Project Overview for the Review of the ICANN Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO) Request for Proposal

Date of issue:
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1.0   Introduction

1.1   About This Document

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) is seeking a provider to conduct an independent review of the Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO), as mandated by ICANN's Bylaws.

In seeking a comprehensive proposal for this service, ICANN is placing maximum emphasis on several key components of value including expertise with similar processes, demonstrated practices, and the ability to work within the guidelines established in this Request for Proposal (RFP).

Note: This "Project Overview" to the RFP, even if it provides all the information relevant for the RFP such as the background, scope, requirements, deliverables and timeline, does not constitute the complete RFP packet by itself. There are several other documents included as part of the RFP packet that require participants to provide information to ICANN in a structured format. For a full list of documents included in the RFP, along with detailed instructions for responding to the RFP and use of the ICANN Sourcing Tool, refer to the Instructions document provided separately.

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

The ICANN organization 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 organization:

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 names system, or DNS);
    b. Internet Protocol ("IP") addresses;
    c. Autonomous System ("AS") numbers; and
    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.

2.0   ccNSO Review Requirements

2.1 Period of this Review

This is a one-time review. ICANN is planning to start the review of the ccNSO in August 2018, with an anticipated duration of twelve (12) months. ICANN is seeking qualified providers to conduct the review in an efficient and effective manner and submit their Final Report in July 2019.

2.2 Project Background

As part of ICANN's ongoing commitment to its evolution and improvement, Section 4.4 of its [Bylaws](#) contains provisions for *"periodic review of the performance and operation of each Supporting Organization, each Supporting Organization Council, […] by an entity or entities independent of the organization under review.*

The goal of the review, to be undertaken pursuant to such criteria and standards as the Board shall direct, shall be to determine (i) whether that organization, council or committee has a continuing purpose in the ICANN structure, (ii) if so, whether any change in structure or operations is desirable to improve its effectiveness and (iii) whether that organization, council or committee is accountable to its constituencies, stakeholder groups, organizations and other stakeholders.

These periodic reviews present ICANN supporting organizations and advisory committees with opportunities for continuous improvement. The goal is to objectively measure performance relative to specific and quantifiable criteria based on the unique nature of ICANN's structure. The resulting implementation of improvements and the systematic means of measuring performance and validating effectiveness of implementation are of utmost importance to ICANN.

The ccNSO is one of the supporting organizations mandated for review. The ccNSO and its purpose are described in Article 10 of the Bylaws: *"There shall be a policy-development body known as the Country-Code Names Supporting Organization ("ccNSO"), which shall be responsible for:*
(a) developing and recommending to the Board global policies relating to country-code top-level domains;
(b) Nurturing consensus across the ccNSO's community, including the name-related activities of ccTLDs;
(c) Coordinating with other ICANN Supporting Organizations, committees, and constituencies under ICANN;
(d) Nominating individuals to fill Seats 11 and 12 on the Board; and
(e) Other responsibilities of the ccNSO as set forth in these Bylaws."

Section 10.2 of the Bylaws states: *"The ccNSO shall consist of (a) ccTLD managers that have agreed in writing to be members of the ccNSO (see Section 10.4(b)) and (b) a ccNSO Council responsible for managing the policy-development process of the ccNSO."*

2.3 Scope of the Review

The objective of this RFP is to identify an independent reviewer to conduct a review of the ccNSO as mandated by the [ICANN Bylaws](#). The review is scheduled to take place from August 2018 through July 2019.

The scope of work will include the following key elements, as mandated by the ICANN Bylaws, section 4.4:

1. An assessment of whether the ccNSO has a continuing purpose within the ICANN structure;
2. An assessment of how effectively the ccNSO fulfils its purpose and whether any change in its structure or operations is desirable to improve the ccNSO's effectiveness;
3. An assessment of the extent to which the ccNSO as a whole is accountable to its organizations, committees, constituencies, and stakeholder groups.

Suggested Questions to be Addressed to Meet the Scope

A. Fulfillment of purpose, adherence to policies and procedures, and organizational support
- Does ccNSO fulfill its stated purpose?
- Does the stated purpose meet the needs of ccNSO members, the ccTLD community and ICANN's other Supporting Organizations (SOs) and Advisory Committees (ACs)?
- Are the decision-making procedures of ccNSO consistent over the years? If not, why is flexibility important and which procedures (if any) should remain constant?
- Is participation and representation of ccNSO within ICANN adequate to fulfill the ccNSO's purpose?
- Are appropriate procedures, competencies and support in place?
- Does the ccNSO engage in continuous organizational development?
- Is the mission of the ccNSO in alignment with ICANN's mission (as per Bylaws)?

