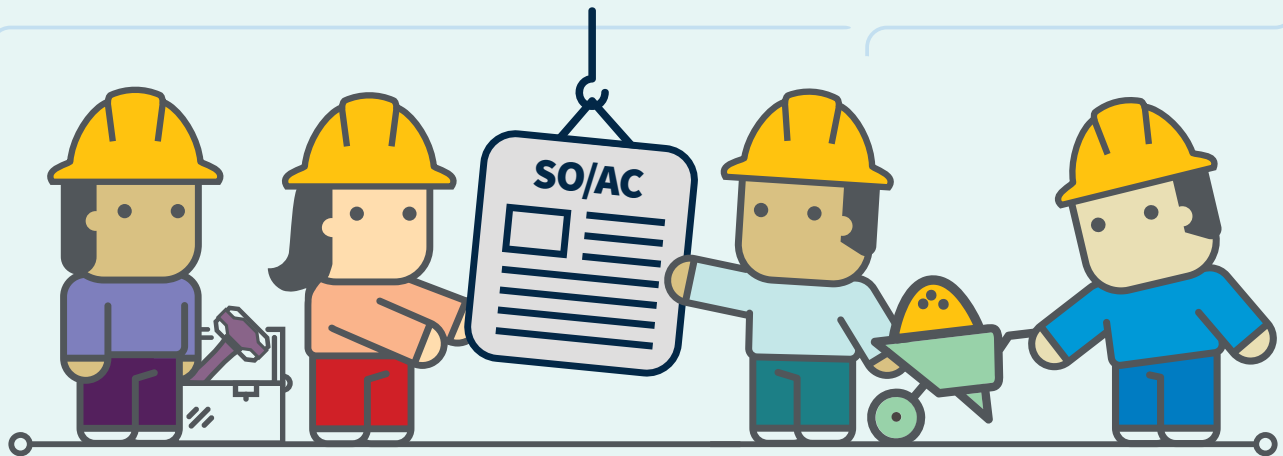


Policy Development

How **Domain Name System Policy** is Developed,
and How You Can Get Involved



Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers

table of CONTENTS

03 Introduction

04 Address Supporting Organization (ASO)

05 Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO)

06 Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO)

07 At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC)

08 Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC)

09 Root Server System Advisory Committee (RSSAC)

10 Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC)

11 Policy Development Support Function

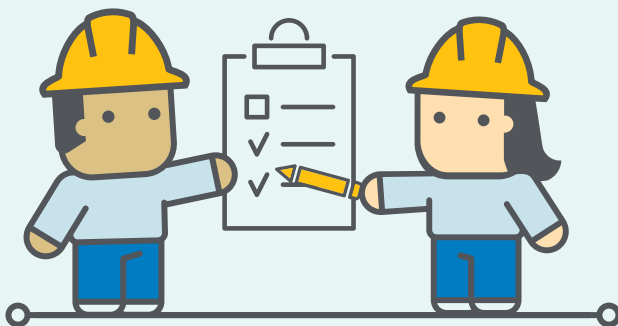


INTRODUCTION

ICANN's mission is to help ensure a stable, secure, and unified global Internet. To reach another person on the Internet, you need to type an address – a name or a number – into your computer or other device. That address must be unique so computers know where to find each other. ICANN helps coordinate and support these unique identifiers across the world. ICANN was formed in 1998 as a nonprofit public-benefit corporation with a community of participants from all over the world.

The ICANN Bylaws mandate that ICANN policies are developed through a bottom-up, consensus-based multistakeholder process. This takes place in an open and sequential way at meetings, teleconferences, and Public Comment opportunities. The ICANN community works through three Supporting Organizations (SOs) and four Advisory Committees (ACs).

The three SOs are primarily responsible for making policy recommendations on domain names and Internet Protocol (IP) addresses to the ICANN Board. The SOs are the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO), the Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO), and the Address Supporting Organization (ASO). The four ACs are the At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC), the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC), the Root Server System Advisory Committee (RSSAC), and the Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC). These ACs are composed of representatives from the Internet community who have expertise in specific areas.



Address Supporting Organization (ASO)

The ASO reviews and develops recommendations relating to the operation, allocation, and management of IP addresses and advises the ICANN Board on these issues.

The ASO was established through a Memorandum of Understanding between ICANN and the Number Resource Organization, which represents the Internet number community and the five autonomous Regional Internet Registries (RIRs):

- **[African Network Information Center \(AFRINIC\)](#)** covering the African continent
- **[Asia Pacific Network Information Centre \(APNIC\)](#)** covering the Asia-Pacific region including Australia, China, Japan, and Korea
- **[American Registry for Internet Numbers \(ARIN\)](#)** covering Canada, some Caribbean and North Atlantic islands, and the United States
- **[Latin American and Caribbean Network Information Centre \(LACNIC\)](#)** covering Latin America and the Caribbean
- **[Réseaux IP Européen Network Coordination Centre \(RIPE NCC\)](#)** covering Europe, the Middle East, and parts of Asia

RIRs manage the regional distribution of Internet number resources, including IP addresses and Autonomous System Numbers, which are unique numbers assigned to groups of IP networks. Collectively, this is referred to as the Internet Number Registry System and is described in detail in **[RFC 7020](#)**.

