

# Request for Proposals for consulting services: independent review of the ICANN's Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO)

Deadline for applications: **xxxxxxxxxxxxxx**

## 1 Instructions to Bidders

### 1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) is an internationally organized, non-profit corporation that has responsibility for the coordination of critical Internet resources. These include Internet Protocol (IP) address space allocation, protocol identifier assignment, generic (gTLD) and country code (ccTLD) Top- Level Domain name system management, and root server system management functions.

As a private-public partnership, ICANN is dedicated to preserving the operational stability of the Internet; to promoting competition; to achieving broad representation of global Internet communities; and to developing policy appropriate to its mission through bottom-up, consensus-based processes. The systems that ICANN coordinates provide stability and universal resolvability of the Domain Name System (DNS).

1.1.2 ICANN is seeking to appoint an independent consultant to undertake an organizational review of its Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO). The ccNSO is the policy development body for a narrow range of global ccTLD (country code Top-Level Domain) issues within the ICANN structure. In particular, it is responsible for developing and recommending to the Board of Directors global policies relating to country-code top-level domains, nurturing consensus across the ccNSO's community, including the name-related activities of ccTLDs, and coordinating with other ICANN Supporting Organizations, committees, and constituencies.

Further details about ccNSO can be found in the Terms of Reference below (Section 2 of the present Request for Proposals).

1.1.3 The present Section 1 provides instructions to bidders for answering to the Request for Proposals, while the following Section 2 contains the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the consulting activity to be carried out. The two sections should be read in conjunction.

### 1.2 Objectives, timeline and estimated efforts

1.2.1 The review is designed to determine: (i) whether the ccNSO is fulfilling its purpose in the ICANN structure; and (ii) if so, whether any change in its structure or operations is desirable to improve its effectiveness and facilitate further membership of the wider ccTLD community. Please refer to the Section 2 below for the full ToR.

1.2.2 The review is due to begin in **xxxxxx**. While a full project timeline should be developed by applicants as an integral part of their bid, the following key milestones are anticipated:

- {date} beginning of operations – initial briefing
- {date} ICANN meeting in yyyyyy – initial interviews
- {date} delivery of draft final report
- {date} finalization of final report based on feedbacks from review Working Group
- {date} ICANN meeting in yyyyyy – presentation of report

1.2.3 The review is expected to absorb between four and five working months over approximately four calendar months. Substantial deviations from this estimation are to be justified in the applicant's bid.

### **1.3 Methodology of work**

1.3.1 The ccNSO review is expected to be largely based on qualitative analysis, and to include a data gathering, a data analysis and validation, and a final reporting phase. Different approaches can be proposed by applicants, and have to be adequately justified.

1.3.2 During data gathering the contractor to be selected will be required to undertake documental analysis and a significant series of individual interviews with members of the global ICANN community. Targeted interviewees are based worldwide and have varying degrees of Internet accessibility. In order to facilitate this evidence gathering phase, the consultant to be selected will be invited to attend the ICANN public meeting in xxxxxxxxxxxx, where a large number of key informed individuals will convey and can be interviewed face to face. Further distance interviews would be directly organized by the contractor via phone / teleconference; applicants are invited to specify in their offer the further mechanisms that they envisage to use to allow inputs during data gathering from the larger ccNSO and ccTLD communities.

Applicants are encouraged to propose the use of further data collection tools that they might consider appropriate as to integrate evidence, and suitable to reach a globally and culturally diverse and distributed set of stakeholders.

Applicants are invited to describe in their offer the approach that they deem the most appropriate for data analysis and validation of findings and conclusions, and to describe the mechanisms that they plan to use as to involve the structure under review in validation of findings and conclusions.

### **1.4 Steering of the review and reporting**

1.4.1 The contractor to be selected will report to Marco Lorenzoni, ICANN Director for Organizational Review.

1.4.2 The Board of Directors' Structural Improvement Committee is tasked within ICANN with the horizontal coordination of all the organizational review processes. In this role, the Committee –either directly or through a specific Working Group- will monitor the regular carrying out of the ccNSO review.

