	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower	Inform
Objective	Listen to stakeholders and incorporate relevant feedback to understand the issues being consulted upon.	Engage with stakeholders to further identify issues and considerations that will contribute to auDA's understanding of the topic being consulted upon.	Co-design with stakeholders to identify preferred decision.	Integrate stakeholders into governance and decision-making processes.	Keep stakeholders informed and explain reasoning for decisions.
Characteristics	auDA and individual stakeholder: • auDA-led two-way communication • auDA is decision-maker	auDA and one or more stakeholders: • auDA and stakeholder-led multi-way communication • auDA is decision-maker	auDA and one or more stakeholders: • auDA and stakeholder-led multi-way communication • auDA is decision-maker with support from stakeholders	One or more stakeholder(s): • Stakeholder-led communication • Stakeholder is decision-maker	One-way communication from auDA to the stakeholder
Examples	auDA has one-to-one meeting with a stakeholder to discuss policy implementation to streamline complaints procedure.	auDA convenes a multi-stakeholder forum and invites participation from a range of stakeholders.	Joint project between auDA and Registry Operator to implement security upgrades for registry system.	DoCA guiding implementation of recommendations for auDA transformation.	auDA acknowledging receipt of stakeholder complaints and reaffirming resolution process.

Note: consistent with AccountAbility's AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard 2015.

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2 (c) ii. Operating Rhythm

In a multi-stakeholder environment, needs and interests are varied, multi-faceted and often incompatible. auDA will adopt an operating rhythm underlined by a set of processes of regular communication and interaction that will be put in place to ensure auDA's stakeholder activities are continuous, understood and valued by stakeholders. This will consist of the following operating rhythm:

- Regular newsletter or blog-like communications sent out to relevant stakeholders from the Chairman and or CEO. These newsletters will seek to inform readers of what's happening at auDA, what's happening in the Australian Internet community, new developments and decisions.

- A standardised approach to complaints handling such as an automated standardised acknowledgement email, a committed complaints handling turnaround time, a published procedure for complaints handling, with tailored templates for particular complaints to be sent out where necessary. Training a number of people in handling these will free up time for senior leadership to focus on improving auDA's strategic partnerships.

- It is important that auDA has appropriate and consistent senior leadership representation at international fora and its collaboration with other organisations (such as ICANN) is consistent and meaningful. Having core team members in these collaborations will not only provide the knowledge and familiarity with auDA's day-to day operations but will also mean that these members will be able to bring learnings back to the business. This will facilitate skills capability growth within auDA's core team and form strong strategic linkages between policies. The rhythm around international engagement should focus on a small number of regularly-pursued impactful activities.

- auDA will provide structured formats for stakeholders to access key documents and information (with respect to any existing and relevant confidentiality agreements), to be able to submit queries as required.

- auDA decisions on important matters will be communicated regularly through web-based updates, as well as stakeholder communication. Not all decisions or outcomes will be in line with stakeholder preferences and in such cases auDA will be ready to provide **"if not, why not?"** explanation where needed.

- auDA needs to balance the conflicting requirements of its many stakeholders and chart a course where the interests of stakeholders are appropriately taken into account in solutions that provide a net benefit to the Australian and global Internet community.

The 'if not, why not?' philosophy

auDA's leadership is responsible for determining and implementing the policy, constitution and governance decisions for auDA.

Multi-stakeholder input is critical to assisting auDA leadership in reaching its decisions. However, with a broad spectrum of stakeholders at times having conflicting or incompatible views, auDA leadership must effectively develop outcomes which balance the interests and roles of its stakeholders.

In the event auDA leadership does not consider certain stakeholder recommendations as appropriate for implementation, then it should be ready to explain to stakeholders why – this is the 'if not, why not?' philosophy. Where possible, auDA should proactively initiate and guide these conversations with stakeholders.

Being ready to provide stakeholders such explanation ensures stakeholders remain fully informed of auDA's decisions and supporting reasoning. This will help build trust in auDA in its role as custodian of the .au ccTLD, and encourage more meaningful and open dialogue between auDA and its stakeholders in subsequent engagement.

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2 (c) iii. Examples of Engagement Approaches

In order to ensure the needs of stakeholders are effectively addressed, the most appropriate engagement mechanisms must be adopted. Some examples (non-exhaustive) of how auDA will engage with stakeholders are provided here.

Community

- Engage and consult with Australian consumer groups drawn from current domain name users via the General and Technical Advisory Standing Committees (committees designed to receive and consider submissions from the public regarding auDA's operations, management, decisions and technical aspects);

- Stimulate discussion with consumer and civil society groups where there is under-penetration of .au ccTLD domain name use within Australia (e.g. by region, ethnic group, socio-economic status)

- Build trust and confidence in, and understand concerns of, end users of .au and other websites to appreciate how to develop and profile the benefits of .au further.

Business

For auDA to ensure engagement with its business stakeholders is as representative as possible, it will engage businesses that are drawn from:

- the spectrum of Australian corporates, multi-nationals, state-owned enterprises and SMEs;

- a different range of industries and business activity; and

- organisations that represent businesses with an under-representation of the .au ccTLD (e.g. Chambers of Commerce by region and/or industry)

auDA will provide for a regular consultation forum to enable open and multi-stakeholder communication between auDA and its business stakeholders. This forum will give the representative business stakeholder community the means to raise important challenges or opportunities for the Australian Internet community in relation to the .au ccTLD brand.

Members

- Enable Associate and Governing member participation and contribution to the General and Technical Advisory Standing Committees;

- Hold an annual general meeting of associate members and encourage member input and participation; and

- Establish feedback mechanisms between auDA and its members to identify operational and constitutional improvement needs.

