

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN
THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
AND
INTERNET CORPORATION FOR ASSIGNED NAMES AND NUMBERS

I. PARTIES

This document constitutes an agreement between the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC or USG) and the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), a not-for-profit corporation.

II. PURPOSE

A. Background

On July 1, 1997, as part of the Administration's Framework for Global Electronic Commerce, the President directed the Secretary of Commerce to privatize the management of the domain name system (DNS) in a manner that increases competition and facilitates international participation in its management.

On June 5, 1998, the DOC published its Statement of Policy, *Management of Internet Names and Addresses*, 63 *Fed. Reg.* 31741(1998) (Statement of Policy). The Statement of Policy addressed the privatization of the technical management of the DNS in a manner that allows for the development of robust competition in the management of Internet names and addresses. In the Statement of Policy, the DOC stated its intent to enter an agreement with a not-for-profit entity to establish a process to transition current U.S. Government management of the DNS to such an entity based on the principles of stability, competition, bottom-up coordination, and representation.

B. Purpose

Before making a transition to private sector DNS management, the DOC requires assurances that the private sector has the capability and resources to assume the important responsibilities related to the technical management of the DNS. To secure these assurances, the Parties will collaborate on this DNS Project (DNS Project). In the DNS Project, the Parties will jointly design, develop, and test the mechanisms, methods, and procedures that should be in place and the steps necessary to transition management responsibility for DNS functions now performed by, or on behalf of, the U.S. Government to a private-sector not-for-profit entity. Once testing is successfully completed, it is contemplated that management of the DNS will be transitioned to the mechanisms, methods, and procedures designed and developed in the DNS Project.

In the DNS Project, the parties will jointly design, develop, and test the mechanisms, methods, and procedures to carry out the following DNS management functions:

- a. Establishment of policy for and direction of the allocation of IP number blocks;
- b. Oversight of the operation of the authoritative root server system;
- c. Oversight of the policy for determining the circumstances under which new top level domains would be added to the root system;
- d. Coordination of the assignment of other Internet technical parameters as needed to maintain universal connectivity on the Internet; and
- e. Other activities necessary to coordinate the specified DNS management functions, as agreed by the Parties.

The Parties will jointly design, develop, and test the mechanisms, methods, and procedures that will achieve the transition without disrupting the functional operation of the Internet. The Parties will also prepare a joint DNS Project Report that documents the conclusions of the design, development, and testing.

DOC has determined that this project can be done most effectively with the participation of ICANN. ICANN has a stated purpose to perform the described coordinating functions for Internet names and addresses and is the organization that best demonstrated that it can accommodate the broad and diverse interest groups that make up the Internet community.

C. The Principles

The Parties will abide by the following principles:

1. Stability

This Agreement promotes the stability of the Internet and allows the Parties to plan for a deliberate move from the existing structure to a private-sector structure without disruption to the functioning of the DNS. The Agreement calls for the design, development, and testing of a new management system that will not harm current functional operations.

2. Competition

This Agreement promotes the management of the DNS in a manner that will permit market mechanisms to support competition and consumer choice in the technical management of the DNS. This competition will lower costs, promote innovation, and enhance user choice and satisfaction.

3. Private, Bottom-Up Coordination

This Agreement is intended to result in the design, development, and testing of a private coordinating process that is flexible and able to move rapidly enough to meet the changing needs of the Internet and of Internet users. This Agreement is intended to foster the development of a private sector management system that, as far as possible, reflects a system of bottom-up management.

4. Representation.

This Agreement promotes the technical management of the DNS in a manner that reflects the global and functional diversity of Internet users and their needs. This Agreement is intended to promote the design, development, and testing of mechanisms to solicit public input, both domestic and international, into a private-sector decision making process. These mechanisms will promote the flexibility needed to adapt to changes in the composition of the Internet user community and their needs.

III. AUTHORITIES

A. DOC has authority to participate in the DNS Project with ICANN under the following authorities:

(1) 15 U.S.C. § 1525, the DOC's Joint Project Authority, which provides that the DOC may enter into joint projects with nonprofit, research, or public organizations on matters of mutual interest, the cost of which is equitably apportioned;

(2) 15 U.S.C. § 1512, the DOC's authority to foster, promote, and develop foreign and domestic commerce;

(3) 47 U.S.C. § 902, which specifically authorizes the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to coordinate the telecommunications activities of the Executive Branch and assist in the formulation of policies and standards for those activities including, but not limited to, considerations of interoperability, privacy, security, spectrum use, and emergency readiness;

(4) Presidential Memorandum on Electronic Commerce, 33 Weekly Comp. Presidential Documents 1006 (July 1, 1997), which directs the Secretary of Commerce to transition DNS management to the private sector; and

(5) Statement of Policy, *Management of Internet Names and Addresses*, (63 Fed. Reg. 31741(1998) (Attachment A), which describes the manner in which the Department of Commerce will transition DNS management to the private sector.

