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**U.S. COMMERCE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES A JOINT PROJECT
AGREEMENT WITH ICANN ON THE COORDINATION OF INTERNET
DOMAIN NAME AND ADDRESSING SYSTEM**

The Commerce Department today announced it has signed a Joint Project Agreement with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) to continue the transition of the coordination of the technical functions relating to the management of the Internet Domain Name and Addressing System to the private sector. It focuses on institutionalizing transparency and accountability mechanisms in the management of the Internet domain name and addressing system.

“We continue to believe that ICANN is the appropriate private sector entity to coordinate the technical elements of the DNS,” said Acting Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information John M.R. Kneuer.

“We are committed to working with ICANN to ensure that they have the established transparency and accountability mechanisms necessary to be a stable, lasting and independent institution,” Kneuer said.

The three year Joint Project Agreement extends the current Memorandum of Understanding between the Department and ICANN which expires on September 30, 2006. It calls for a midpoint review of ICANN’s progress towards becoming a more stable organization with greater transparency and accountability in its procedures and decision making, the department said.

The Joint Project Agreement follows an internal review of the MOU and a public consultation process that resulted in over 700 contributions from individuals, private corporations, trade associations, non-governmental entities and foreign governments.

The public consultation process showed broad support for continuing the transition of the coordination of the technical management of the DNS to the private sector and the continued involvement of the DOC in this transition, the department said.

The full text of the Joint Project Agreement can be accessed through NTIA’s web site at www.ntia.doc.gov