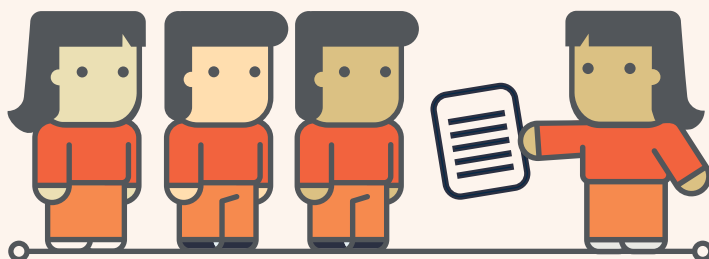
The **ASO Address Council** coordinates the global policy development work of the Internet number community and appoints members to the ICANN Board, the Nominating Committee, and other ICANN groups. It consists of 15 members, three from each RIR.

How to Become Involved

Contact your local RIR. The five RIRs hold meetings, which participants can attend in person or remotely. Each RIR also runs its own policy discussions. For more information, **[click here](#)**.

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<https://aso.icann.org/>



Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO)

Created in 2003 for and by country code top-level domain (ccTLD) managers, the ccNSO develops and recommends global policies to the ICANN Board on issues related to ccTLDs. The ccNSO provides a global platform to discuss topics and issues of concern, build consensus and technical cooperation, and facilitate the development of voluntary best practices for ccTLD managers. The ccNSO also coordinates with other ICANN community groups.

The ccNSO is administered by the **ccNSO Council**, which consists of 18 councilors, 15 elected by ccNSO members and three appointed by the ICANN Nominating Committee. The ccNSO Council meets regularly during ICANN Public Meetings and during monthly teleconferences. The ccNSO Council publishes documents, minutes of its meetings, and approved resolutions.

Policy development in the ccNSO is made through a structured process that begins with the request from the ccNSO Council, the ICANN Board, one of the regional ccTLD organizations, a Supporting Organization or the Advisory Committee, or at least 10 ccNSO members.

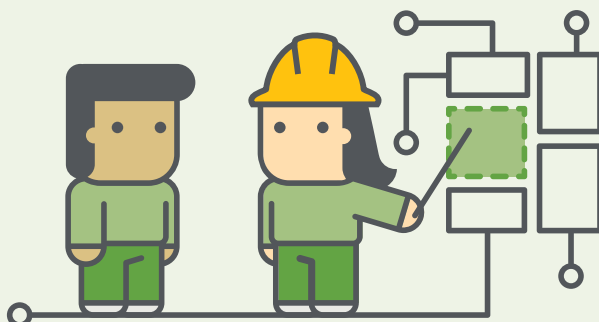
Registration policies for ccTLDs are outside the purview of the ccNSO and are set by individual ccTLDs.

How to Become Involved

If you are a manager of an International Standards Organization 3166 (ISO 3166) country code top-level domain, you may become a member of the ccNSO or participate in its working groups or meetings. Most ccNSO work takes place within its working groups. You can apply for membership online, but you do not have to be a member to participate in working groups or meetings. For more information, [click here](https://ccnso.icann.org/).

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Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO)

The GNSO develops and recommends global policies related to generic top-level domains (gTLDs). Examples of gTLDs are .org, .com, and .museum. GNSO members include representatives from gTLD registries, gTLD registrars, Internet service providers (ISP), and others who have interests in intellectual property, business, and noncommercial issues.

The 21-member **GNSO Council** manages the policy development process. For voting purposes, it is divided into two houses. Within these two houses, the GNSO has four broad Stakeholder Groups that represent a wide variety of groups and individuals that make up the ICANN community. The Contracted Parties House consists of the Registries and Registrars Stakeholder Groups, while the Non-Contracted Parties House consists of the Commercial and Noncommercial Stakeholder Groups.

Policy within the GNSO is made through a structured policy development process (PDP) that begins with the identification of an issue, usually by the GNSO Council, ICANN Board, or an Advisory Committee.

