

Request for Proposals for consulting services:

Independent review of the ICANN Address Supporting Organization (ASO)

Deadline for applications: 31-January-2011

1 Instructions to Bidders

1.1 Introduction

- a. The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) is an internationally organized, non-profit corporation that has responsibility for the coordination of critical Internet resources. These include generic (gTLD) and country code (ccTLD) Top- Level Domain name system management, and root server system management functions. Under a contract with the United State Department of Communication (DoC) the ICANN also fulfils the function of the Internet Assigned Name and Number Authority (IANA). As private-public partnership, ICANN is dedicated to preserving the operational stability of the Internet; to promoting competition; to achieving broad representation of global Internet communities; and to developing policy appropriate to its mission through bottom-up, consensus-based processes. The systems that ICANN coordinates provide stability and universal resolvability of the Domain Name System (DNS)¹.
- b. The Address Supporting Organisation (ASO) is the body which acts within the ICANN framework, according to Article VIII of the ICANN Bylaws, to advise the Board with respect to policy issues relating to the operation, assignment and management of Internet addresses.
- c. The Number Resource Organization (NRO) is the Organization serving as the coordinating mechanism of the Regional Internet Registries (RIRs) to act collectively on matters relating to the interests of the RIRs².
- d. Under the ASO MoU signed between the ICANN and the NRO³, the two organizations agree that NRO shall fulfill the role, responsibilities and functions of the ASO as defined within the ICANN bylaws⁴. Under the terms of this MoU (section 8), the parties have agreed to undertake a periodic review of the ASO with reference to the provisions of Article IV, Section 4 of the ICANN Bylaws where the NRO will provide the review mechanisms.
- e. The NRO is seeking to appoint an independent consultant to undertake a review of the ASO, in accordance with these documents and agreements.
- f. The present Section 1 provides instructions to bidders for answering to the Request for Proposals, while the following Section 2 contains the Terms of

¹ <http://www.icann.org/en/general/bylaws.htm#I>

² <http://www.nro.net/documents/nro1.html>

³ <http://www.icann.org/en/aso/aso-mou-29oct04.htm>, <http://www.nro.net/documents/nro11.html>

⁴ <http://www.icann.org/en/general/bylaws.htm>

Reference (ToR) of the consulting activity to be carried out. The two sections should be read in conjunction.

1.2 Objectives, timeline and estimated efforts

- a. The review is designed to determine: (i) an assessment of the performance of the ASO in accordance with its constituent documents; and (ii) whether any change in its structure or operations is desirable to improve its effectiveness (including the question of whether the ASO has a continuing purpose within ICANN). Please refer to the Section 2 below for the full ToR.
- b. The review is due to begin in **20 February 2011**. While a full project timeline should be developed by applicants as an integral part of their bid, the following key milestones are anticipated:
 - **20-Feb-2011** - Beginning of operations – initial briefing
 - **13-18-Mar-2011** - ICANN-40 meeting in San Francisco – initial interviews
 - **15-Apr-2011** - Delivery of draft final report
 - **15-May-2011** - Submission of final report based on feedbacks from review Working Group
 - **19-24-Jun-2011** - ICANN-41 meeting – presentation of report
- c. The review is expected to absorb between four and five working months over approximately four calendar months. Substantial deviations from this estimation are to be justified in the applicant's bid.

1.3 Methodology of work

- a. The ASO review is expected to be largely based on qualitative analysis, and to include a data gathering, a data analysis and validation, and a final reporting phase. Different approaches can be proposed by applicants, and should be adequately justified.
- b. During data gathering the contractor to be selected will be required to undertake documental analysis and a significant series of individual interviews with members of the global ICANN and RIR communities. Targeted interviewees should include a wide range of stakeholders representing a diversity of interests, sectors, geographical locations, and economic and social conditions. In order to facilitate this evidence gathering phase, the consultant to be selected will be invited to attend a series of RIR and ICANN public meetings, where a large number of interested individuals tend to assemble, and can be interviewed face to face.

Further distance interviews would be directly organized by the contractor via electronic or remote means; and applicants are invited to specify in their offer the further mechanisms that they envisage to use to

allow inputs during data gathering from the larger communities of interest.

