



CIRA Corporate Plan Fiscal Year 2016

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Background

The Canadian Internet Registration Authority is the Member-driven not-for-profit organization that manages Canada's .CA domain name registry, develops innovative new products and programs that support the Internet community, and represents the .CA Registry internationally.

As a not-for-profit organization, .CA is governed by its Member-elected Board of Directors. Membership is free and open to any .CA Registrant who is interested in participating in the governance of the corporation and contributing to the development of the Internet in Canada. Members may attend and vote at annual general meetings, vote for CIRA's Board of Directors and vote on changes to CIRA's by-laws. From time to time, Members are asked to participate in consultations and surveys on issues and opportunities that affect .CA and the Internet ecosystem. In short, membership provides a unique opportunity for Registrants to become active in the management of .CA and the development of Canada's Internet.

Planning Environment

CIRA's primary mandate is to run a world-class registry and domain name system (DNS). The organization also continually seeks to enhance its customers experience through product innovation and has a unique responsibility to advance the Internet for the benefit of all Canadians. These three areas of focus form the foundation of CIRA's strategic plan and continue to guide its activities for FY16.

After decades of growth, the domain industry has undergone significant changes in the past few years. The domain market is maturing and overall domain growth rates continue to slow across the industry. The introduction of hundreds of new generic top-level domains (gTLDs), which began offering service in early 2014, has created unprecedented change and competition in the market. In this evolving environment, .CA must remain relevant, expand its product offerings, and enhance its value to its customers. This much be accomplished while retaining its position as the domain of choice for Canadians.

.CA's growth since CIRA took over its management 14 years ago has been explosive. From only 60,000 domains under management (DUM) in 2001, the .CA Registry reached one million registrations in only eight years. .CA doubled its size just five years later. There are now more than 2.3 million registered .CA domains and the registry continues to grow above industry norms. .CA has built a solid reputation for delivering excellent products by combining best-of-breed technology with outstanding customer service.

As Internet-related technologies quickly evolve, CIRA must remain at the forefront of an ever-evolving and competitive environment. Central to helping CIRA meet its goals and improve its relevance is an ongoing commitment to market and customer focus. From the overhaul of the Registry and its related processes, to the development of new products, CIRA has made innovation a focal point in its plans for the future.

Long a topic of discussion among some more technically-savvy Internet users, security emerged as a widespread public concern in FY15. High-profile hacks of large multinational companies, hijacking of public sector domains, and an increase in multi-vector attacks have made headlines in mainstream newspapers and are forcing all Internet users to protect themselves. .CA remains focused on this issue, with the launch of security-related products such as DNSSEC, Registry Lock and the D-Zone Anycast DNS service. Focus for the year ahead will remain on safeguarding .CA's reputation as a safe, secure and trusted domain, and in helping Canadians understand their role in keeping Canada's Internet safe.

Given the emerging threats to the multi-stakeholder model and impending IANA stewardship transition, CIRA will maintain its involvement in international Internet governance.

In March 2014 the U.S. Government announced its intent to cede its historical stewardship role of the IANA functions. Since that point, the global Internet governance community has been engaged in a process to identify an alternative mechanism to replace this role. Activity on this file will increase over FY16 as the September 30, 2015 proposal deadline approaches. As well, the global Internet community will see a shift in governance discussions in 2015 as the Internet governance file gains prominence in United Nations fora and the conversation shifts away from the more technical venue of ICANN.

CIRA will continue to support the development of the Internet domestically by funding community-based initiatives such as the Community Investment Program (CIP) and Canadian Internet Forum (CIF). CIRA continues to strengthen its linkages with the larger Canadian Internet community by investing in a myriad of activities that advance the Internet through the .CA Community Investment Program. Through this program, .CA provided more than \$1.2 million in FY15 to projects to enhance digital literacy, bolster infrastructure, improve access, and research various aspects of Internet governance and policy. The .CA Community Investment Program Fund will continue to provide funding to new initiatives annually and round two of the program launches in early February 2015.

CIRA will also host the fifth annual Canadian Internet Forum (CIF) in FY16, ensuring that Canadians have a voice in the development of the Internet within Canada and continue to be heard in global fora such as the IGF. Active engagement in these areas continues to position .CA as a strong voice for the development of the Internet globally and within Canada's Internet community.

Strategy

As in the two previous years, CIRA will continue to focus on its primary goal of ensuring that:

.CA is a recognized leader and trusted voice in the Internet community.

Supporting this goal is a strategic framework that includes the organization's mission, vision, values, and top-level strategies.