B. ICANN has the authority to participate in the DNS Project, as evidenced in its Articles of Incorporation (Attachment B) and Bylaws (Attachment C). Specifically, ICANN has stated that its business purpose is to:

(i) coordinate the assignment of Internet technical parameters as needed to maintain universal connectivity on the Internet;

(ii) perform and oversee functions related to the coordination of the Internet Protocol (IP) address space;

(iii) perform and oversee functions related to the coordination of the Internet domain name system, including the development of policies for determining the circumstances under which new top-level domains are added to the DNS root system;

(iv) oversee operation of the authoritative Internet DNS root server system; and

(v) engage in any other related lawful activity in furtherance of Items (i) through (iv).

IV. MUTUAL INTEREST OF THE PARTIES

Both DOC and ICANN have a mutual interest in a transition that ensures that future technical management of the DNS adheres to the principles of stability, competition, coordination, and representation as published in the Statement of Policy. ICANN has declared its commitment to these principles in its Bylaws. This Agreement is essential for the DOC to ensure continuity and stability in the performance of technical management of the DNS now performed by, or on behalf of, the U.S. Government. Together, the Parties will collaborate on the DNS Project to achieve the transition without disruption.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARTIES

A. General.

1. The Parties agree to jointly participate in the DNS Project for the design, development, and testing of the mechanisms, methods and procedures that should be in place for the private sector to manage the functions delineated in the Statement of Policy in a transparent, non-arbitrary, and reasonable manner.

2. The Parties agree that the mechanisms, methods, and procedures developed under the DNS Project will ensure that private-sector technical management of the DNS shall not apply standards, policies, procedures or practices inequitably or single out any particular party for disparate treatment unless justified by substantial and reasonable cause and will ensure sufficient appeal procedures for adversely affected members of the Internet community.

3. Before the termination of this Agreement, the Parties will collaborate on a DNS Project Report that will document ICANN's test of the policies and procedures designed and developed pursuant to this Agreement.

4. The Parties agree to execute the following responsibilities in accordance with the Principles and Purpose of this Agreement as set forth in section II.

B. DOC. The DOC agrees to perform the following activities and provide the following resources in support of the DNS Project:

1. Provide expertise and advice on existing DNS management functions.
2. Provide expertise and advice on methods and administrative procedures for conducting open, public proceedings concerning policies and procedures that address the technical management of the DNS.
3. Identify with ICANN the necessary software, databases, know-how, other equipment, and intellectual property necessary to design, develop, and test methods and procedures of the DNS Project.
4. Participate, as necessary, in the design, development, and testing of the methods and procedures of the DNS Project to ensure continuity including coordination between ICANN and Network Solutions, Inc.
5. Collaborate on a study on the design, development, and testing of a process for making the management of the root server system more robust and secure. This aspect of the DNS Project will address:
 - a. Operational requirements of root name servers, including host hardware capacities, operating system and name server software versions, network connectivity, and physical environment.
 - b. Examination of the security aspects of the root name server system and review of the number, location, and distribution of root name servers considering the total system performance, robustness, and reliability.
 - c. Development of operational procedures for the root server system, including formalization of contractual relationships under which root servers throughout the world are operated.
6. Consult with the international community on aspects of the DNS Project.
7. Provide general oversight of activities conducted pursuant to this Agreement.
8. Maintain oversight of the technical management of DNS functions currently performed either directly, or subject to agreements with the U.S. Government, until such time as further agreement(s) are arranged as necessary, for the private sector to undertake management of specific DNS technical management functions.

C. ICANN. ICANN agrees to perform the following activities and provide the following resources in support of the DNS Project and further agrees to undertake the following activities pursuant to its procedures as set forth in Attachment B (Articles of Incorporation) and Attachment C (By-Laws), as they may be revised from time to time in conformity with the DNS Project:

1. Provide expertise and advice on private sector functions related to technical management of the DNS such as the policy and direction of the allocation of IP number blocks and coordination of the assignment of other Internet technical parameters as needed to maintain universal connectivity on the Internet.
2. Collaborate on the design, development and testing of procedures by which members of the Internet community adversely affected by decisions that are in conflict with the bylaws of the organization can seek external review of such decisions by a neutral third party.
3. Collaborate on the design, development, and testing of a plan for introduction of competition in domain name registration services, including:
 - a. Development of procedures to designate third parties to participate in tests conducted pursuant to this Agreement.
 - b. Development of an accreditation procedure for registrars and procedures that subject registrars to consistent requirements designed to promote a stable and robustly competitive DNS, as set forth in the Statement of Policy.
 - c. Identification of the software, databases, know-how, intellectual property, and other equipment necessary to implement the plan for competition;
4. Collaborate on written technical procedures for operation of the primary root server including procedures that permit modifications, additions or deletions to the root zone file.
5. Collaborate on a study and process for making the management of the root server system more robust and secure. This aspect of the Project will address:
 - a. Operational requirements of root name servers, including host hardware capacities, operating system and name server software versions, network connectivity, and physical environment.
 - b. Examination of the security aspects of the root name server system and review of the number, location, and distribution of root name servers considering the total system performance; robustness, and reliability.
 - c. Development of operational procedures for the root system, including formalization of contractual relationships under which root servers throughout the world are operated.
6. Collaborate on the design, development and testing of a process for affected parties to participate in the formulation of policies and procedures that address the technical management of the Internet. This process will include methods for soliciting, evaluating and responding to comments in the adoption of policies and procedures.
7. Collaborate on the development of additional policies and procedures designed to provide information to the public.
8. Collaborate on the design, development, and testing of appropriate membership mechanisms that foster accountability to and representation of the global and functional diversity of the Internet and its users, within the structure of private- sector DNS management organization.