Applicants are encouraged to propose the use of further data collection tools that they might consider appropriate as to integrate evidence, and suitable to reach a globally and culturally diverse and distributed set of stakeholders. Applicants are invited to describe in their offer the approach that they deem the most appropriate for data analysis and validation of findings and conclusions, and to describe the mechanisms that they plan to use as to involve the structure under review in validation of findings and conclusions.

1.4 Steering of the review and reporting

- a. The contractor to be selected will report to the Chair of the NRO.
- b. The ICANN Board of Directors' Structural Improvement Committee is tasked within ICANN with the horizontal coordination of all the organizational review processes. In this role, the Committee through the NRO Executive Council (NRO EC) will monitor the process and progress of the ASO review.
- c. At the end of each calendar month the contractor to be selected will be required to produce a short report (one-two pages), underlining achievements against plans and, when available, early findings. The reports will be followed by phone conferences with the Director, Organizational Review and the Structural Improvement Committee or its specific Working Group, to discuss proceeding of work and early findings.
- d. By the date indicated in 1.2.2 the contractor will issue a draft Final Report, containing description of findings and its full conclusions and recommendations.

No later than two weeks from the reception of this draft, the NRO EC will inform the contractor of its intention to either approve the report in this version, or will request it to address any specific concerns before its approval. In this last case, the contractor will be given not less than two weeks to address the concerns raised by the NRO EC.

1.5 Format of the offers

- a. Interested consultants and consulting firms are invited to submit their binding offer for the present ASO review. In order to allow comparison of the different offers that will be received, the NRO invites applicants to structure their bid as follows:
 - *Section 1 – Understanding of the assignment.* Applicants are invited to describe their own comprehension of the work to be carried out, including their understanding of the ICANN framework, the current

system of management of IP addresses at regional and global levels, the main developments and challenges facing the system as a key component of the global Internet, and any emerging issues.

- *Section 2 – Qualification of the bidding organization and of the key experts proposed to conduct the assignment.* Applicants are requested to describe their qualification to carry out the ASO review, providing precise description and reference to their experience in assessing effectiveness and performances of national and international organizations; in reviewing structures and processes involving a globally diverse and distributed set of stakeholders; and in offering advice to guide processes of organizational change. Relevant research conducted and publications, if any, should also be included;
 - *Section 3 – Methodology of work and tools.* The applicants will describe in this section their methodological approach to the review of ASO, with indication of selected tools and expected efforts (in working days) per each phase of the review. A detailed time plan will ideally complete the section.
 - *Section 4 – Financial offer.* Criteria for the formulation of the financial offer can be found in following section 1.7.
 - *Annex: full CVs of key staff / consultants proposed to conduct the Review, proving the suitability for the proposed work of all the selected experts (max length of each CV: 3 pages).* Role to be played by each individual expert has to be specified.
- b. Both consulting firms, networks of individual consultants and consortia of consulting firms can apply for this assignment. Applications submitted by networks of individual consultants, and consortia of consulting firms shall clearly identify a consortium leader, holding all responsibilities towards the NRO EC for the correct fulfillment of all the contractual obligations resulting in the eventuality of a contract awarding.

1.6 Contract Compliance

Applicants should warrant that they are willing to operate under a nondisclosure agreement.

1.7 Formulation of the financial offer

- a. Offers shall be formulated in US Dollars.
- b. The financial offer (Section 4 of the applicants' bid) is to be formulated as an overall lump-sum of the consulting fees requested for the carrying out of the full assignment. An approximate estimation of the working days needed to conduct the assignment shall be provided, as well.

Consulting fees shall include direct costs such as communication, consumables, use of computer equipment and other minor expenses.

- c. The NRO will furthermore reimburse the contractor the following costs, which are not to be included in the applicants' financial offer:
- Return travels of two Members of the Consulting Team to participate in defined meetings, as approved; planned travels shall be taken in economy class.
 - Hotel (pre-paid by the NRO) and full meal costs for the participation to the meetings.
 - Further reasonable travel expenses, if deemed necessary for the fulfillment of the assignment, provided that they will be approved in advance in writing by the NRO-EC.