How to Become Involved

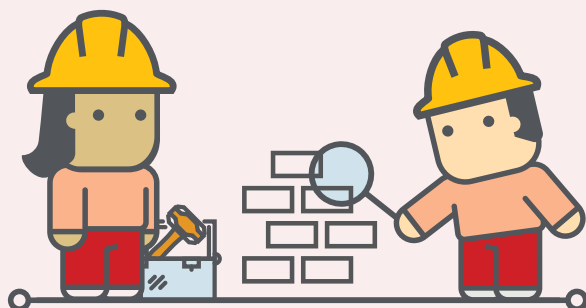
Individuals and organizations may apply for membership in any of the GNSO Stakeholder Groups and Constituencies. This includes:

- The Commercial Stakeholder Group and its three constituencies
 - Business Constituency
 - Intellectual Property Constituency
 - ISPs and Connectivity Providers Constituency
- The Noncommercial Stakeholder Group and its two constituencies
 - Noncommercial Users Constituency
 - Not-for-Profit Operational Concerns Constituency
- Registrar Stakeholder Group
- gTLD Registries Stakeholder Group

Each Stakeholder Group and Constituency has membership rules. For more information, [click here](#).

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At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC)

The ALAC expresses the interests of individual Internet end users in ICANN policy development and gives advice to the ICANN Board. ALAC publishes its analyses of proposed ICANN policies and decisions from the perspective of end users. Many ALAC working groups are dedicated to policy discussions and capacity development activities. Other groups address issues such as improving accessibility and inclusion at ICANN.

ALAC is a part of the bottom-up At-Large community. At-Large Structures (ALSes) exist at the grassroots level. ALSes are organized by region through five Regional At-Large Organizations (RALOs). These five RALOs inform the end-user community in their region about ICANN work. Each RALO is governed separately. It elects leaders and has its own requirements for these positions.

The five RALOs are:

- African Regional At-Large Organization (AFRALO)
- Asian, Australasian, and Pacific Islands Regional At-Large Organization (APRALO)
- European At-Large Organization (EURALO)
- Latin American and Caribbean Islands Regional At-Large Organization (LACRALO)
- North American Regional At-Large Organization (NARALO)

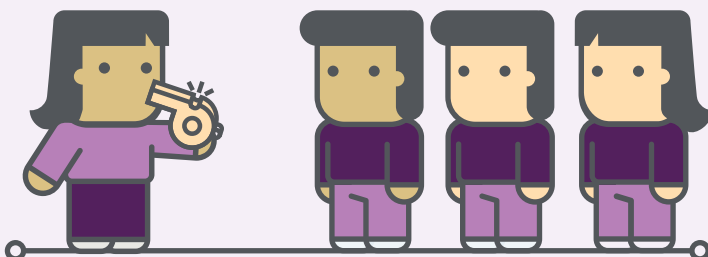
In addition to members of ALSes, RALOs have either a provision that allows individual members to participate or are working to develop such provisions.

How to Become Involved

Everyone is invited to participate in the At-Large community, and many [resources](#) are available to help newcomers learn more about how it works and how to get involved.

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<https://atlarge.icann.org/>



Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC)

The GAC provides advice on the public policy aspects of ICANN activities, especially in the areas of possible interactions between ICANN policies and national laws or international agreements. The GAC is not a decision-making body. It advises ICANN on issues that are within its remit. According to the ICANN Bylaws, the ICANN Board must take GAC advice into account. If the ICANN Board proposes actions that would be inconsistent with GAC advice, it must provide reasons for doing so and attempt to reach a mutually acceptable solution.

GAC membership consists of national governments and distinct economies recognized in international forums. Multinational governmental, treaty organizations, and public authorities participate in the GAC as observers.

GAC working groups focus their efforts on issues such as the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process (PDP), including geographical names; public safety; underserved regions; human rights and international law; Universal Acceptance; Internationalized Domain Names; and GAC operating principles. Working groups also examine internal matters, including GAC relations with the ICANN Nominating Committee, the evolution of travel support guidelines, the implementation of accountability recommendations, and the development of new processes and resources to support the work of the GAC and its working groups.

How to Become Involved

According to its operating principles, the GAC is comprised of members that are national governments or distinct economies as recognized in international forums. Intergovernmental organizations or treaty organizations may become GAC observers. Governments and entities interested in joining the GAC as a member or observer, can send a formal inquiry to the [GAC support team](#).

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Root Server System Advisory Committee (RSSAC)

The RSSAC advises the ICANN community and ICANN Board on matters relating to the operation, administration, security, and integrity of the Root Server System (RSS). The RSSAC consists of representatives from the root server operator organizations and liaisons from the partner organizations involved in the technical and operational management of the root zone.

The **RSSAC Caucus** is comprised of Domain Name System (DNS) experts who have an interest in the RSS and broaden the base of diverse, technical expertise available for RSSAC work. The primary role of the RSSAC Caucus is to perform research and produce publications on topics relevant to the mission of the RSSAC.

