Enhancing ICANN Accountability

1. Comment Phase
   Ends 30 May 2014 23:59 UTC

2. Reply Phase
   Ends 21 Jun 2014 23:59 UTC

3. Summary and Review
   Evaluation and Decision
   During this phase your comments are reviewed by the body that asked for input/feedback and evaluations are made about how to proceed based on the comments.

Brief Overview

As announced at ICANN’s March 2014 Public Meeting
in Singapore, ICANN is initiating a discussion on Enhancing ICANN Accountability. This discussion will look at how ICANN remains accountable in the absence of its historical contractual relationship to the U.S. Government and the perceived backstop with regard to ICANN's organization-wide accountability provided by that role. While related to the ongoing discussions around the IANA Stewardship Transition, this is a separate process, though the output of this process is expected to be completed on the same timeframe as the stewardship transition work.

**Update:** Due to technical difficulties experienced during the transition from the old to the new ICANN site, the links to the pages related to "Enhancing ICANN Accountability" opportunity for public dialogue and community feedback were intermittently inaccessible. To ensure that the community has the full 21 days to comment, we are extending the deadline to the comments phase by three days to 30 May. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused. The reply period will close on 21 June at 23:59 UTC.

Comment Period: 6 May 2014 - 30 May 2014 23:59 UTC

**Section I: Description, Explanation, and Purpose**

On March 14, 2014, the US National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) announced its intent to transition its stewardship over key Internet domain name functions to the global multistakeholder community. NTIA asked ICANN, as the IANA functions contractor and the
global coordinator for the DNS, to convene a multistakeholder process to develop a proposal for the transition.

During discussions around the IANA stewardship transition, the community has also raised the broader topic of the impact of the transition on ICANN accountability. While the community develops a proposal for the transition of NTIA’s stewardship role, it is important that the community also address the separate – but interdependent and interrelated – issue of ICANN’s accountability. As a result, ICANN is launching a separate process, the scope of which is to look at ICANN remaining accountable in the absence of its historical contractual relationship to the U.S. Government and the perceived backstop with regard to ICANN’s organization-wide accountability provided by that role, such as the renewal process of the IANA Functions Contract. This second process will examine from an organizational perspective how ICANN’s broader accountability mechanisms should be strengthened to address the absence of its historical contractual relationship to the U.S. Government. This includes looking at strengthening existing accountability mechanisms like the Affirmation of Commitments. This process is additive, not a duplication of any of the reviews called for under the Affirmation of Commitments.

This Accountability Process is envisioned to be coordinated by the ICANN Accountability Working Group, comprised of community members as well subject-matter experts in a range of areas, including:

- Internet Technical Operations
- International Organizational Reviews
- Global Accountability Tools and Metrics
The Enhancing ICANN Accountability page sets out the detail of the proposed terms of reference for the process as well as setting forth questions designed to provide input to the ICANN Accountability Working Group. For ease of reference, the questions posed are:

- What issues does the community identify as being core to strengthening ICANN’s overall accountability in the absence of its historical contractual relationship to the U.S. Government?
- What should be the guiding principles to ensure that the notion of accountability is understood and accepted globally? What are the consequences if the ICANN Board is not being accountable to the community? Is there anything that should be added to the Working Group’s mandate?
- Do the Affirmation of Commitments and the values expressed therein need to evolve to support global acceptance of ICANN’s accountability and so, how?
- What are the means by which the Community is assured that ICANN is meeting its accountability commitments?
- Are there other mechanisms that would better ensure that ICANN lives up to its commitments?
- What additional comments would you like to share that could be of use to the ICANN
Accountability Working Group?
As the public comment period is underway, ICANN will be reaching out to the Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees regarding the identification of Working Group members. ICANN anticipates that the Working Group will commence its work, including consideration of community input, during ICANN 50 in June 2014. It’s expected that sub-working groups on specialized subject areas will be useful and open to all.

Section II: Background

The Enhancing ICANN Accountability page sets forth detail on the community consultation that led to the creation of this ICANN Accountability Process, as well as an inventory of ICANN’s current accountability efforts.

Section III: Relevant Resources

Community input is sought on the Enhancing ICANN Accountability proposal.

Section IV: Additional Information

N/A

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