

Scoping Document

What Is Expected to be Addressed in the Transition Proposal?

On 14 March 2014, the United States Department of Commerce National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) announced its intent to transition key Internet domain name functions to the global multistakeholder community. As the first step, NTIA asked ICANN to convene global stakeholders to develop a proposal to transition the current stewardship role played by NTIA in the coordination of the Internet's Domain Name System (DNS).

ICANN has learned through other efforts, such as the reviews called for under the Affirmation of Commitments, that providing a clear scope for the dialogue allows the participants to focus on addressing the challenge presented and gaining consensus. As a result, ICANN, in consultation with NTIA, provides this scoping document in support of the global dialogue on this first step of work.

What Must the Proposal to Transition NTIA's Role Address?

NTIA specified that the transition proposal must have broad community support and meet the following principles:

- Supports and enhances the multistakeholder model;
- Maintains the security, stability and resiliency of the DNS;
- Meets the expectations of affected parties; and,
- Maintains the openness of the Internet.

NTIA also specified that it will not accept a proposal that replaces the NTIA role with a government-led or an intergovernmental organization solution.

What is the Scope of the Proposal?

The Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions are a set of interdependent technical functions that enable the continued efficient operation of the Internet. The IANA functions include: (1) the coordination of the assignment of technical Internet protocol parameters; (2) the processing of change requests to the authoritative root zone file of the DNS and root key signing key (KSK) management; (3) the allocation of Internet numbering resources; and (4) other services related to the management of the ARPA and INT top-level domains (TLDs).

NTIA contracts with ICANN to carry out the IANA functions. As the IANA functions operator, ICANN maintains, updates and makes publicly available registries related to the three IANA functions. First, ICANN is the central repository for protocol name and number registries used in many Internet protocols. It reviews and assigns unique values based on established policies and guidelines as developed by the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). Second, it coordinates allocations of IP (Internet Protocol) and AS (Autonomous System) numbers to the Regional Internet Registries (RIR) who then distribute IP and AS

Scoping Document

numbers to Internet Service Providers and others within their geographic regions. Third, ICANN processes root zone change requests for Top Level Domains (TLDs) and makes publicly available a Root Zone WHOIS database with current and verified contact information for all TLD registry operators. In all three cases ICANN as the IANA functions operator applies the policies developed by the affected parties when completing requests related to the various IANA functions.

NTIA has a Cooperative Agreement with Verisign to perform the related root zone management functions. The related root zone management functions are the management of the root zone “zone signing key” (ZSK), as well as implementation of changes to and distribution of the DNS authoritative root zone file, which is the authoritative registry containing the lists of names and addresses for all top level domains, effectively the Internet’s phone book.

NTIA’s role in the IANA functions includes the role of administering changes to the authoritative root zone file and, more generally, serving as the historic steward of the DNS via the administration of the IANA functions contract. NTIA does not initiate changes to the authoritative root zone file, assignment of protocol numbers, or allocation of Internet numbering resources. In addition, in practice, the NTIA role does not involve the exercise of discretion or judgment with respect to root zone change requests nor should any new authority or process exercise such discretion or judgment.

The dialogue and resulting proposal are to focus on defining accountability mechanisms that would serve to replace the current stewardship role played by NTIA to ensure ICANN’s performance of the IANA functions based on the agreements and/or policies provided by the respective bodies (IETF, GNSO, RIRs, ASO, ccTLDs, ccNSO).

Scoping Document

Following is an illustrative description of the system as described above:

IANA FUNCTIONS	IANA POLICY / SPECIFICATION		IANA IMPLEMENTATION			
	DEVELOPMENT	OPERATION	ACCOUNTABILITY			
			CURRENT	FUTURE		
PROTOCOL PARAMETERS	GLOBAL	IETF	ICANN	IAB/USG	Mechanism	
GENERAL PURPOSE IP ADDRESSES	GLOBAL	ASO		RIRs/USG	Mechanism	
GENERIC DOMAIN NAMES	GLOBAL	gNSO		ICANN/Verisign/Root Operators	gTLD Registries /gNSO/USG	Mechanism
COUNTRY CODE DOMAIN NAMES	GLOBAL	ccTLDs ccNSO		ccTLDs/ ccNSO/ GAC/ USG	Mechanism	

Transition from USG/NTIA Stewardship Requires Global Public Consultation

What is Outside of the Scope of the Proposal?

In discussions to date, a number of topics have arisen that are outside the scope of this transition. To avoid any misunderstanding, there are a range of issues that, while important, are not appropriately part of a transition proposal requested by NTIA, including:

- **Policy development related to the IANA functions.** As NTIA currently plays no unique role in the development of policies for the coordination of the Internet’s domain name system, the proposal is not about how relevant policies are created, nor the relevant structures in which they are created. The roles of all Internet registry policy bodies (such as the RIRs, IAB, IETF, ASO, NRO, ccNSO, ccTLD Registry Operators, and the GNSO) will stay unchanged. These bodies continue to represent their respective communities and hold policy authority for the protocol parameter, number, and name spaces, including responsibility to ensure the faithful registry implementation by ICANN according to those policies.
- **IANA functions operator.** NTIA exercises no operational role in the performance of the IANA functions. Therefore, ICANN’s role as the operator of the IANA functions is not the focus of the transition: it is paramount to maintain the security, stability, and resiliency of the DNS, and uninterrupted service to the affected parties.
- **Issues Not Within the IANA Functions.** The operation of the IANA functions is not involved in issues, for example, of cybersecurity, privacy, content, child protection,

Scoping Document

online protection of intellectual property; structural review of ICANN or its functions; or the management of TLDs. While all of these remain important topics for discussion and are regularly discussed within multiple forums, they fall outside the scope of the transition proposal requested by NTIA.