1.4.3 At the end of each calendar month the contractor to be selected will be required to produce a short flash report (one-two pages), underlining achievements against plans and –when available, early findings. The reports will be followed by phone conferences with the Director, Organizational Review and the Structural Improvement Committee or its specific Working Group to discuss proceeding of work and early findings.

1.4.4 By the date indicated in 1.2.2 the contractor will issue a draft Final Report, containing description of findings and its full conclusions and recommendations. No later than two weeks from the reception of this draft Final Report, the Structural Improvement Committee (either directly or through a specific Working Group) will

inform the contractor of its intention to either approve the report in this version, or to request to address some comments before its approval. In this last case, the contractor will be given not less than two weeks to address the comments issued by the Structural Improvement Committee (either directly or through a specific Working Group).

## **1.5 Format of the offers**

1.5.1 Interested consultants and consulting firms are invited to submit their binding offer for the present ccNSO review. In order to allow comparison of the different offers that will be received, ICANN invites applicants to structure their bid as follows:

- *Section 1 – Understanding of the assignment.* Applicants are invited to describe their own comprehension of the work to be carried out, including their understanding of the system of country code top level domains, of emerging issues, and of the main developments and challenges facing the system as a key component of the global Internet.
- *Section 2 – Qualification of the bidding organization and of the key experts proposed to conduct the assignment.* Applicants are requested to describe their qualification to carry out the ccNSO review, providing precise description and reference to their experience in assessing effectiveness and performances of national and international organizations; in reviewing structures and processes involving a globally diverse and distributed set of stakeholders; and in offering advice to guide processes of organizational change. The full contact details of five referrals are to be provided as an integral part of the offer.

Relevant research conducted and publications –if any- will be considered, as well; supporting documentation can be produced as an attachment to the offer.

- *Section 3 – Methodology of work and tools.* The applicants will describe in this section their methodological approach to the review of ccNSO, with indication of selected tools and expected efforts (in working days) per each phase of the review. A detailed timeplan will ideally complete the section.
- *Section 4 – Financial offer.* Criteria for the formulation of the financial offer can be found in following Chapter 1.7.
- *Annex: full CVs of key staff / consultants proposed to conduct the Organizational Review, proving the suitability for the proposed work of all the selected experts (max length of each CV: 3 pages). Role to be played by each individual expert has to be specified.*

1.5.2 Both consulting firms, networks of individual consultants and consortia of consulting firms can apply for this assignment. Applications submitted by networks of individual consultants, and consortia of consulting firms shall clearly identify a consortium leader, holding all responsibilities towards ICANN for the correct fulfillment of all the contractual obligations resulting in the eventuality of a contract awarding.

## **1.6 ICANN Contract Compliance**

1.6.1 Applicants should warrant that they are willing to operate under a non-disclosure agreement.

## **1.7 Formulation of the financial offer**

1.7.1 Offers shall be formulated in US Dollars.

1.7.2 The financial offer (Section 4 of the applicants' bid) is to be formulated as an overall lump-sum of the consulting fees requested for the carrying out of the full assignment. An approximate estimation of the working days needed to conduct the

assignment shall be provided, as well. Consulting fees shall include direct costs such as communication, consumables, use of computer equipment and other minor expenses.

1.7.3 ICANN will furthermore reimburse the contractor the following costs, which are not to be included in the applicants' financial offer:

- Return travels of two Members of the Consulting Team to participate to the ICANN general meetings in [REDACTED] (XXXXXXX) and in [REDACTED] (XXXXXXX); plane travels shall be taken in economy class.
- Hotel (pre-paid by ICANN) and full meal costs for the participation to the two above meetings.
- Further reasonable travel expenses, if deemed necessary for the fulfillment of the assignment, provided that they will be approved in advance in writing if exceeding US\$ 250.00.

