

ccTLD Policy Consolidation: The management of country code top level domains

Version 0 - Experimental Draft - April 2024

About this document

This document is a thought experiment for consideration by a small group of ccNSO Council members, and possibly later broader use. The experiment is to consider whether a single source of truth can be created that sets out the **existing** policy framework for how IANA must manage ccTLDs.

This document has no standing, and is not a policy document or a draft policy document. It is not authoritative and may not be relied upon by any person for any purpose.

Underlined text in Arial at 11 points is suggested new text.

Text in Calibri at 14 points is extracted from RFC1591 or the Framework of Interpretation (Fol). Where there is a ~~striketrough~~ or an underline, these are proposed changes to the RFC1591/Fol language.

*This document is a thought experiment for consideration by a small group of ccNSO Council members, and possibly later broader use. The experiment is to consider whether a single source of truth can be created that sets out the **existing** policy framework for how IANA must manage ccTLDs.*

This document has no standing, and is not a policy document or a draft policy document. It is not authoritative and may not be relied upon by any person for any purpose.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
1. Introduction	3
2. Interpretation	3
3. The role of the IANA in relation to ccTLDs	3
5. Rights to Names	8
6. Types of ccTLDs	8
7. Delegation of a new ccTLD	8
8. Transfer of a ccTLD	9
9. Revocation of a ccTLD	9
10. Retirement of a ccTLD	9
11. Detailed Process and Guidance	9
12. Appeals and reviews	10
13. Unexpected situations	10

*This document is a thought experiment for consideration by a small group of ccNSO Council members, and possibly later broader use. The experiment is to consider whether a single source of truth can be created that sets out the **existing** policy framework for how IANA must manage ccTLDs.*

This document has no standing, and is not a policy document or a draft policy document. It is not authoritative and may not be relied upon by any person for any purpose.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document draws together the policy that the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) must follow in its management of country code top level domains (ccTLDs).
- 1.2. The policy in this document is based on RFC 1591 and the 2005 GAC Principles relating to ccTLDs, as interpreted by the Framework of Interpretation.
- 1.3. If there is any conflict between these earlier documents and this document, the provisions of this document prevail.
- 1.4. The Country Code Names Supporting Organisation (ccNSO), a Supporting Organisation structure of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), is the sole authority that can make policy for the role of IANA in relation to ccTLDs, pursuant to ICANN's bylaws and (OTHER LINES OF AUTHORITY).
- 1.5. [[Statement that this document has been prepared through whatever process it has been prepared through, setting out its bona fides as authoritative policy OR as guidance. The Experimental Draft has been written as if it is policy.]]
- 1.6. The policy in this document is binding on IANA. IANA is obliged to uphold its provisions. Where a situation arises that is not adequately covered in this document, the process set out in section X must be followed.

2. Interpretation

- 2.1. Insert relevant definitions and linkages.
- 2.2. Complete later.

3. The role of the IANA in relation to ccTLDs

- 3.1. The Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) is responsible for the overall coordination and management of the Domain Name System (DNS), and especially the delegation of portions of the name

*This document is a thought experiment for consideration by a small group of ccNSO Council members, and possibly later broader use. The experiment is to consider whether a single source of truth can be created that sets out the **existing** policy framework for how IANA must manage ccTLDs.*

This document has no standing, and is not a policy document or a draft policy document. It is not authoritative and may not be relied upon by any person for any purpose.

space called top-level domains.

- 3.2. The country-code top level domains (ccTLDs) are domains usually based on two-letter country codes taken from the ISO standard 3166.
- 3.3. The main functions of the IANA in relation to ccTLDs are to maintain the appropriate records in the domain name system's root zone that pertain to ccTLDs.
- 3.4. The responsibilities involved include making decisions to:
 - 3.4.1. Delegate new ccTLDs
 - 3.4.2. Transfer ccTLDs between different designated managers
 - 3.4.3. Revoke the delegation of ccTLDs
 - 3.4.4. Implement the retirements of ccTLDs
- 3.5. In doing this work, the relationship between the IANA and ICANN is as set out in the following documents:
 - 3.5.1. DOCUMENTS

4. Policy concerns applying to ccTLDs

- 4.1. The major concern in selecting a designated manager for a domain is that it be able to carry out the necessary responsibilities, and have the ability to do an equitable, just, honest, and competent job.
- 4.2. The key requirement is that for each domain there be a designated manager for supervising that domain's name space.
 - 4.2.1. In the case of top-level domains that are country codes this means that there is a manager that supervises the domain names and operates the domain name system in that country or territory.

*This document is a thought experiment for consideration by a small group of ccNSO Council members, and possibly later broader use. The experiment is to consider whether a single source of truth can be created that sets out the **existing** policy framework for how IANA must manage ccTLDs.*

This document has no standing, and is not a policy document or a draft policy document. It is not authoritative and may not be relied upon by any person for any purpose.

