# SO/AC Accountability

Discussion starter

**Issue description :**

Several commenters in the public comment period recommended that the CCWG consider more deeply a topic which was sometimes referred to as "who whatches the watchers" ? As the community becomes empowered, concerns were raised about SO and ACs' accountability.

As stated by Jan Aart Scholte (supported by several commenters, including independent Advisors) : "*How can one ensure that the multistakeholder mechanism will adequately encompass all affected circles?* " […] "*- How will participants in the empowerment mechanism be held accountable to wider stakeholder circles, both within ICANN (i.e. the ACs and SOs) and beyond? Legislators in democratic nation-states are subject to election by the general population, but delegates in the ICANN 'parliament' would only be elected by ACs and SOs, whose connections to wider constituencies – and that so-called 'global public interest' – can be quite thin? How does one ensure that the community empowerment mechanism does not become a vehicle for capture of ICANN by insider activists? Is this a weak point that opponents of the transition could target?*"

This issue is related to ensuring Icann's accountability to external stakeholders, as often raised in the comments.

It should be noted that each SO and AC currently has accountability mechanisms in their respective Bylaw sections and Operating Rules.

**Potential concrete steps for CCWG :**

The following ideas for recommendations of the CCWG could be explored :

- Assess existing SO/AC accountability mechanisms against the accountability framework defined by the CCWG Accountability (Transparency, consultation, checks and balances, independence, review, redress…)
- Consider the suggestion to create a "Mutual Accountability roundtable", as proposed by Willie Currie
- Define a "minimal" set of accountability conditions to apply to each SO and AC in terms, for instance, of transparency, diversity or consultation
- Include the topic of SO/AC accountability as part of WS2 items
- Enhance independence / conflict of interest rules as part of WS2 items to avoid capture
- Clarify that SO/AC decisions be eligible for IRP appeal

- Assess whether structural reviews of SO/ACs should be empowered to assess SO/AC accountability