### **1.8 Requests for clarification and contacts during the bidding period**

1.8.1 Requests for clarification can be addressed until [REDACTED] only to Marco Lorenzoni, Director Organizational Review ([marco.lorenzoni@icann.org](mailto:marco.lorenzoni@icann.org)). These requests will be answered via email within three working days from their reception. Requests for clarification and their answers will be made anonymous and published at the following webpage [REDACTED] in order to ensure equal treatment of all bidders.

1.8.2 Any other direct contact with ICANN staff during the bidding period, related to the present Request for Proposal is strongly and expressly discouraged, will not be answered and might lead to disqualification of the bidder.

### **1.9 Proposal assessment – awarding of the contract**

Proposals will be assessed by a panel composed of three to four individuals, with the use of the assessment grid enclosed as Annex XX to the present document.

Each panelist will score each proposal received, and a final average grid will be produced for each proposal, accompanied by a note resuming verified references of the three bidders scoring with the highest marks.

Final average grids and the verified references will be submitted to the Board's Structural Improvement Committee for final selection.

### **1.10 Deadline for the submission of the offers and their validity**

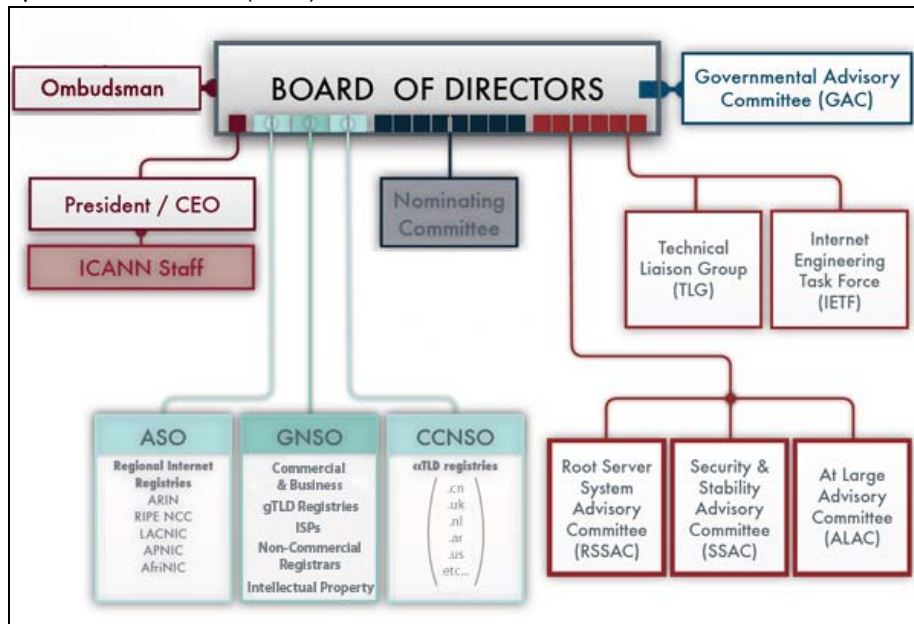
1.10.1 In order to be considered valid, offers shall be sent by [REDACTED] to Marco Lorenzoni, Director Organizational Review ([marco.lorenzoni@icann.org](mailto:marco.lorenzoni@icann.org)), in Adobe pdf format. A confirmation email will be sent for each proposal received before the expiring of the deadline.

1.10.2 Offers sent in observance of the present Request for Proposals shall remain valid for a period of six months after the deadline mentioned in previous Chapter 1.10.1.

## 2 Terms of Reference

### 2.1 The Country Code National Supporting Organization (ccNSO)

2.1.1 *History and functions* - The three ICANN's Supporting Organizations (ASO, GNSO and ccNSO) are responsible for initiating the relevant ICANN's Policy Development Processes (PDP)<sup>1</sup>.



The Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO) is the policy development body for a narrow range of global ccTLD (Country Code Top Level Domains) issues; in particular, it is responsible for developing and recommending to the Board global policies relating to country-code top-level domains, nurturing consensus across the ccNSO's community, including the name-related activities of ccTLDs, and coordinating with other ICANN Supporting Organizations, committees, and constituencies under ICANN.