9. Collaborate on the design, development and testing of a plan for creating a process that will consider the possible expansion of the number of gTLDs. The designed process should consider and take into account the following:

- a. The potential impact of new gTLDs on the Internet root server system and Internet stability.
- b. The creation and implementation of minimum criteria for new and existing gTLD registries.
- c. Potential consumer benefits/costs associated with establishing a competitive environment for gTLD registries.
- d. Recommendations regarding trademark/domain name policies set forth in the Statement of Policy; recommendations made by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) concerning: (i) the development of a uniform approach to resolving trademark/domain name disputes involving cyberspiracy; (ii) a process for protecting famous trademarks in the generic top level domains; (iii) the effects of adding new gTLDs and related dispute resolution procedures on trademark and intellectual property holders; and recommendations made by other independent organizations concerning trademark/domain name issues.

10. Collaborate on other activities as appropriate to fulfill the purpose of this Agreement, as agreed by the Parties.

D. Prohibitions.

1. ICANN shall not act as a domain name Registry or Registrar or IP Address Registry in competition with entities affected by the plan developed under this Agreement. Nothing, however, in this Agreement is intended to prevent ICANN or the USG from taking reasonable steps that are necessary to protect the operational stability of the Internet in the event of the financial failure of a Registry or Registrar or other emergency.
2. Neither Party, either in the DNS Project or in any act related to the DNS Project, shall act unjustifiably or arbitrarily to injure particular persons or entities or particular categories of persons or entities.
3. Both Parties shall act in a non-arbitrary and reasonable manner with respect to design, development, and testing of the DNS Project and any other activity related to the DNS Project.

VI. EQUITABLE APPORTIONMENT OF COSTS

The costs of this activity are equitably apportioned, and each party shall bear the costs of its own activities under this Agreement. This Agreement contemplates no transfer of funds between the Parties. Each Party's estimated costs for the first six months of this Agreement are attached hereto. The Parties shall review these estimated costs in light of actual expenditures at the completion of the first six month period and will ensure costs will be equitably apportioned.

VII. PERIOD OF AGREEMENT AND MODIFICATION/TERMINATION

This Agreement will become effective when signed by all parties. The Agreement will terminate on September 30, 2000, but may be amended at any time by mutual agreement of the parties. Either party may terminate this Agreement by providing one hundred twenty (120) days written notice to the other party. In the

event this Agreement is terminated, each party shall be solely responsible for the payment of any expenses it has incurred. This Agreement is subject to the availability of funds.

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PARTIES ESTIMATED SIX MONTH COSTS

A. ICANN

Costs to be borne by ICANN over the first six months of this Agreement include: development of Accreditation Guidelines for Registries; review of Technical Specifications for Shared Registries; formation and operation of Government, Root Server, Membership and Independent Review Advisor Committees; advice on formation of and review of applications for recognition by Supporting Organizations; promulgation of conflicts of interest policies; review and adoption of At-Large membership and elections processes and independent review procedures, etc; quarterly regular Board meetings and associated costs (including open forums, travel, staff support and communications infrastructure); travel, administrative support and infrastructure for additional open forums to be determined; internal executive, technical and administrative costs; legal and other professional services; and related other costs. The estimated six month budget (subject to change and refinement over time) is \$750,000 - 1 million.

B. DOC

Costs to be borne by DOC over the first six months of this Agreement include: maintenance of DNS technical management functions currently performed by, or subject to agreements with, the U.S. Government, expertise and advice on existing DNS management functions; expertise and advice on administrative procedures; examination and review of the security aspects of the Root Server System (including travel and technical expertise); consultations with the international community on aspects of the DNS Project (including travel and communications costs); general oversight of activities conducted pursuant to the Agreement; staff support equal to half-time dedication of 4-5 full time employees, travel, administrative support, communications and related other costs. The estimate six month budget (subject to change and refinement over time) is \$250,000 - \$350,000.