

2019 ICANN Contracted Parties Satisfaction Survey Overview of Results

Background

In February 2019, the Global Domains Division (“GDD”) of the ICANN organization commissioned a survey of contracted parties using an independent third-party market research company, the MITA Group. The goal of the survey is to determine how GDD is fulfilling its stated mission and objectives and what steps GDD can take to work more effectively with the ICANN community and contracted parties as a group. This is the third satisfaction survey GDD has conducted with its contracted parties ([2017 survey](#), [2018 survey](#)).

As with the previous years, the 2019 survey was conducted anonymously to allow respondents the greatest level of privacy in presenting their responses. For 2019, the survey was updated with the objectives of producing more actionable information, building on the baseline knowledge learned from the 2017/18 surveys, and increasing participation among contracted parties. To help meet these objectives the questionnaire was updated to include both a 5-point sliding scale format and “True/False” statements. The combined question format was designed to provide a more thorough insight into contracted parties’ sentiment across topics.

Methodology and Survey Structure

Survey invitations were sent to 1,027 registries and registrars, with a response period from 26 February 2019 to 2 April 2019. Responses were received from 244 respondents. This represented a total participation rate of 23.8%, which is a significant increase from the 2018 participation rate of 17.3% and the 2017 participation rate of 12.7%.

To meet the first objective of securing more actionable responses, some questions were updated to “True/False” statements with a follow-up question added if the respondent replied in the negative. The follow-up question provided for an open-ended response to achieve a more precise understanding of respondent’s sentiments. Some questions from the previous years’ surveys were carried over in the 5-point sliding scale format (1 - “Strongly Agree” to 5 - “Strongly Disagree”) to provide year-over-year performance indicators in areas such as Integrity, Competence, and Satisfaction.

This year’s survey saw the respondents’ roles within their organizations spread across a variety of functions with General Business (25%) and Operations (23%) being the largest categories. Other organizational roles included: Finance (18%), Legal/Policy (15%), and Marketing (14%). The 2019 respondents also demonstrated a global distribution of regions served, with Europe (46%), Asia/Pacific (35%), and North America (34%) as the leading constituencies.

Additionally, respondents were asked about their organization’s involvement in the stakeholder groups and constituencies in the global domain name community. The resulting answers showed that 40% of respondents did not participate in these groups. This is a significant point as it shows the survey captured the sentiments and opinions of contracted parties not represented elsewhere. Similarly, the survey results indicate that over one quarter (27%) of the respondents do not regularly participate in ICANN meetings.

Findings – Year-over-Year Comparison

While a direct year-over-year comparison to previous results is not possible due to differing survey questions and formats, a comparison can be made regarding perceptions of ICANN GDD’s performance across three key areas: GDD’s adherence to its stated mission, confidence in the GDD’s abilities, and the GDD’s commitment to contracted parties.

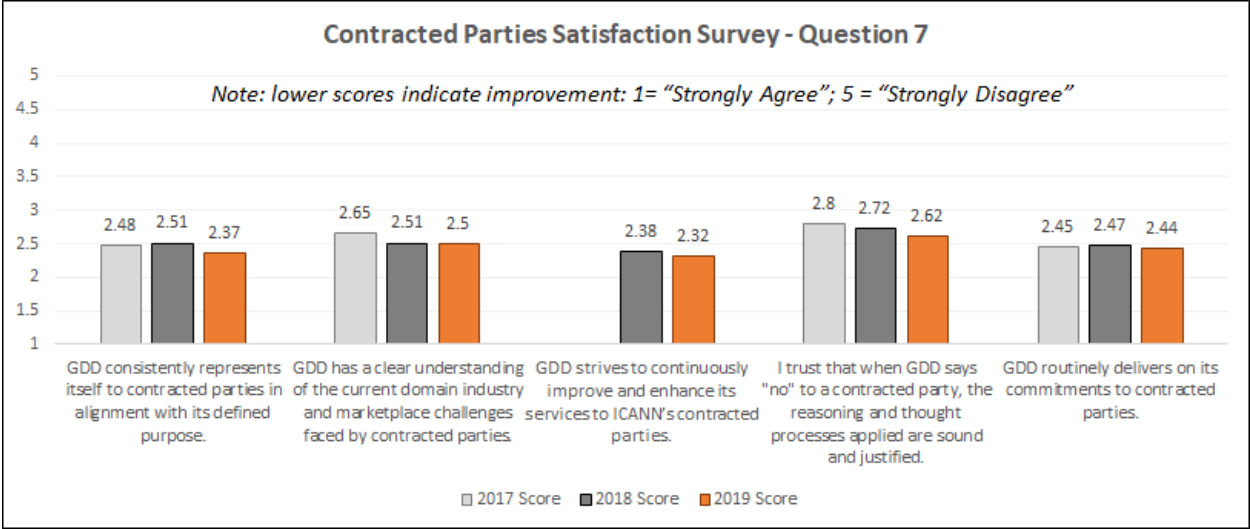
Table 1

The GDD’s adherence to Mission	Favorable (net neutral compared to 2018)
Confidence in the GDD’s abilities	Favorable (slight net gain compared to 2018)
The GDD’s commitment to contracted parties	Favorable (net neutral compared to 2018)

As indicated above (see Table 1), all three areas received a favorable score and respondents indicated increased confidence in the GDD’s abilities overall for 2019. The weighted average questions in the 2019 survey showed the GDD improved (i.e., the respondents’ scores were *lower* on the five-point scale) over 2017 and 2018’s results in nearly every category that had direct commonality year-over-year (see Figures 1 and 2 below).