The Country Code Top Level Domains have been defined in March 1994 –before ICANN came into existence- by the IETF (Internet Engineering Task Force) through its RFC 1591<sup>2</sup>. The mechanisms and concepts of RFC 1591, which are still fundamental for ccTLDs, were inherited by ICANN and to date determine the relation between ICANN and ccTLD managers, in particular the respective roles and responsibilities, which are also reflected in the ccNSO.

The ccNSO was created in 2003<sup>3</sup>, as one of the outcomes of ICANN's Evolution and Reform Process<sup>4</sup>. Before the creation of ccNSO, ccTLD managers were organised as part of the former DNSO (Domain Name Supporting Organisation) in the ccTLD constituency.

<sup>1</sup> Applicants are invited to consult the website of ICANN (<http://www.icann.org>) for a more in-depth description of its role, unique governance model, and key projects. It is furthermore suggested to applicants to read the most recent Annual Reports of ICANN, available at <http://www.icann.org/en/annualreport/> and its most recent Strategic and Operating Plans, available at <http://www.icann.org/en/planning/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc1591>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.icann.org/en/minutes/minutes-26jun03.htm>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.icann.org/en/committees/evol-reform/fifth-supplemental-implementation-report-22apr03.htm>



2.1.2 *Characteristics of ccNSO* - The ccNSO is an ICANN membership-based Supporting Organization, regulated by Article IX of ICANN's Bylaws<sup>5</sup>. Any ccTLD of an ISO 3166<sup>6</sup> country-code top-level domain is entitled to apply for voluntary and free membership to ccNSO, and any member can terminate its membership at any time by giving notice in writing.

To date, ccNSO has a membership of 90 ccTLDs out of 248, responsible for 85% of all ccTLD domain names registered.

The requirements for membership are: i) the applicant has to be a ccTLD manager; ii) the applicant shall agree to abide to policies developed through the ccPDP (country code PDP) as defined in Annex B of the ICANN Bylaws<sup>7</sup>, with the caveat that the policy has to be within the scope of a PDP (Annex C to the Bylaws<sup>8</sup>). Membership is independent from any other relation with ICANN and does not affect relations with the IANA function<sup>9</sup>.

The ccNSO Council consists of 18 members, 15 appointed on a regional basis by the ccNSO members and 3 appointed by ICANN's Nominating Committee (NomCom<sup>10</sup>).

To compensate for the appointment of the 3 NomCom members, the ccNSO Membership takes a final vote on ccPDP recommendations (Annex B). Finally, according to the Bylaws the scope of the ccPDP (Annex C) and its process (Annex B) can only be changed through a ccPDP (Article IX section 6).

2.1.3 *Main activities*<sup>11</sup> - Given its scope and limited membership, the ccNSO has run insofar only one ccPDP, which was on Bylaw changes<sup>12</sup>. A second ccPDP will focus on the introduction of IDN ccTLDs, and is expected to be initiated in April 2009<sup>13</sup>.

Most of the business undertaken by the ccNSO is not directly conducted within the remit of a policy development process, but as part of its other objectives as defined in the Article IX, section 1 of Bylaws.

To date, the efforts of ccNSO focused mainly on: providing guidelines to ccTLD's and ICANN on the voluntary contribution to ICANN costs of operation<sup>14</sup>; providing guidelines for the Accountability Framework program<sup>15</sup>; leading the effort on the introduction and delegation of IDN ccTLDs<sup>16</sup>; providing the ccTLDs and the broader ICANN community with a platform for information sharing, for example by conducting

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.icann.org/en/general/bylaws.htm#IX>

<sup>6</sup> ISO 3166 is this commonly accepted International Standard of up-to-date alpha-2 country codes; it is maintained since 1974 by the ISO 3166 Maintenance agency (ISO 3166/MA). Ref.:

[http://www.iso.org/iso/country\\_codes.htm](http://www.iso.org/iso/country_codes.htm)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.icann.org/en/general/bylaws.htm#AnnexB>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.icann.org/en/general/Bylaws.htm#AnnexC>

