



**To:** Fiona M. Alexander, Associate Administrator  
Office of International Affairs  
National Telecommunications and Information Administration  
U.S. Department of Commerce

**Subject:** Docket No. 090420688-9689-01, Assessment of the Transition of the Technical Coordination and Management of the Internet's Domain Name and Addressing System

The Internet Architecture Board (IAB) is pleased to respond to the NTIA's request for comments on "the upcoming expiration of the Joint Project Agreement (JPA) with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)" [1]. Our response consists of two key points.

First, the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) is the Standards Development Organization (SDO) responsible for the specification and development of the DNS, TCP/IP, and many other Internet protocols, including major applications protocols such as those for electronic mail. IETF specifications define the formats used by these protocols, such as URLs, URIs, IRIs, AS numbers, and IPv4 and IPv6 addresses. In turn the IETF, as the SDO who develops and maintains exactly those protocols for which ICANN has an administrative, security, and stability mandate (as defined by its bylaws and referred to by the JPA [2]), is responsible for taking a proactive role to ensure that critical identifier types meet the stability expectations of both the Internet technical community and the community of users (and other entities) who depend on the Internet. Although the IETF and ICANN operate independently in the Internet environment, the IETF maintains a liaison to the ICANN Board to aid that specific body, and ICANN in general, in understanding the perspectives of the Internet's development, technical, operational, and user communities. We believe that the above mentioned responsibilities to the Internet community, and the relationship between them and ICANN, have not been significantly affected by the JPA in the past and that they are unlikely to be affected by decisions about continuation of the JPA.

The second point involves ICANN's role with respect to the technical protocol parameters that are referred to in the JPA. Separate from DNS names, the JPA calls out "Coordination of the assignment of other Internet technical parameters as needed to maintain universal connectivity on the Internet;". As the IAB has noted in the past, the IETF determines the policies under which registrations are to be made for the protocol parameters, and in most cases, defines the methods and supplies the expertise for approving those registrations. The implementation of this role is documented in a memorandum of understanding between ICANN and the IETF [3]. The IAB notes



that the ICANN-IETF MOU makes reference to the IANA contract. While we understand that it is out of scope for this Notice, that arrangement has generally worked to the mutual satisfaction of the IETF and ICANN. However, the IAB believes that it is critical that these functions of the IETF, and the corresponding functions of IANA, not be disrupted by any transition of ICANN responsibilities, or by other changes to either the DNS Project activities or other ICANN functions. The IAB looks forward to working with NTIA and other relevant agencies to monitor developments, and will continue to assist in evaluating and making recommendations about the best path forward to maintain the Internet's protocol parameter coordination.

On behalf of the IAB,

Olaf Kolkman  
Chair, Internet Architecture Board

***References:***

- [1] <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/E9-9409.htm>
- [2] <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/domainname/icann.htm>
- [3] <http://www.iab.org/documents/correspondence/2008-02-15-midterm-view-icann-doc-jpa.html>
- [4] <http://www.ietf.org/rfc/rfc2860.txt>

***Organizations:***

**IAB.** The Internet Architecture Board has a long history but is currently viewed as a senior committee working with the IETF that has both technical (architectural) functions and oversight functions for the development of the Internet. The latter also includes oversight of IANA functions performed for the IETF. See <http://www.iab.org>.

**IETF.** The Internet Engineering Task Force is a worldwide and open organization whose mission is to produce high quality, relevant technical and engineering documents that influence the way people design, use, and manage the Internet in such a way as to make the Internet work better. These documents include protocol standards, best current practices, and informational documents of various kinds. See <http://www.ietf.org>.