B. Accountability and transparency, as detailed in ICANN Bylaws Articles 3 and 4
- Is the ccNSO accountable to its members?
- How can ccNSO's processes be improved, including but not limited to transparency and accountability?
- What type of information regarding ccNSO operations and activities - and to what level - do ccNSO members desire?
- What is the level of community satisfaction with the information provided?
- Is the ccNSO operating in such a way that interested parties may easily locate and retrieve desired information? Are there means to improve accessibility of information?

C. ccNSO operations, membership processes, and participation
- Is any change in structure or operations desirable to improve ccNSO's effectiveness?
- What is the current level of participation of members and non-members in ccNSO activities and initiatives? What potential for improved participation exist?
- What is the current level of participation of the ccNSO in Cross-Community Working Groups (CCWGs)?
- Are CCWG efforts effectively representing the interests of ccNSO members in the broader ICANN Community?
- Did the ccNSO completely and satisfactorily define the process for acting as part of the Empowered Community (as defined in the new Bylaws)?

D. Communication
- Do ccNSO communications satisfy the needs of its membership, the ICANN Board, SOs and ACs, and the broader ICANN Community?
- Are ccNSO communications – both among its members about its internal processes, and to the ICANN Community about its role and function – adequate to assure understanding and legitimacy of ccNSO actions? If not, how can communication be improved?

E. Evaluation and measurement of outcomes
- Based on the IE's findings, are ccNSO processes and membership adequate to properly advise ICANN regarding issues relating to ccTLDs?

F. Effectiveness of implementation of prior ccNSO review recommendations
- Have implementation steps been completed, or initiated, from the prior review? If not, why not?
- Has implementation been completed to a degree that allows assessment of effectiveness? If so, have the implemented recommendations from previous review efforts led to the desired improvements?

Exclusions

The following elements should be excluded from the review:
1. Assessment of financial contributions of ccTLDs to ICANN.
   Rationale for exclusion:
   - The financial contribution of a ccTLD to ICANN is voluntary and a matter between the individual ccTLD and ICANN.
   - Although the ccTLD community has developed a guideline to assist an individual ccTLD to select a level of financial contribution through the ccNSO, there is no formal role of the ccNSO with respect to the financial contributions of ccTLDs to ICANN.

2. Assessment of the quality of outcomes from ccNSO's policy development process (Annex B) and scope (Annex C).
   Rationale for exclusion: An assessment of the quality of the policies that the ccNSO develops is not mandated by the ICANN Bylaws.

The implementation of any recommendations that come out of the review remain subject to section 10.6 of the Bylaws.

If, in the course of the Review, the independent examiner receives input on any items outside of the scope of the Review, it will be encouraged that they share this feedback directly with the ccNSO, and not as part of the Review process.

2.4   Review Work Methodology

The review's methodology is expected to include the following:
- Examination of documentation, records and reports.
- Observation of proceedings of ccNSO activities.
- Interviews (group and/or individual) with existing and former ccNSO members and the broader ICANN Community, especially those in leadership positions of the SO/ACs, as well as the ICANN Board and ICANN organization[1].
- Online survey to collect feedback pertinent to the scope of this review. Feedback should be sought from existing and former ccNSO members as well as all of ICANN's SOs and ACs; the ICANN Board of Directors; interested members from ICANN Community and members of the ICANN organization.
- Consulting studies and/or literature related to the roles/procedures of the ccNSO and/or other, comparable bodies.

2.5   Structure of the Reports
There are to be two reports—an Assessment Report and a Final Report.

The Assessment Report is to be the initial published document, presenting findings about areas that are working well and those that need improvement. The Assessment Report should not include recommendations. A public consultation of the Assessment Report will

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[1] ICANN organization is the term used for all ICANN employees.

take place, led by the ccNSO Review Working Party and ICANN's Multistakeholder Strategy and Strategic Initiatives (MSSI) department.

The Assessment Report should have the following main sections:

1. **Executive Summary:** This section should provide a clear and easy to understand summary of findings and recommendations.
2. **Facts:** This section should provide data on all aspects as described in the Scope of Work section above.
3. **Analysis:** This section should provide an in-depth analysis of the data collected, and show correlations amongst the various data sets. A clear explanation of how each data set is weighted to achieve impartiality and balance should also be provided. An explanation of how public comment/input has been incorporated or rejected by the independent examiner.
4. **Assessment:** This section should provide an overview of what processes work well and where improvements can be made; the assessment ought to be based on and refer to the 'Facts' and 'Analysis' sections.