International

- Engage with global Internet governance authorities and domain administrators (e.g. ICANN, APTLD, other ccTLDs, etc.) to exchange and share knowledge and best practice;

- Engagement in international fora where the development of the Internet is an important point of discussion (e.g. ICANN, IMF, GMSA, UNESCO, UN Broadband Commission, ITU, WSIS); and

- Focussed participation in events to support the level of international engagement that auDA will benefit from

Government

- Engage with the relevant Australian policy makers and regulatory authorities;

- Engage with government agencies which are involved in shaping the Australian Internet environment (e.g. cyber, national security, tax, consumer protection, e-commerce and privacy agencies); and

- Ensure there is adequate representation of Government across the range of government stakeholders that are engaged

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2(d) Stakeholder Engagement Success Measures

Stakeholder Engagement Success Measures

auDA is committed to continuously improving the effectiveness of its multi-stakeholder engagement model. Evaluating performance under this engagement strategy is key to understanding where stakeholder engagement should be refined and improved. This is a 'live' document and can therefore be amended and updated as required where areas for improvement have been identified.

auDA's performance in relation to stakeholder engagement should be assessed against its ability to deliver against the six engagement principles. The higher the transparency, inclusivity, accountability, accessibility, flexibility and proportionality elements are, the more successful the engagement.

There are various channels through which stakeholder engagement can be assessed, including:

- stakeholder feedback via consultations, online surveys webinars and social media

- public consultations

- group/one-on-one interactions with stakeholders

- domestic and international events attended

- quantity and quality of stakeholder-related events

- number of meetings and outcomes from Advisory Committees

- annual stakeholder satisfaction surveys; satisfaction and website accessibility'.

- improved complaint resolution and publication of complaint-related data (introduce metrics such as time until acknowledgement email has been sent, time until query has been answered, time until query has been resolved, number of times where a query has led to gaining an additional .au member, appropriateness of template used for particular query, satisfaction of the resolution outcome, escalation paths etc.)

From time to time the auDA Board will conduct a review of auDA's Stakeholder Engagement Strategy, utilising any informal and formal stakeholder feedback received from engagement, as well as learnings and opportunities identified by auDA. auDA management will develop KPIs to measure stakeholder inclusion and participation in the engagement process, consistent with auDA's Transparency and Accountability Framework. This will provide the opportunity to formally assess whether the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy has been effective in meeting the needs and expectations of auDA's stakeholders.

Whilst auDA aspires to become a world-leading domain administrator in the field of stakeholder engagement, it will continuously connect with other agencies (and ICANN) to review and improve its stakeholder engagement.

It is intended that such stakeholder engagement will also reinforce the credibility of auDA in the public space, and the confidence of government and stakeholders for it to continue to operate under its Terms of Endorsement.

auDA strives to make progress such that even when stakeholders tell us that they may not always agree with our decisions or approach, they will still agree that the process has been **robust**, **transparent** and **fair**.

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3. Stakeholder Engagement Roadmap

auDA is developing a skills and capability development plan to achieve these ambitions.

World's most admired ccTLD

auDA is regarded as one of the leading bodies at ICANN and is the most admired ccTLD

Inclusive

Open for business: auDA leads ccTLD administration in the inclusion of organisations from rural and remote area across ethnic and socio-economic groups
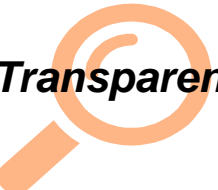
Trusted Custodian

auDA is trusted by Australian and global stakeholders and members for its values, integrity and transparency

Transparent

auDA will publish annual indicators measuring performance against its stakeholder engagement strategy

Engaged

auDA is seen as a global leader in multi-stakeholder engagement models for Internet governance

.au First

More than 70%* of Australian organisations with a registered website have chosen the .au ccTLD

Note: 70% represents initial hypothesis: target to be set upon further analysis

auDA Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2019

auDA's Stakeholder Engagement Strategy is an aspirational plan that is bold, innovative but achievable by 2023 if the right mechanisms are put in place now.

auDA will develop measures and targets for the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy as per the KPI Framework. Progress against this Strategy, and the KPIs that auDA will develop (examples being stakeholder feedback, annual satisfaction surveys and complaint resolution), will be reported in auDA's Annual Report and AGMs, as described in the Transparency and Accountability Framework.

auDA has the unique opportunity to become a world class domain that others trust and look up to. With the execution of the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2018, auDA seeks to emerge as a leading organisation in domain administration and multi-stakeholder engagement.

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Appendix – Internet Governance – Guiding Principles

1. **Open, inclusive and transparent participation.** The participation of interested and informed stakeholders in Internet governance processes, in their respective roles and responsibilities, is necessary to ensure that outcomes are both effective and accepted. It also ensures that interested stakeholders can directly participate in the work and have access to its results.

2. **Consensus-based decision making**. Policy-making processes should be informed by both practical experience and the individual and collective expertise of a range of stakeholders. Decisions should be reached through accountable processes that are based on consensus.

3. **Collective stewardship and empowerment.** To ensure the continued security, stability, and resilience of the Internet, governance structures and principles should be developed in an environment of strong cooperation among all stakeholders, each contributing their own skills.

4. **Pragmatic and evidence-based approaches.** Internet governance discussions, debates, and decisions must be informed by, and depend upon, objective and empirical information.

5. **Voluntarism.** In the realm of Internet technical policy development, voluntarism means that success is determined by users and the public, rather than a central authority.

6. **Permissionless innovation.** The remarkable growth of the Internet and the ensuing explosion of innovation and Internet use is a direct result of the open model of Internet connectivity and standards development. Anyone should be able to create a new application on the Internet without having to obtain approval from a central authority. Internet governance arrangement should not constrain or regulate the ability of individuals or organizations to create and use new standards, applications, or services.

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