

NRO's Contribution to the Midterm Review of the United States Department of Commerce and the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers Joint Project Agreement.

This statement is made by the Number Resource Organization representing the five Regional Internet Registries and pertains to the Midterm Review of the Joint Project Agreement between the United States Department of Commerce (DoC) and the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) for the Transition of the Technical Coordination and Management of the Internet's Domain Name and Addressing System to the private sector. This memo is in response of the Notice of Inquiry by the Honorable John Kneuer dated 30 October 2007, related to the mid-term review of the ICANN/DOC joint project agreement (Docket No 071023616-7617-01).

The NRO reaffirms its support of the current model for coordinating and managing the Internet Domain Name and Addressing System. During the past several years, ICANN has demonstrated its commitment to become a stable and trustworthy organization, and has made great strides in achieving this. ICANN has worked to improve the involvement of all stakeholders in its processes and structures, to ensure open and participatory policy development. This participatory model has been essential in enhancing the governance of ICANN by its own stakeholders.

The NRO believes that the Joint Project Agreement between the DoC and ICANN should be concluded. To this end we call on ICANN and the DoC to work actively together to complete the comprehensive transition to private sector coordination of the Internet as soon as possible. We further call on ICANN to consult fully with its community throughout this process.

The NRO still maintains that in this evolving environment of the Internet, no single government should exercise a special role in the management of Internet Resources in general. ICANN has shown a capability to operate and work independently within the current form of accountability represented by the relationship with the USG. The NRO strongly asserts that while an independent ICANN should be no less accountable, current mechanisms must not be replaced by accountability to any other government, group of governments, or treaty organization. Rather it is important that an independent ICANN be fully accountable to its stakeholders in all sectors of Internet Governance - public, private, and civil society - through defined open and transparent processes.

The NRO also reaffirms its commitment to continue to work closely with ICANN through channels like the ASO MoU to safeguard the bottom-up policy development process which ensures open, transparent, and equitable management of Internet number resources in the public benefit.

The NRO believes that ICANN has made commendable progress on several of the Joint Project Agreement's ten points, but calls upon ICANN for continuing evolution toward further improvement. While the work that needs to be done on some of these points does not impact the conclusion of the JPA, it will surely contribute to ICANN's credibility and enhance confidence among stakeholders. The NRO has corresponded directly with ICANN on the specifics of these matters and will continue to do so as a direct stakeholder and participant in ICANN's governance.

About the NRO

Formed by the Regional Internet Registries to formalize their cooperative efforts, the NRO exists to protect the unallocated number resource pool, to promote and protect the bottom-up policy development process, and to act as a focal point for Internet community input into the RIR system.

Its members are: AfriNIC, serving the African continent; APNIC, serving the Asia-Pacific region; ARIN, serving Canada, the United States, and several islands in the Caribbean and North Atlantic Ocean; LACNIC, serving Latin America and portions of the Caribbean; and RIPE NCC, serving Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia.

More information about the NRO is available at www.nro.net.