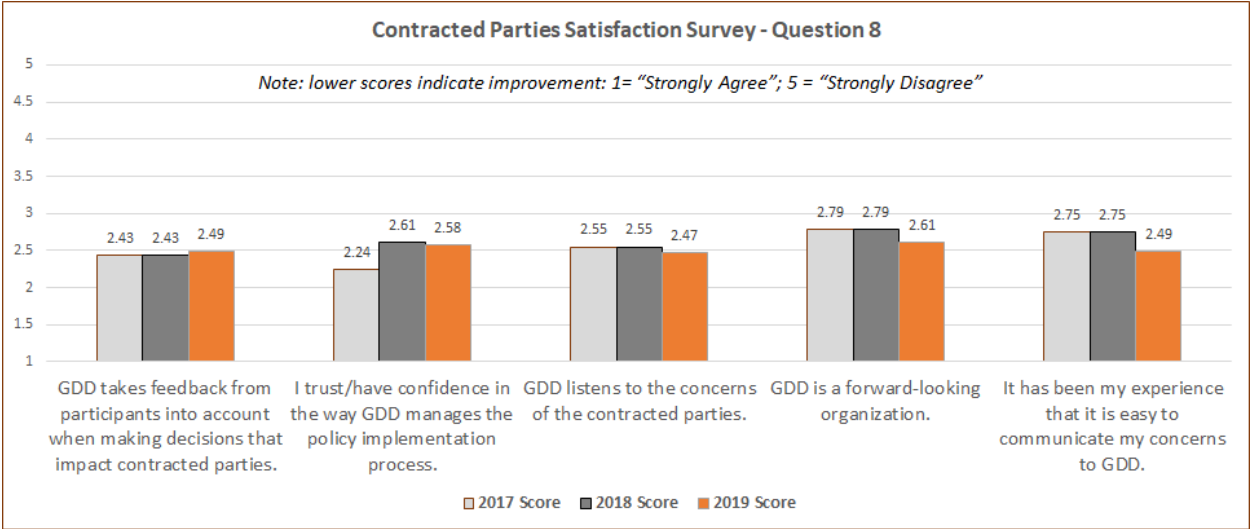
Q7: Please tell us how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement below in regards to GDD:

Figure 1



Q8: Please tell us how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement below in regards to GDD:

Figure 2



Recalling that for these questions the respondents were asked to respond on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 representing a "perfect score," the trend in response data from 2017 to 2019 shows that overall sentiment towards GDD has improved each year since the survey's inception.

New Questions for the 2019 Survey

In conjunction with a reduction in the number of sliding scale questions, the 2019 survey introduced “True/False” questions for respondents. The intent of the new question type was to achieve greater precision and deeper understanding of the respondents’ sentiments regarding key issues relating to the GDD’s performance.

When asked if the GDD treats contracted parties fairly, over 88% of respondents responded favorably. Similarly, over 77% of respondents stated that they felt their concerns were adequately considered during decision-making processes. Over 81% of respondents thought that appropriate actions were taken when contracted parties’ concerns were raised.

Regarding the GDD itself, over 85% of the respondents stated that they have confidence in the GDD’s skills and ability to accomplish its stated mission and objectives. However, in the open-ended questions, respondents noted that GDD should work to make its work and mission better known and that ICANN org and the GDD should be more proactive in addressing topical concerns (e.g., the EU’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) was specifically referenced as an area that GDD addressed only after the contracted parties raised it).

Nearly 82% of respondents indicated that the GDD staff is properly responsive to the needs of the industry. Likewise, over 85% of respondents indicated that contracted parties have confidence in the GDD’s ability to cooperate with its constituents if/when concerns are raised. In terms of their relationship with the GDD as an industry partner, more than 85% of respondents stated that the GDD provides useful information to their organization when needed.

In terms of contracted parties’ general views towards the GDD, nearly 85% of respondents stated that they value the relationship their organization has with the GDD. As to areas where the GDD could improve its performance, open-ended questions posed throughout the survey indicated a common theme: ICANN org and GDD should be more proactive when addressing industry needs and concerns (again, GDPR was raised as a specific area in which GDD should have been more proactive). Also, respondents indicated that the GDD staff should improve lines of communication and foster greater engagement within the industry and between the GDD and contracted parties.

The closing questions of the 2019 survey were open-ended and asked how the relationship between the GDD and the contracted parties could improve, how the survey could improve, and what questions should be added to subsequent surveys. Nearly 80% of the respondents stated that they found the survey to be informative and useful. Responses on how the relationship between the GDD and the contracted parties could improve centered on the GDD having a heightened sensitivity to the business needs of the contracted parties and providing more proactive communications. The final open-ended question gathered suggestions from the respondents on how the survey could be improved in future versions. While the suggestions varied greatly, there was interest in seeing the True/False questions changed to be “less binary” to effectively measure the nuanced relationship between the GDD and the contracted parties.