**Draft of Principles and Criteria that Should Underpin Decisions on the Transition of NTIA Stewardship**

**Introduction**

These principles and criteria are meant to be the basis on which the decisions on the transition of NTIA stewardship are formed. This means that the proposals can be tested against the principles and criteria before they are sent to the ICG.

* 1. Security and stability: Changes must not undermine the operation of the IANA function and should assure accountability and objectivity in the stewardship of the service.

Changes should be the minimum needed to provide accountability and objectivity.

* 1. Accountability and transparency: the service should be accountable and transparent.
     1. Transparency: Transparency is a prerequisite of accountability. While there might be commercial confidentiality concerns or concerns over operational continuity during the process of delegation or redelegation of a TLD, the final decision and the rationale for that decision should be made public or at least be subject to an independent scrutiny as part of an ex-post assessment of service performance.
     2. Independence of accountability[[1]](#footnote-1): Accountability should be independent of the IANA functions operator and should assure the accountability of the operator to the inclusive global multi-stakeholder community.
     3. Independence of policy from IANA: the IANA functions operator should be independent of the policy processes. Its role is to implement changes in accordance with policy agreed through the relevant bottom up policy process. (Note: this does not pre-suppose any model for separation of the policy and IANA roles. The current contract already requires such separation.)
     4. Protection against Capture: Safeguards need to be in place to prevent capture of the service or of any oversight or stewardship function.
     5. Performance standards: The functions operator needs to meet agreed service levels and its decisions should be in line with agreed policy. Processes need to be in place to monitor performance and mechanisms should be in place to remedy failures. A fallback provision also needs to be in place in case of service failure.
     6. Appeals and redress: There should be an appeals process on decisions that includes [binding] redress open to affected parties and open to public scrutiny.
  2. Service levels: The performance of the IANA functions must be carried out in a reliable, timely and efficient manner. It is a vital service and any proposal should ensure continuity of service over the transition and beyond, meeting a recognised and agreed quality of service and in line with service-level commitments.
     1. Service level commitments should be adaptable to developing needs of the customers of the IANA function and subject to continued improvement.
     2. The process should be automated for all routine functions.
     3. Service quality should be independently audited (*ex-post* review) against agreed commitments.
  3. Policy based: Decisions and actions of the IANA functions operator should be based on policy agreed to through the recognised bottom-up multi-stakeholder processes. As such, decisions and actions should be:
     1. Predictable: Decisions are clearly rooted in agreed policy. For ccTLDs, decisions may be made locally through nationally agreed processes. The ccNSO is the policy authority in ICANN, working in an open process with all ccTLDs, not just ccNSO members, although its authority is not universally accepted. For gTLDs, the policy authority is the GNSO;
     2. Non-discriminatory;
     3. Audited (*ex-post* review); and
     4. Appealable by significantly interested parties.
  4. Diversity of IANA’s Customers:   
       
     IANA’s operations need to take account of the variety of forms of relationship between TLD operators and the IANA functions operator. The transition will need to reflect the diversity of arrangements in accountability to the direct users of the IANA functions.  
       
     For ccTLDs: the IANA should provide a service without requiring a contract and should respect the diversity of agreements and arrangements in place for ccTLDs. In particular, the national policy authority should be respected and no additional requirements should be imposed unless it is directly and demonstrably linked to global security, stability and resilience of the DNS[[2]](#footnote-2).
  5. Seperability: any proposal must ensure the ability:
     1. To separate the IANA functions from the current operator if warranted and in line with agreed processes; and
     2. To convene a process for selecting a new operator.

Seperability should persist through any future transfer of the IANA functions. (Note the current NTIA contract requires such separation.)

1. In this the principle is the independence of the oversight, not the oversight per se. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This is included in rfc1591 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)