<sup>9</sup> The Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) is responsible for the global coordination of the DNS Root, IP addressing, and other Internet protocol resources; it is one of the Internet's oldest institutions, with its activities dating back to the 1970s, and it is today operated by ICANN. For more information on IANA please visit <http://www.iana.org/>

<sup>10</sup> The NomCom is responsible for the selection of all ICANN Directors except the President and those selected by ICANN's Supporting Organizations, and for such other selections as are set forth in the Bylaws; these include selections for the ALAC, the ccNSO Council and GNSO Council. The NomCom role and processes are regulated by Art. VII of ICANN Bylaws (<http://www.icann.org/en/general/bylaws.htm#VII>).

<sup>11</sup> Activities of ccNSO are publicized through their website <http://ccnso.icann.org/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.icann.org/en/announcements/announcement-21dec05.htm>

<sup>13</sup> Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) are domain names represented by local language characters. Such domain names could contain letters or characters from non-ASCII scripts (for example, Arabic or Chinese). Current and past ICANN activities in this field are described at

<http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.ccnso.icann.org/announcements/announcement-09mar07.htm>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.ccnso.icann.org/announcements/announcement-06jan06.htm>

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.icann.org/en/minutes/resolutions-02nov07.htm#\\_Toc55609363](http://www.icann.org/en/minutes/resolutions-02nov07.htm#_Toc55609363)

surveys and discussing their outcomes<sup>17</sup>; and on initiatives of outreach and improving participation. In 2008 the ccNSO has redefined its internal rules and guidelines<sup>18</sup>.

**2.1.4 Structural reform of ccNSO to adapt to IDN ccTLDs** - As part of its upcoming IDN ccPDP<sup>19</sup>, the ccNSO will have to adjust some of its fundamental characteristics, such as its voting and representation mechanisms, as to reflect the expected ccNSO membership of new IDN ccTLDs.

The current ccNSO membership is based on one ccTLD per territory (by definition there can be no more). With the introduction of IDN ccTLD this will change, and it can be anticipated that some territories will have more than one, and in some cases up to 20 and more ccTLDs. Fundamental changes will then be needed, for example the manner in which the ccTLD-appointed members of the ccNSO Council will be elected, and the membership vote as part of the ccPDP.

**2.1.5 Review of ICANN's Geographic Regions** - Geographic diversity is a fundamental characteristic of ICANN. The ICANN Bylaws (Article VI Section 5<sup>20</sup>) currently define five geographic regions as Africa, North America, Latin America/Caribbean, Asia/Australia/Pacific and Europe; over time, countries have been assigned to these regions on the basis of the guidelines of the United Nations' Statistics Division, and the concept of "citizenship" is now adopted. These regions were originally defined as to ensure regional diversity in the composition of the ICANN Board and were subsequently expanded in various ways as to apply to GNSO, ALAC and ccNSO. In the recent years, ccNSO has developed concerns about the assignment of territories to these regions<sup>21</sup> and related representational issues, and in 2007 the ccNSO Council approved a resolution recommending that the ICANN Board appoints a community-wide working group to further study and review the issues related to their definition, to consult with all stakeholders and submit proposals to the Board to resolve issues relating to the current definition of the ICANN Geographic Regions. The recommendation has been accepted by the Board, and a Working Group has been established to undertake a review of present ICANN's Geographic Regions<sup>22</sup>. Interested applicants are informed that the outcomes of the ongoing review of ICANN's Geographic Regions might impact ccNSO as well as other parts of the ICANN structure.

## **2.2 Questions to be addressed by reviewers**

**2.2.1** The review is designed to determine: (i) whether the ccNSO is fulfilling its purpose in the ICANN structure; and (ii) if so, whether any change in its structure or operations is desirable to improve its effectiveness and facilitate further membership of the wider ccTLD community.

**2.2.2** In order to appropriately address these two key issues, the reviewers are requested to answer to the following questions, plus any other question that they consider appropriate and suitable in order to fill their mandate.