In FY16, the CIRA Board will be examining the upcoming Strategic Plan direction for FY17-20 and if necessary, make adjustments to the future direction of the organization.

Mission

CIRA's mission is to foster the development of .CA as a key public resource for all Canadians by providing stable, secure and trusted domain name services, and by taking a leadership role in shaping Canada's Internet for the benefit of .CA domain holders.

Vision

CIRA's vision is to be a world-class Internet Registry that is recognized and valued by the Internet community and Canadians.

Values

We believe that fairness, transparency and high ethical standards are the foundation of our culture.

CIRA is committed to a collaborative team environment that seeks continuous improvement and breakthrough ideas through innovation.

At CIRA we are committed to exceeding stakeholder expectations through excellence in operations, service delivery and engagement.

We believe in being a positive influence in the communities where we provide service and do business.

The primary objective of being a recognized leader and trusted voice in the Internet community follows naturally from CIRA's previous three-year strategic plan. This goal reflects a more complex need to ensure the effective stewardship of .CA, a focus on growth and diversification, as well as continued support for the development of the Internet for the benefit of all Canadians.

CIRA will be making material investments across all four top-level strategies with continued emphasis in the areas of “safe, secure and stable” and “market and customer focused”. The four primary top-level strategies as detailed in the FY14-16 Strategic Plan are:

1. Maintain a safe, secure and stable operating environment
2. Increase operational efficiency
3. Enhance market and customer focus
4. Support the development of Internet related activities in Canada

The following pages outline each strategic priority and the associated activities for FY16. A listing of all FY16 projects and initiatives that shows their detailed alignment with CIRA’s top-level objectives follows in Appendix A.

1) Safe, Secure and Stable

Maintaining a safe, secure and stable .CA domain space for the benefit of all Canadians is CIRA's first priority. As threats to online security continue to multiply, CIRA is maintaining a focus on leading-edge new products that help both .CA and its customers mitigate these risks.

Data Centre Move

In recent years, the .CA Registry and much of its related technology has been updated. As the registry grows and new products are implemented, the next planned major upgrade will be to .CA's production data centre. .CA has outgrown its current data centre's physical space, and its technological and support needs are greater than those offered in its current location. In FY16, .CA will move to a new facility in Toronto that will offer the scalability and support required to ensure the stability of .CA our customers have come to expect.

Additionally, CIRA's Ottawa-based data centre will move to a new facility in advance of the company's head office move in the spring. This shift will allow CIRA to support a more collaborative and diversified working environment as well as advancing a true multi-product environment.

.CA Registry Enhancements

Keeping up with malicious actors on the Internet is a continual effort and the organization's focus will remain on ensuring the .CA Registry remains at the forefront of the domain industry in this regard. For FY16, planned enhancements will be primarily Registrar-facing, implemented in response to the needs of .CA channel partners and to mitigate emerging security threats with industry best practices.

DNSSEC Market Adoption

The Domain Name System Security Extension (DNSSEC) is a technology that provides more integrity to the DNS and a more stable online environment for our .CA users. Essentially, this technology ensures that visitors to website can be certain that the websites they visit is genuine. CIRA has the technology in place to facilitate DNSSEC market adoption and continues to work with its Registrar partners to foster the adoption of DNSSEC among Registrants in order to secure a safer Internet experience.

Business Continuity

As .CA evolves, so too must plans for business continuity. In FY16, plans will be revised to reflect infrastructure changes resulting from the head office move to Lansdowne Park in Ottawa, as well as the physical move of the .CA technology stacks. Similar to previous years, business continuity will be tested through a crisis simulation and failover / failback scenarios for all projects and services.

2) Operational Efficiency

Employer of Choice

In FY15, .CA was named one of Canada's Best 50 Small and Medium Employers by AON Hewitt and Queen's School of Business. This award is recognition of a concerted effort to position the organization as a competitive employer, offering top talent a challenging work environment, great growth and development opportunities, as well as industry lead benefits.

Leading up to this award, CIRA enlisted the collaboration of all employees to launch a process that would help refresh its corporate culture to focus on innovation, development and continuous improvement. As of the start of FY16, the .CA culture has been defined and the team is now implementing it across every aspect of the company.

One foundational element of living this culture is the office move to a new, larger space at the new Lansdowne Park development in Ottawa. Although required due to space constraints in .CA's current home, the new location will be a living representation of the new culture, enabling better communications by fostering collaboration, openness, creativity and efficiency.

Building on improvements to the recruitment process in FY14 and 15, .CA will be further improving its recruitment and employee onboarding process to reflect the newly defined corporate culture, reflect .CA's position as an employer of choice, and to ensure a consistent experience for new employees.