- 4.2.2. The manager must, of course, be on the Internet. There must be Internet Protocol (IP) connectivity to the nameservers and email connectivity to the management and staff of the manager.
- 4.2.3. There must be an administrative contact and a technical contact for each ~~domain~~ ccTLD.
- 4.2.4. ~~For top-level domains that are country codes [A]~~at least the administrative contact must generally reside in the country or territory involved.
- 4.3. ~~These designated authorities are~~ Each designated manager is a trustee for the delegated domain ccTLD they manage, and have a duty to serve the community.
 - 4.3.1. The designated manager is the trustee of the top-level domain for both the nation, ~~in the case of a country code~~, and the global Internet community.
 - 4.3.2. Concerns about "rights" and "ownership" of domains are inappropriate. It is appropriate to be concerned about "responsibilities" and "service" to the community.
- 4.4. The designated manager must be equitable to all groups in the domain that request domain names.
 - 4.4.1. This means that the same rules are applied to all requests, all requests must be processed in a non-discriminatory fashion, and academic and commercial (and other) users are treated on an equal basis. No bias shall be shown regarding requests that may come from customers of some other business related to the manager - e.g., no preferential service for customers of a particular data network provider. There can be no requirement

*This document is a thought experiment for consideration by a small group of ccNSO Council members, and possibly later broader use. The experiment is to consider whether a single source of truth can be created that sets out the **existing** policy framework for how IANA must manage ccTLDs.*

This document has no standing, and is not a policy document or a draft policy document. It is not authoritative and may not be relied upon by any person for any purpose.

that a particular mail system (or other application), protocol, or product be used.

- 4.4.2. ~~In particular, a~~ All subdomains shall be allowed to operate their own domain name servers, providing in them whatever information the subdomain manager sees fit (as long as it is true and correct).
- 4.5. Significantly interested parties in the domain should agree that the designated manager is the appropriate party.
 - 4.5.1. Significantly interested parties include, but are not limited to:
 - 4.5.1.1. the government or territorial authority for the country or territory associated with the ccTLD, and
 - 4.5.1.2. any other individuals, organizations, companies, associations, educational institutions, or others that have a direct, material, substantial, legitimate and demonstrable interest in the operation of the ccTLD(s) including the incumbent manager.
 - 4.5.2. The IANA tries to have any contending parties reach agreement among themselves, and generally takes no action to change things unless all the contending parties agree; only in cases where the designated manager has substantially mis-behaved would the IANA step in.
 - 4.5.3. ~~However, i~~ It is also appropriate for interested parties to have some voice in selecting the designated manager.
 - 4.5.4. IANA ~~and the central IR~~ may establish a new top-level domain and delegate only a portion of it: ~~(1) there are contending parties that cannot agree, or (2) if the applying party may not be able to represent or serve the whole country. The later~~ Such a case sometimes arises when a party outside a country is trying to be helpful in getting networking started in a country --

*This document is a thought experiment for consideration by a small group of ccNSO Council members, and possibly later broader use. The experiment is to consider whether a single source of truth can be created that sets out the **existing** policy framework for how IANA must manage ccTLDs.*

This document has no standing, and is not a policy document or a draft policy document. It is not authoritative and may not be relied upon by any person for any purpose.

this is sometimes called a "proxy" DNS service.

- 4.6. The designated manager must do a satisfactory job of operating the DNS service for the domain.
 - 4.6.1. That is, the actual management of the assigning of domain names, delegating subdomains and operating nameservers must be done with technical competence.
 - 4.6.2. This includes keeping the IANA ~~the central IR (in the case of top-level domains) or other higher-level domain manager~~ advised of the status of the domain, responding to requests in a timely manner, and operating the database with accuracy, robustness, and resilience.
 - 4.6.3. There must be a primary and a secondary nameserver that have IP connectivity to the Internet and can be easily checked for operational status and database accuracy ~~by the IR and the the IANA.~~
 - 4.6.4. In cases when there are persistent problems with the proper operation of a domain, the delegation may be revoked, and possibly ~~delegated~~ transferred to another designated manager.
- 4.7. For any transfer of the designated manager trusteeship from one organization to another, ~~the higher-level domain manager (the IANA in the case of top-level domains)~~ must receive communications from both the old organization and the new organization that assure the IANA that the transfer is mutually agreed, and that the new organization understands its responsibilities.
- 4.8. It is also very helpful for the IANA to receive communications from other parties that may be concerned or affected by the transfer.

*This document is a thought experiment for consideration by a small group of ccNSO Council members, and possibly later broader use. The experiment is to consider whether a single source of truth can be created that sets out the **existing** policy framework for how IANA must manage ccTLDs.*

This document has no standing, and is not a policy document or a draft policy document. It is not authoritative and may not be relied upon by any person for any purpose.

5. Rights to Names

- 5.1. Names and trademarks - this policy concerns only the management of ccTLDs. There are no intellectual property rights in the two letter codes set out in the ISO 3166 standard.
- 5.2. Selection of country codes - The IANA is not in the business of deciding what is and what is not a country. The selection of the ISO 3166 list as a basis for country code top-level domain names was made with the knowledge that ISO has a procedure for determining which entities should be and should not be on that list.