The Final Report should include the following main sections:
1. **Executive Summary:** This section should provide a clear and easy to understand summary of findings and recommendations.
2. **Facts:** This section should provide data on all aspects as described in the Scope of Work section above.
3. **Analysis:** This section must provide an in-depth analysis of the data collected, and show correlations across the various data sets. A clear explanation of how each data set is weighted to achieve impartiality and balance should also be provided.
4. **Conclusions:**
   a. Based on the findings from analyzing the data collected, the Report must identify elements that are working well and those that need improvement; i.e. an updated version of the assessment report.
   b. The Report should include a description of input received from the ccNSO as well as from other parts of the ICANN Community. Indications of how input has been incorporated and a rationale for exclusion, if applicable, should also be included.
   c. The Report should provide suggestions and recommendations on ways to improve effectiveness of the ccNSO, clearly indicating how each recommendation addresses one or several of the issues previously identified to be in need of improvement. Wherever possible, recommendations should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-limited (SMART)

A draft Final Report will be published for public comment. Following the ICANN standard for public comment periods, the independent examiner will update the report (if applicable) and then submit the Final Report to ICANN.

The Final Report and any attached documents will be submitted in the English language. All reports will be submitted to ICANN electronically in MS-Word and PDF format, including a red-line version (if applicable).

2.6 Background of the RFP

Current Review

The current cycle of reviews is conducted based on the process documented on ICANN.org.

The timing of the current ccNSO Organizational Review is in accordance with the ICANN Bylaws Section 4.4, which mandates such periodic reviews shall be conducted no less frequently than every five years, based on feasibility as determined by the Board. In September 2017, the ICANN Board resolved to defer the current ccNSO Review until August 2018 in response to community concerns about volunteer bandwidth.

In preparation for the ccNSO Review, the current ccNSO has established a Review Working Party (RWP) to serve as a liaison between the independent examiner, the wider Community, the current ccNSO and the Organizational Effectiveness Committee of the Board (OEC) who is responsible for the oversight of Organizational Reviews, including this ccNSO Review.

The role of the ccNSO RWP is to provide input on review criteria and the ccNSO assessment, coordinate interviews and objectively supply clarification and responses to the Assessment Report and the Final Report as well as any intermediary findings. Once the Final Report is issued, the ccNSO RWP is expected to coordinate with the ccNSO to prepare a Feasibility Assessment and Initial Implementation Plan based on the Final Report. Subsequently both reports will be sent on to the OEC for its consideration.

Previous Review

The first ccNSO Review Working Group (RWG) formed in June 2009. The RWG was charged with providing feedback to the independent examiner throughout the regular review process, and addressing recommendations in the independent examiner's Final Report.

ITEMS International was appointed as the independent examiner of the ccNSO Review. The review was designed to determine: (i) whether the ccNSO is fulfilling its purpose in the ICANN structure; and (ii) if so, whether any change in its structure or operations is desirable to improve its effectiveness and facilitate further membership of the wider ccTLD community. The Final Report of the independent examiner, which summarized findings from the independent review and contained proposals for action, was published for public comment on 15 June 2010.

The RWG presented its Draft Final Report for public comment on 15 November 2010. The Report includes draft conclusions and recommendations of the RWG on the review process of ccNSO, based on the Final Report of the independent examiner and on comments received from the ICANN Community. Following the 15 January 2011 closing of the public comment period, the RWG Final Report was presented to the ICANN Board on 4 March 2011.

Pursuant to its Charter, the report was presented to the Structural Improvements Committee (SIC), currently the OEC of the ICANN Board. After the SIC reviewed the report, and developed implementation steps, the Committee recommended that the ICANN Board approve them.

The report was adopted in June 2011. The Board resolution can be found here: https://www.icann.org/resources/board-material/resolutions-2011-06-24-en#1.3

Details of the implementation of all recommendations from the first ccNSO Review were published in September 2013 and can be found here: https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/improvements-implementation-plan-11sep13-en.pdf

Additional information about the first ccNSO Review is available at:
https://www.icann.org/resources/reviews/org/ccnso

