II. Background on the Review Team

The Competition, Consumer Trust and Consumer Choice Review Team (CCT-RT) was convened under the [Affirmation of Commitments](#) section 9.3[1]. The AoC prescribes that "when new gTLDs (whether in ASCII or other language character sets) have been in operation for one year, ICANN will organize a review that will examine the extent to which the introduction or expansion of gTLDs has promoted competition, consumer trust and consumer choice, as well as effectiveness of (a) the application and evaluation process, and (b) safeguards put in place to mitigate issues involved in the introduction or expansion."

The CCT-RT was assembled in January 2016 and comprises 17 volunteer subject matter experts who represent the diversity of the global Internet stakeholders (see composition [here](#)). Since the Review Team was convened, ICANN has adopted new Bylaws as part of the IANA Stewardship Transition that incorporated the AOC provisions into the Bylaws as "Specific Reviews" under Section 4.6. Similar to the AOC, the Bylaws describe the scope of this Review as:

The review team for the CCT Review will examine (A) the extent to which the expansion of gTLDs has promoted competition, consumer trust and consumer choice and (B) the effectiveness of the New gTLD Round's application and evaluation process and safeguards put in place to mitigate issues arising from the New gTLD Round.

The new Bylaws also specify that, for each of its recommendations, the CCT Review Team should indicate whether the recommendation, if accepted by the Board, must be implemented before opening subsequent rounds of new generic top-level domain applications periods. The recommendations contained within this Report identify those that should be implemented before the opening of future application periods for new gTLDs.

Producing recommendations that are as data and fact driven as possible is a fundamental goal of the Review: the CCT-RT has devised its report to have findings supported by data received prior to and throughout the review process. A number of initiatives were taken prior to the CCT-RT's launch and during the CCT's deliberations, to inform its work (refer to appendix B for details):

> ¤ In December, 2010, the [Board requested advice](#) from the ALAC, GAC, GNSO, and ccNSO on establishing the definition, measures, and three year targets for competition, consumer trust, and consumer choice in the context of the domain name system. This advice was requested to support ICANN's

obligations under the AoC to review the extent to which the introduction or expansion of gTLDs has promoted competition, consumer trust, and consumer choice.

¤ The ICANN Board formed an Implementation Advisory Group for Competition, Consumer Trust & Consumer Choice (IAG-CCT) in September 2013 to review 70 metrics recommended by a GNSO-ALAC working group in December 2012. The IAG-CCT was tasked to make recommendations to the Review Team based on an evaluation of the feasibility, utility, and cost-effectiveness of each of the proposed metrics. In September 2014, the IAG-CCT submitted its [final recommendations](#) to the ICANN Board, which [adopted](#) them in February 2015. The recommendations included the collection of 66 metrics related to competition, consumer trust and consumer choice. ICANN staff has been continuously gathering and publishing data related to most of these metrics on the ICANN [website](#).

¤ These efforts led ICANN to commission a survey of Internet users and registrants, to gauge their sense of trust and choice, and an economic study of gTLD pricing and marketplace. The Nielsen Firm was retained to perform the [registrant](#) and [consumer](#) studies, and the Analysis Group was retained to perform the [economic study](#), that served as important resources for the Review Team in building its draft recommendations.

¤ The AoC mandates an examination of the effectiveness of the application and evaluation processes used in the 2012 round of gTLD applications, including ICANN's implementation of the policy recommendations made for the New gTLD Program. To help inform the CCTRT, staff compiled and published the [Program Implementation Review report](#) to provide staff perspective on the execution of the New gTLD Program, as well as incorporating feedback from stakeholders including applicants, service providers and other community members.

¤ Per its mandate, the Review Team is to assess the effectiveness of safeguards enacted to mitigate abuse. To inform the CCT-RT's work, ICANN collaborated with the ICANN community to generate a report on [New gTLD Program Safeguards Against DNS Abuse](#) that explores methods for measuring the effectiveness of safeguards to mitigate Domain Name System (DNS) abuse that were implemented as part of the New gTLD Program, as well as a report on [Rights Protection Mechanism Review](#), focused on key protection mechanisms such as the Trademark Clearinghouse, the Uniform Rapid Suspension System and Post-Delegation Dispute Resolution.

¤ The Review Team was interested in understanding why more firms from the developing world did not apply to the Program. To inform this aspect of its work, AM Global produced a [Report](#) on its research and interviews conducted

with firms, organizations and other institutions that did not apply for new gTLDs, but who may have been considered good candidates for the program as cohorts of similar entities that did apply from the developed world.

To supplement the existing data, the CCT-RT requested additional surveys and studies to further inform its work – see Appendix B for details.

---

[1] The Affirmation of Commitments, signed on 30 September 2009 between ICANN and the U.S. Department of Commerce (the "AoC"), calls for periodic review of four key ICANN objectives: (a) ensure that decisions made related to the global technical coordination of the DNS are made in the public interest and are accountable and transparent; (b) preserve the security, stability and resiliency of the DNS; (c) promote competition, consumer trust, and consumer choice in the DNS marketplace; and (d) facilitate international participation in DNS technical coordination.