Enterprise Architecture

Ongoing improvements of internal systems are necessary to ensure that a quickly evolving organization remains efficient, effective, and capable of offering best-of-breed customer service. For FY16, .CA will be undertaking a review of a number of enterprise-level systems.

The organization will continue development of a corporate-wide customer relationship management system that can support membership management, channel relations, lead generation and customer service for existing and new products. An assessment of our IT Service Management ticketing system and a deeper implementation of our CIRAnet collaboration toolset will also serve to increase organizational efficiencies.

Finally, enhancements to our business analytics and intelligence reporting capabilities will serve to ensure more efficient and effective decision making throughout the organization.

3) Market and Customer-Focused

CIRA Brands and Promotion

The current brand identity for the Canadian Internet Registration Authority was developed in 2010 to better position the organization as Canada Online. With the launch of new product lines in FY15, the need arose to review the existing brand standard to ensure consistent integration into all communication and marketing efforts. This will continue as additional products are taken to market in FY16.

.CA brand promotion will also continue in FY16, with further strategic brand-building advertising campaigns as well as additional promotional efforts. Partnership programs with the sales channel will also bolster the profile of .CA in this increasingly competitive industry.

Building a Business Development Capability and Sales Function

CIRA will continue to invest in building business development capability and sales capacity to support revenue growth in the new lines of business. Increasing this capability and capacity is not only a recruiting and operational challenge, but also a significant cultural shift for the organization. New .CA products, such as D-Zone Secondary Anycast DNS, require new approaches to sales and marketing. The .CA team continues to scale to meet these needs.

Leveraging New Product Developments – Fungible Investments

Over the course of FY15 CIRA has made significant investments to support innovation and growth by creating new capacity in development, IT Operations and product management. While these investments will create opportunities for expanded product lines; the increased functionality, related enhancements and outcomes of the DNS and Registry development efforts are fully fungible and will be re-incorporated into the core .CA Registry and DNS infrastructure.

.CA Registry

As a customer-focused organization, .CA strives to meet the needs of Registrars and ensure that its products and policies make doing business with .CA as streamlined and efficient as possible. This must be achieved while maintaining .CA's high standards for quality. Throughout FY16, .CA will continue to streamline its communications with Registrars and support their business needs by enhancing our reporting mechanisms.

With a mandate to manage the .CA for the benefit of all Canadians, CIRA will continue efforts to develop, implement and promote product line extensions that help keep the domain space safe, secure and trusted. This includes increased adoption of DNSSEC and Registry Lock. On DNSSEC, CIRA will seek opportunities to reach industry stakeholders such as Internet Service Providers, Registrars, and technology managers in key organizations to educate them on the benefits of this security protocol and encourage adoption. On the Registry Lock front, CIRA will continue to push for adoption by both Registrars and high-value domain name holders to mitigate risks of domain name hijacking similar to those witnessed in FY15.

D-Zone

The D-Zone Anycast DNS service is an anycast network and a secondary nameserver cloud. This product is designed for organizations serving the Canadian market. This first new .CA product was launched to channel partners and trial customers in the second half of FY15. For FY16, focus will be on demand generation, promotion, sales and product evolution.

Registry Services

In FY15, .CA began research and development on a new Registry platform that could host other country code top-level domains (ccTLDs) or new generic top-level domains (gTLDs). Initial priorities in FY16 will be to onboard a TLD seeking back-end services; creating a true multi-tenant platform to expand on in the future.

Technological advances and new features from the development of this new registry platform will also be applied to the .CA Registry, ensuring it remains best-of-breed.

Registrar Support and Development

Registrar support continues to be a priority for CIRA and CIRA regularly consults with Registrars to understand how to best meet their needs. These relationships represent a significant competitive advantage for CIRA and CIRA continues to roll out new tools and services for Registrars, as well as simplifying the process of promoting .CA.

Tracking Study

The tracking study, in its seventh year, provides insight into .CA's brand performance and customer satisfaction among Registrants, Registrars and Members. The study provides information on .CA brand awareness, how Canadians use the Internet and the adoption and usage of Internet technology by Canada's SME's. Insights derived from this research allow CIRA to optimize its products and also be a source of unique, impartial information in the organization's thought leadership efforts.

4) Internet-Related Activities in Canada

Community Investment Program

Over the course of FY15 CIRA staff dispersed \$1.2 million in community investment program dollars to 29 projects that support the development and improve Canada's Internet.

In FY16, CIRA will administer the second round of funding applications, while supporting the projects selected based on the FY14 call for applications and leveraging project successes for media and marketing opportunities wherever appropriate.