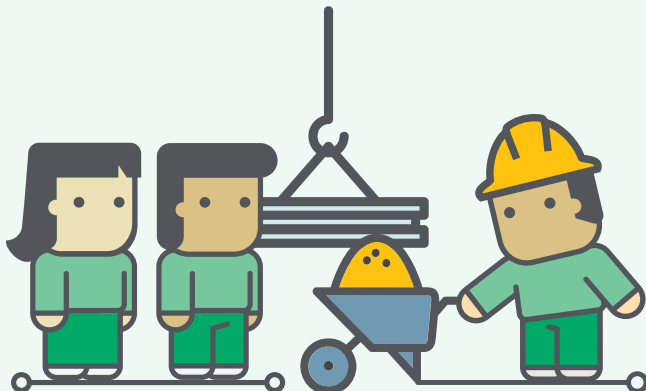
How to Become Involved

Interested parties can apply for membership in the RSSAC Caucus by **submitting a Statement of Interest** to the RSSAC Caucus Membership Committee. In this statement of interest, RSSAC Caucus applicants indicate their preferred work areas and relevant expertise. The membership committee considers the following points when reviewing applicants: knowledge of the DNS, experience within the DNS community, and a commitment to participate.

Members of the RSSAC Caucus can serve as leaders who produce or contribute to documents. RSSAC Caucus members may also submit personal opinions about a document at any point in the process, and specifically once the document has been submitted to the RSSAC.

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Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC)

The SSAC advises the ICANN community and ICANN Board on matters relating to the security and integrity of the naming and address allocation systems of the Internet. This includes operational matters such as those pertaining to the correct and reliable operation of the Root Server System; administrative matters such as those pertaining to address allocation and Internet number assignment; and registration matters such as those pertaining to registry and registrar services like WHOIS. The SSAC also tracks and assesses threats and risks to the Internet naming and address allocation services.

SSAC members are technical security professionals who volunteer their time and expertise to improve the security and integrity of the Internet's addressing system. The SSAC produces reports, correspondence, and comments on a range of topics to the ICANN Board, the ICANN community, and the broader Internet community.

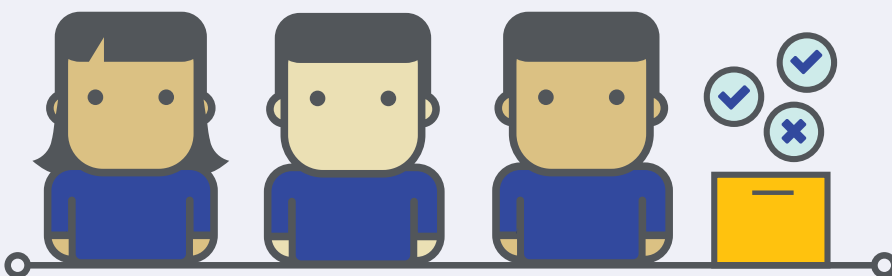
How to Become Involved

The ICANN Board appoints the chair and members of SSAC. The SSAC Membership Committee meets with potential candidates and reviews their experience, interests, and skills before making recommendations for membership to the SSAC. If the SSAC agrees to admit new members based on those recommendations, it then requests appointments via the SSAC Liaison to the ICANN Board.

Interested individuals are invited to contact the chair or any member of SSAC about joining. Candidates will be asked to submit a resume or curriculum vitae, a statement of interest, and a description of skills that they would bring to the SSAC.

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Policy Development Support Function

ICANN community members have limited time to participate in ICANN policy development. For this reason, the ICANN org Policy Development Support function offers a broad range of support. The Policy Development Support function consists of subject matter experts and community operations professionals.

Supporting the ICANN Community

Facilitation | The Policy Development Support function facilitates meetings with a neutral stance, focusing on developing goal-oriented outcomes, and fostering a collaborative work environment. This includes timekeeping, recording discussions and decisions, and communicating action items.

Subject Matter Experts | The Policy Development Support function has a deep understanding of technical issues relevant to the policy development mission of ICANN.

Research | The Policy Development Support function conducts research into different topics for the ICANN community, from privacy laws to domain name collisions. This helps the ICANN community learn more about issues, raise questions, and formulate recommendations.

Managing Processes

Community Operations | The Policy Development Support function streamlines operations for the SOs, ACs, Stakeholder Groups, Constituencies, and working groups. This involves working closely with ICANN community leaders to create agendas, maintain membership rosters, schedule meetings, and ensure participation.

Public Comment | This mechanism gives the ICANN community, Internet stakeholders, and the general public an opportunity to **provide input** on ICANN work and policies. It is a vital part of the multistakeholder model and contributes to our transparency and accountability commitments. The Policy Development Support function ensures that Public Comment submissions are handled fairly and facilitates their review and analysis.

Informing Stakeholders

The Policy Development Support function uses a variety of channels to reach stakeholders on a broad range of policy development priorities. This includes **briefings, reports, and webinars**. There is also a twice-weekly **ICANN Community Leadership Digest** to help ICANN community leaders track requests and follow updates.

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