6. Types of ccTLDs

- 6.1. There are two primary types of ccTLDs: conventional ccTLDs and IDN ccTLDs.
- 6.2. Conventional ccTLDs are <explain>.
- 6.3. IDN ccTLDs are <explain>.
- 6.4. The provisions of this policy apply equally to all ccTLDs of whatever type.
- 6.5. Where there are additional policy requirements for a specific type of ccTLD, these are noted in the relevant part of the following sections of this document or in separate, referenced documents as required.

7. Delegation of a new ccTLD

- 7.1. What this means

*This document is a thought experiment for consideration by a small group of ccNSO Council members, and possibly later broader use. The experiment is to consider whether a single source of truth can be created that sets out the **existing** policy framework for how IANA must manage ccTLDs.*

This document has no standing, and is not a policy document or a draft policy document. It is not authoritative and may not be relied upon by any person for any purpose.

- 7.2. How it comes about
- 7.3. How manager chosen
- 7.4. IANA decision-making:

8. Transfer of a ccTLD

- 8.1. What this means
- 8.2. How it comes about
- 8.3. How new manager chosen
- 8.4. IANA decision-making:

9. Revocation of a ccTLD

- 9.1. What this means
- 9.2. How it comes about
- 9.3. How new manager is chosen: by the transfer process set out in Section X.
- 9.4. IANA decision-making:

10. Retirement of a ccTLD

- 10.1. What this means
- 10.2. Triggers for a retirement event
- 10.3. Steps in the retirement process
- 10.4. IANA decision-making:

11. Detailed Process and Guidance

- 11.1. This policy framework is the high level, binding framework for IANA's management of ccTLDs.

*This document is a thought experiment for consideration by a small group of ccNSO Council members, and possibly later broader use. The experiment is to consider whether a single source of truth can be created that sets out the **existing** policy framework for how IANA must manage ccTLDs.*

This document has no standing, and is not a policy document or a draft policy document. It is not authoritative and may not be relied upon by any person for any purpose.

- 11.2. Detailed process and guidance documentation may also be prepared. This could be done by the IANA, by the ccNSO, or jointly between them.
- 11.3. Such guidance sets out how this policy framework is interpreted in practice, and is for the assistance of anyone seeking deeper understanding of how it is put into effect.
- 11.4. The IANA and other parties involved in the management of ccTLDs are expected to abide by the agreed processes and guidance.
- 11.5. If parties do not abide by such guidance, the ccNSO will consider whether to conduct a ccPDP and turn the process or guidance involved into policy, which is binding on the same parties and in the same manner as this policy framework is.

12. Appeals and reviews

- 12.1. Where a party does not agree with a decision made by the IANA, they may have access to certain appeal or review mechanisms. These are outlined in the following section, and links to where more information can be found at the end of this document.
- 12.2. The IRP
- 12.3. The cc Review Mechanism

13. Unexpected situations

- 13.1. From time to time a situation may emerge where the IANA needs to act in a way not contemplated by this policy, for instance if a novel combination of circumstances arises which is not dealt with by the existing policy framework.
- 13.2. In such a situation the IANA should, as soon as feasible, advise the ccNSO Council of the situation and its proposed approach.
- 13.3. The ccNSO Council will respond to the IANA to confirm:
 - 13.3.1. Whether or not it agrees that the matter needs a novel resolution - that is, that it does truly sit outside the policy framework.

*This document is a thought experiment for consideration by a small group of ccNSO Council members, and possibly later broader use. The experiment is to consider whether a single source of truth can be created that sets out the **existing** policy framework for how IANA must manage ccTLDs.*

This document has no standing, and is not a policy document or a draft policy document. It is not authoritative and may not be relied upon by any person for any purpose.

- 13.3.2. Whether or not it agrees that the IANA's proposed approach seems reasonable given the available information and prevailing circumstances.
- 13.4. If the ccNSO Council disagrees with the IANA in either case, the IANA is urged to consider the feedback given and propose a revised approach.
- 13.5. This correspondence will be made public in the usual place on the ICANN website.
- 13.6. Whenever such a situation arises, the ccNSO Council will consider whether any policy changes are required.
- 13.7. Ultimately the IANA is responsible for all of its actions, including its responsibility to act in accordance with this policy framework.
- 13.8. The ccNSO's ultimate recourse, if it disagrees with the approach the IANA decides to take, is to change this policy framework so that a future occurrence of the situation is dealt with differently.
- 13.9. The ultimate recourse of other parties affected by any such situation depends on their standing in various appellate processes.

*This document is a thought experiment for consideration by a small group of ccNSO Council members, and possibly later broader use. The experiment is to consider whether a single source of truth can be created that sets out the **existing** policy framework for how IANA must manage ccTLDs.*

This document has no standing, and is not a policy document or a draft policy document. It is not authoritative and may not be relied upon by any person for any purpose.