State of the Internet

.CA has identified an opportunity to expand its thought leadership role by building an advanced, accurate and neutral Internet speed test for Canadians. The .CA Internet Connection Test will move from a technical prototype into a fully available service available on the .CA website in the first quarter of FY16. Initially, the technical quality of the test will be promoted with additional features including DNSSEC and IPV6 reporting to be added throughout the year. The communications strategy will focus on clearly articulating the benefits to early adopters to begin market adoption. This tool is a cornerstone in the organization's thought leadership strategy.

IXPs

.CA continues to support the development of Internet Exchange Points (IXPs) across Canada. IXPs are now established in Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Windsor, Winnipeg, Calgary and Vancouver.

In FY16, CIRA will focus maintaining relationships with these existing points and leveraging them to maximize .CA services that now depend on these IXPs, including D-Zone Anycast Services and the State of the Internet initiative.

Canadian Internet Forum

The Canadian Internet Forum (CIF) will enter its fifth year in FY15 and will continue to form the basis of CIRA's participation at the annual international Internet Governance Forum, a UN-sponsored, global multi-stakeholder meeting held regularly over a five - year lifespan. This is a unique opportunity for Canadians to participate in and have a say on the direction the Internet should take in Canada.

Financial management
CIRA Operating Budget FY16

	FY16 Budget (\$)	FY15 Budget (\$)	Common Size % of Revenue	Year over Year \$ Change	Year over Year % Change
Revenue	20,380,000	18,925,400	100.0%	1,454,600	7.7%
Infrastructure/DNS (IT Operations)	4,949,313	4,515,252	24.3%	434,061	9.6%
Finance & Administration	3,830,177	3,407,904	18.8%	422,273	12.4%
Development	2,865,705	2,905,673	14.1%	(39,968)	-1.4%
Marketing & Communications	2,550,705	2,376,447	12.5%	174,258	7.3%
Amortization	2,117,000	1,920,000	10.4%	197,000	10.3%
Channel Management	815,476	764,378	4.0%	51,098	6.7%
Legal & Policy	614,291	742,211	3.0%	(127,920)	-17.2%
Board of Directors	552,821	547,394	2.7%	5,427	1.0%
Total Core Operating Expenses	18,295,488	17,179,259	89.8%	1,116,229	6.5%
Product Investment	2,148,828	1,914,171	10.5%	234,657	12.3%
Community Investment Program	1,400,000	1,400,000	6.9%	-	0.0%
(Operating Deficit)	(1,464,316)	(1,568,030)	-7.2%	103,714	-6.6%
CIRA Capital Plan FY16	FY16 Budget (\$)	FY15 Budget (\$)	FY16 Budget % of Capital	Year over Year \$ Change	Year over Year % Change
Computer Hardware	1,085,500	1,273,000	73.2%	(187,500)	-14.7%
Leasehold Improvements	0	410,000	0.0%	(410,000)	-100.0%
Computer Software	194,500	180,000	13.1%	14,500	8.1%
Furniture & Fixtures	131,000	0	8.8%	131,000	
Office Equipment	72,585	150,000	4.9%	(77,415)	-51.6%
	1,483,585	2,013,000	100.0%	(529,415)	-26.3%

Appendix A: Activities Aligned with Top-Level Strategies

Strategic Objective: Safe and Secure				
Project / Initiative Name	Safe & Secure	Operational Efficiency	Market & Customer Focused	Internet-Related Activities
Data Center Move				
.CA Registry Enhancements				
DNS Market Adoption				
Business Continuity				

Strategic Objective: Operational Efficiency				
Project / Initiative Name	Safe & Secure	Operational Efficiency	Market & Customer Focused	Internet-Related Activities
Employer of Choice				
Enterprise Architecture				

Strategic Objective: Market & Customer Focused				
Project / Initiative Name	Safe & Secure	Operational Efficiency	Market & Customer Focused	Internet-Related Activities
Brand				
Building Business Development Capability (Sales Funnel)				
Leveraging New Product Developments (fungible)				
D-Zone				
Registry Services				
Registrar Support and Development				
Customer Satisfaction Tracking				
To Be Released Domains				

Strategic Objective: Internet Related Activities				
Project / Initiative Name	Safe & Secure	Operational Efficiency	Market & Customer Focused	Internet-Related Activities
Community Investment Program				
State of the Internet				
Internet Exchange Points				
Canadian Internet Forum				

Legend:

	No Contribution or Alignment
	Limited Contribution or Alignment
	Moderate Contribution or Alignment
	Significant Contribution or Alignment
	Direct Contribution or Alignment