**2.2.3 PART I – Purpose of ccNSO, its effectiveness and relevance**

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.ccnso.icann.org/surveys/>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.ccnso.icann.org/about/organisational.htm>

<sup>19</sup> The tentative timeline of the IDN ccPDP is published at: <http://www.ccnso.icann.org/workinggroups/idn-pdp-process-time-table-02dec08.htm>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.icann.org/en/general/bylaws.htm#VI>

<sup>21</sup> The ccNSO has recently adopted the possibility for its members assigned to a specific region based on the citizenship of their manager to opt to be re-assigned to an ICANN Geographic Region with which the ccTLD Manager and the Government believe the country or territory has the closest geographic, language, cultural and economic ties. <http://www.ccnso.icann.org/applications/geo-region-application.htm>

<sup>22</sup> More at <http://www.icann.org/en/announcements/announcement-2-18feb09-en.htm>

1. Has the ccNSO been effective in achieving its three key objectives<sup>23</sup>, as defined in Article IX of Bylaws?
2. What internal or external elements –if any- prevented the full achievement of ccNSO's objectives?
3. What general or specific measures can be imagined to enhance the effectiveness of the ccNSO?
4. Overall, were the initiatives carried out by ccNSO since its establishment consistent with its mandate as defined in the Bylaws?
5. What are the ccNSO members' understandings of the mandate of ccNSO?
6. What are the understandings of other Supporting Organizations and of Advisory Committees of the mandate of the ccNSO?
7. Does the ccNSO have a continuing purpose in the ICANN structure?
8. Does the rationale for ccNSO as spelled out in the Bylaws need to be revised, and in which sense?

#### 2.2.4 **PART II** – Functioning of the ccNSO

9. Does the ccNSO operate in an accountable and transparent way? Are there any changes to ccNSO ways of operating that might enhance its accountability and transparency?
10. Are the ccNSO's internal working mechanisms suitable and sufficient to guide all the aspects of its present work? The Consultant is informed that ccNSO is undertaking an IDN ccPDP (see 2.1.4) that might impact on its future working mechanisms. In consideration of the very early stage of this Process the Consultant is requested to refrain from envisaging changes to the ccNSO working mechanisms that might be dependent on the outcomes of this Process.
11. What mechanisms can be envisaged as to further support the efforts of ccNSO to enlarge its membership to further existing and future ccTLDs?
12. Has the ccNSO had the resources necessary to accomplish its tasks? Was the support provided by ICANN to ccNSO consistent and sufficient with the needs of ccNSO in terms of personnel resources, as well as in administrative and operational terms?
13. Are there regular and suitable communication and collaboration mechanisms in place between the ccNSO and other SOs and ACs?

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<sup>23</sup> *"There shall be a policy-development body known as the Country-Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO), which shall be responsible for: 1. developing and recommending to the Board global policies relating to country-code top-level domains; 2. Nurturing consensus across the ccNSO's community, including the name-related activities of ccTLDs; and 3. Coordinating with other ICANN Supporting Organizations, committees, and constituencies under ICANN." From Article IX Bylaws, Section 1 (Description)*



### 3 Annex: proposal assessment grid

Request for proposals: Bidder: Name of proposal evaluator:			
	Max score	Evaluator's score	Minimum threshold
<b>Understanding of the assignment (total)</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>
- Understanding of the Terms of Reference	15		
- Understanding of ICANN and its mandate	10		
<b>Qualification of bidder (total)</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>
- Previous similar activities conducted for national / local organizations	5		
- Previous similar activities conducted for other international organizations	10		
- Previous similar activities successfully carried out in ICANN	5		
- Geographic and cultural diversity, multilingualism, gender balance	10		
- Suitability of proposed CVs	10		
<b>Proposed methodology and tools (total)</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30</b>
- Suitability of timetable	10		
- Work organization and methodological approach	15		
- Suitability of proposed data gathering tools	15		
- Suitability of proposed data analysis / validation methods	15		
<b>Financial offer (total)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>
- Max efforts respected or acceptably justified in case of deviations?	10		
- Overall value for money?	10		
<b>OVERALL SCORE</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>75</b>