GAO Engagement on the Internet Domain Name System

Discussion Guide

Background on GAO's Engagement

GAO has been asked by the Chairs of the House Energy and Commerce Committee and its Communications and Technology Subcommittee to review the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) planned transition of its oversight of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions to the global multistakeholder community. We are meeting with key people and organizations to gather input on

- the process used to develop a transition proposal and how the process considers risks associated with the transition as identified by stakeholders and

- The extent to which NTIA's core requirements for the transition provide an effective framework to evaluate the transition proposal.

Topics for Discussion

1. What is your experience related to the IANA functions and NTIA's role?

2. How would you describe NTIA's current role with regard to the IANA functions (e.g., stewardship, administrative/clerical, backstop, etc)?

3. If you consider the implications of transitioning NTIA's role to a global multistakeholder community, what are the potential risks, if any, that come to mind?

   a. What risks can you identify if the transition does occur (i.e., such as any technical, operational, or accountability risks that are currently mitigated by NTIA's contract with ICANN)?

   b. What are the potential risks if the transition does *not* occur?

   c. Are you aware of the list of contingencies being considered by the cross-community working group on enhancing ICANN accountability (CCWG-Accountability)? If so, to what extent do you think this is a comprehensive list? Which risks, if any, are present regardless of NTIA's oversight role?

4. Who, specifically, of the multi-stakeholder community might be most impacted by a transition of NTIA's role? Are these potentially-impacted stakeholders sufficiently represented by the discussion and efforts to develop a transition proposal?

   a. [If stakeholder is from one of the multi-stakeholder constituency groups in ICANN] What is the process for raising concerns that arise from the perspective of your constituency to the multi-stakeholder community and to what extent do you think this process is effective in ensuring that all issues are considered in policy development and decisionmaking?

5. What are the most important issues for the transition proposal to address? Do you have a view on what structure or approach could most effectively address these issues?

6. What factors should be considered when evaluating transition proposals? To what extent do NTIA's core requirements address potential risks? NTIA will require that the proposal:

   a. supports and enhances the multistakeholder model of Internet governance,

   b. maintains the security, stability, and resiliency of the Internet domain name system (DNS),

   c. meets the needs and expectation of the global customers and partners of the IANA services;

   d. maintains the openness of the Internet, and,

   e. does not replace NTIA's oversight role with a government-led or intergovernmental organization solution.