3.0   High-Level 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:

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

1) Understanding of the assignment
   a. Understanding of the assignment, timeline and expected deliverables including specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-limited (SMART) recommendations.
   b. Recognition and understanding that assignment requires ability to work productively, flexibly, and effectively with volunteers and volunteer-based organizations. This includes proactively balancing time zones to ensure appropriate input from a wide range of stakeholders.
2) Knowledge and expertise
   a. Demonstrated understanding of the ccNSO's role within the ICANN structure and how it coordinates with other ICANN Supporting Organizations, Advisory Committees, and stakeholders.
   b. Demonstrated experience in conducting broadly similar examinations of a large, volunteer-based organization with a multistakeholder structure.
   c. Demonstrated experience in working with volunteer-based organizations and demonstrated sensitivity and consideration of volunteer time.
   d. Demonstrated understanding of non-for-profit or non-governmental organizations.
   e. Basic knowledge of ICANN.
   f. Geographic and cultural diversity, multilingualism, gender balance and demonstrated experience of living and/or working in different cultural settings.
   g. Suitability of proposed CVs.
3) Proposed methodology
   a. Work organization, project management approach, timelines (including flexibility subject to community needs).
   b. Clarity of weight expected to be assigned to each method outlined in section 2.4 of this document.
   c. Suitability of tools and methods of work.
   d. Clarity of deliverables.
   e. Suitability for engaging volunteers within volunteer-based organizations.
4) Flexibility, including but not limited to:
   a. Geographic, gender and cultural diversity.
   b. Meeting the timeline.
   c. Ability to adjust to circumstances that could extend the review.
   d. General adaptability.
5) Reference checks
6) Financial value
7) Independence and impartiality including no conflict of interest

4.0   Business Requirements

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

1) Ability to provide a complete response based on ICANN specifications by the designated due date (see below).
2) Availability to participate in finalist presentations via conference call/remote participation (see below).
3) Ability to execute a professional services agreement substantially in accordance with the terms and conditions of ICANN's Contractor Consulting Agreement (see attached).
4) Ability to begin work in August 2018 and complete it by end of July 2019.
5) Conduct of periodic update calls, frequency to be determined.
6) Demonstrated ability to develop work methods, data-gathering mechanisms and evaluation/assessment approaches based on the specific objective and quantifiable criteria supplied by ICANN.
7) Ability to conduct examination work using remote tools.
8) Ability to attend and participate in ICANN meetings, if needed, with an appropriate number of consultants, specifically ICANN63 (20-26 October 2018 in Barcelona, Spain), ICANN64 (9-14 March 2019 in Kobe, Japan) and ICANN65 (24-27 June 2019 in Marrakech, Morocco).
9) Ability to provide the following deliverables (note that deliverables and dates may change due to community work schedules. Delivery dates may also be extended to allow the community or the independent examiner more time to digest inputs, as appropriate):

Independent Examiner Deliverable	Estimated Dates
Draft Assessment Report for Review Working Party (RWP) consideration	January 2019
Assessment Report for public consultation	February – March 2019
ICANN64: Kobe, Japan (fixed date)	**9 - 14 March 2019**
Recommendations for RWP consideration	April 2019
Draft Final Report for public comment	May – June 2019
ICANN65: Marrakech, Morocco (fixed date)	**24 – 27 June 2019**
Final Report for RWP consideration	Early July 2019
Final Report issued and posted – target date:	By July end 2019

Additional responsibilities of the independent examiner include:
1) Lead Review Working Party calls, subject to ICANN Community demands.
2) Conduct ICANN Community webinars as appropriate.
3) Remain available and responsive (email, Skype or telephone) throughout the duration of the review.
4) Respond to Community input as appropriate.
5) Remain flexible on timeline of deliverables.

5.0   RFP Timeline

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

Activity	Estimated Dates
RFP published	26 April 2018
Participants to indicate interest in submitting RFP proposal	**9 May 2018 by 23:59 UTC**

Participants submit any questions via ICANN Sourcing tool	11 May 2018 by 23:59 UTC
ICANN responds to participant questions	No later than 16 May 2018
Participant proposals due by	**24 May 2018 by 23:59 UTC**
Initial evaluations including participant presentations	**June 2018**
Final evaluations, contracting and award	July and August 2018
Start of Review	31 August 2018

6.0   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 organization 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 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 organization 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 organization, in writing, prior to Respondent's preparation of its proposal, such matters must be addressed in Respondent's proposal.

2. The ICANN organization 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 cost credibility rests with the Respondent.

4. If necessary, supplemental information to this RFP will be provided to all prospective Respondents receiving this RFP. All supplemental information issued by the ICANN

organization 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 organization reserves the right, without penalty and at its discretion, to accept or reject any proposal, withdraw this RFP, make no award, to waive or permit the correction of any informality or irregularity and to disregard any non-conforming or conditional proposal.

2. The ICANN organization 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 organization is not obliged to accept the lowest priced proposal. Price is only one of the determining factors for the successful award.

4. The ICANN organization will assess proposals based on compliant responses to the requirements set out in this RFP, any further issued clarifications (if any) 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 organization.

5. The ICANN organization 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 organization.