

Comments of the Internet Architecture Board (IAB) Regarding the "Draft Proposal, Based on Initial Community Feedback, of the Principles and Mechanisms and the Process to Develop a Proposal to Transition NTIA's Stewardship of the IANA Functions"

Summary

The Internet Architecture Board (IAB) has read the "Draft Proposal, Based on Initial Community Feedback, of the Principles and Mechanisms and the Process to Develop a Proposal to Transition NTIA's Stewardship of the IANA Functions," posted at <<http://www.icann.org/en/about/agreements/iana/transition/draft-proposal-08apr14-en.htm>>. We have also read the "Scoping Document" that defines the scope of the transition discussion, posted at <<http://www.icann.org/en/about/agreements/iana/iana-transition-scoping-08apr14-en.pdf>>. In our comments below, we offer a refinement of the existing ICANN process proposal. The key points are:

- Our refinement is focused on increasing the efficiency of the process of developing a transition proposal.
- The IETF community has decades of experience with consensus processes among large, diverse groups of people. The IAB is leveraging that experience to suggest ways to ensure that the transition proposal development process runs smoothly.
- We believe the process of developing a transition proposal component specific to protocol parameters is straightforward.
- ICANN's proposal was a draft and public input was requested. As a key IANA stakeholder, the IAB believes it is important to respond to that request.

Refinement Proposal

We appreciate the efforts made to create the process proposal and scoping document. We have considered the documents in light of the IETF community's principles and practices. In doing so, we have built upon certain aspects of the documents to refine the process proposal in ways that we believe would both help conclude the work of developing the transition proposal in a more efficient manner, and allow for more use of existing, proven processes. We believe the

next step is for ICANN in its convener role to issue a new document that kicks off individual community processes in the three communities described below.

Leveraging Existing Communities and Processes

The IANA parameters fall into three categories: domain names, number resources, and other protocol parameters. While there is some overlap among these categories, they are distinct enough that each one has accrued its own community of interest. Domain names are generally but not exclusively of interest to the ICANN community; number resources are generally but not exclusively of interest to the RIR communities; and protocol parameters are generally but not exclusively of interest to the IETF community.

The distinctions among these categories and their associated communities of interest are widely recognized and well understood. As the proposed process document notes, "[Because] the various affected parties of IANA have somewhat different needs, there is value in keeping the distinct discussions running in parallel, and not forcing either full synchronization or exactly the same end result on them." As such, we propose to divide the work immediately, asking each community to create and embark on a transparent process for developing a component of the transition proposal for its respective category.

Taking advantage of this opportunity to divide the task may well reduce the work. For example, in the case of the protocol parameters registries, the IETF community consensus process is already well-specified. There is already a well-defined oversight procedure for the protocol parameters registries specified in RFC 6220. Along with RFC 2850, RFC 6220 makes the IAB responsible for oversight, selection, and management of the Protocol Parameter Registry Operator. It also makes ICANN currently responsible for the operation according to the terms in RFC 2860 and the ICANN/IANA-IETF MoU Supplemental Agreement signed in 2006. As we have stated previously, we are pleased with ICANN's performance as the operator of the protocol parameters registries. Having had all of these pieces in place for many years already, we believe a quick conclusion could be reached among those interested in protocol parameters about whatever additional work may be necessary to finalize the transition. The work on that component can be undertaken while other communities work on the components having to do with domain names and number resources.

If the number resources and domain name communities are amenable to this proposal, then it is necessary for each community to decide on a process to use to develop its component of the transition proposal. Such processes of course need to recognize that the categories are not perfect and that there will be some areas of overlap, including special-use registries. The overlaps should be addressed in the co-operative way the Internet community has historically worked, and recognize our mutual commitments to existing policies. In keeping

with the NTIA's announcement, ICANN should act as a convener in those cooperative discussions as needed.

Role of the “Steering Group”

To proceed with this approach, the next step is for ICANN in its convening function to issue a new document that kicks off the individual community processes. At the same time, ICANN should proceed to convene the steering group. Below, we describe what the steering group’s charter should be. Based on that charter, we recommend that the group be re-named to “coordination group” or something similar, since “steering” does not appropriately characterize its function.

The composition of the coordination group must be such that it includes representatives from each of the relevant communities. The role of a coordination group member during the development of the transition proposal should be limited to (1) providing status updates about the progress of his or her community in developing a transition proposal component, (2) coordinating which community will develop a transition proposal for each area of overlap (e.g., each special-use registry) while ensuring that those areas receive cross-community review, and (3) reflecting to the rest of the coordination group the consensus within the member's own community. The coordination group should be responsible for assembling the components into a single transition proposal. There are two steps to approving the transition proposal:

- i. The first step will be complete when the reports from the coordination group members from each of the three communities come back with an answer of, "Yes, there is consensus within my community in support of the complete proposal." In effect, as is anticipated in the NTIA announcement about the transition, those reports will be required to be unanimously affirmative, because they will be representing each community's support of the proposal.
- ii. The remainder of the coordination group’s charter should consist of confirming that the complete transition proposal (1) fulfills the scope specified in the scoping document, and (2) meets the criteria specified in the NTIA announcement. In order to prevent capture of the decision-making process concerning these two questions, the group should operate by rough consensus and publicly document outlying views if full consensus cannot be achieved. In the event the coordination group does not confirm both of these conditions, the proposal will need to go back to the communities for re-evaluation and alteration. This step concludes when the coordination group achieves rough consensus that both conditions have been met.

By virtue of fulfilling the responsibilities described above, the coordination group will perform the necessary lightweight coordinating function among the different communities and will be in a position to present the final proposal to NTIA. In order that the work can be easily observed by any interested person, the coordination group should also publish progress reports on a regular basis, so that interested parties might follow along.

Conclusion

The IAB is ready to proceed in the case of the protocol parameters registries. Of course, we look forward to participating in the other communities' discussions to the extent Internet architecture issues arise in those communities' processes. We recognize that consensus takes time to build, and are committed to continuing productive dialogue as long as is necessary to ensure a positive outcome for the Internet. We will also gladly bring the final, complete transition proposal for all of the components to the IETF to determine IETF community consensus, so that that can be reported back to the coordination group.

The approach specified above allows the communities of interest to leverage their existing community-driven, consensus-based processes from the very outset of the transition discussion. It obviates the need to create a decisional body whose purview extends across all of the IANA functions, with all of the attendant questions concerning representation, chairing, oversight, voting procedures, secretarial support, and charter scope. Instead, the communities can decide whether to leverage their existing processes -- which in large part addressed all of those questions long ago -- or whether additional process is needed in any of the three categories of registries. Assembling a final proposal and judging its consensus within each community prior to delivery to NTIA requires cross-coordination among the communities; this is the responsibility of the ICANN-convened coordination group. We expect that coordination will be lightweight, facilitated by the relationships that already exist among the organizations involved.