1.8 Requests for clarification and contacts during the bidding period

- a. Requests for clarification can be addressed until January 20th 2011 only to the Chair of the NRO (chair@nro.net). Requests for clarification and their answers will be made anonymous and published at the NRO webpage [www.nro.net] in order to ensure equal treatment of all bidders.
- b. Any other direct contact with RIRs or ICANN staff during the bidding period, related to the present Request for Proposal is strongly and expressly discouraged, will not be answered and might lead to disqualification of the bidder.

1.9 Proposal assessment – awarding of the contract

Proposals will be assessed by the NRO-executive Council with the use of the assessment grid enclosed as Annex-1 to the present document.

Each members of the NRO-EC will score each proposal received, and a final average grid will be produced for each proposal, accompanied by a note resuming verified references of the three bidders scoring with the highest marks.

Final average grids and the verified references will be submitted to the Board's Structural Improvement Committee for final selection.

1.10 Deadline for the submission of the offers and their validity

- a. In order to be considered valid, offers shall be sent by January 31st 2011 to **the chair of the NRO at chair@nro.net** in Adobe pdf format. A confirmation email will be sent for each proposal received before the expiring of the deadline.

- b. Offers sent in observance of the present Request for Proposals shall remain valid for a period of six months after the deadline mentioned in previous Chapter

2 Terms of Reference

2.1 The Address Supporting Organization (ASO)

History and functions – The Address Supporting Organization (ASO) is the entity established by the Memorandum of Understanding entered on 21 October 2004 between ICANN and the Number Resource Organization (NRO)⁵, an organization of the existing regional Internet registries (RIRs). The ASO is established to advise the Board with respect to policy issues relating to the operation, assignment, and management of Internet addresses. The ASO work through the an Address Council

The Address Council is consist of the members of the NRO Number Council.

The Address Council shall select Directors to those seats on the Board designated to be filled by the ASO.

The ASO Address Council is responsible for the organizational roles of:

- undertaking a role in the global policy development process as described in attachment A of this document.
- providing recommendations to the Board of ICANN concerning the recognition of new RIRs, according to agreed requirements and policies as currently described in document [ICP-2].
- defining procedures for selection of individuals to serve on other ICANN bodies, in particular on the ICANN Board, and implementing any roles assigned to the Address Council in such procedures.
- providing advice to the Board of ICANN on number resource allocation policy, in conjunction with the RIRs.
- developing procedures for conducting business in support of their responsibilities, in particular for the appointment of an Address Council Chair and definition of the Chair's responsibilities. All such procedures shall be submitted to the Executive Council of the NRO for approval.

2.2 Characteristics of ASO

The ASO is an ICANN Supporting Organization, regulated by Article VIII of ICANN's Bylaws. The ASO function is carried by the NRO as defined by the ASO MoU. All accredited Regional Internet Registry becomes member of the ASO. To date the ASO has 5 members, which are the current 5 RIRs in operations. All new accredited RIR are qualified to join the ASO as member.

⁵ <http://www.icann.org/en/aso/aso-mou-29oct04.htm>

The NRO-NC (NRO Number Council) which plays the role of the ASO Address council (ASO-AC) consists of 15 members, appointed on a regional basis by the RIRs (3 each)⁶.

2.3 Main activities

The ASO work mainly through its Address Council (AC). Its main activity has consisted of advising the ICANN board on global policies proposals and working on two ICANN policies: the ICP-2 (Internet Coordination Policy – 2) and the Global Policy Development Process NRO4 (which is an attachment to NRO11, the ASO MoU). The ASO-AC work mainly via e-mailing list and Teleconference.

3 Questions to be addressed by reviewers

The review is designed to determine: (i) whether the ASO is fulfilling its purpose in the ICANN structure; and (ii) if so, whether any change in its structure or operations is desirable to improve its effectiveness.

In order to appropriately address these two key issues, the reviewers are requested to answer to the following questions, plus any other question that they consider appropriate and suitable in order to fill their mandate.

3.1 PART I – Purpose of ASO, its effectiveness and relevance

1. Has the ASO been effective in achieving its key objectives, as defined in the ASO MoU?
2. Are there any internal or external elements that have prevented the full achievement of ASO's objectives? If yes, what are they?
3. What general or specific measures can be imagined to enhance the effectiveness of the ASO?
4. Overall, were the initiatives carried out by ASO since its establishment consistent with its mandate as defined in the ASO MoU?
5. What are the ASO members' understandings of the mandate of ASO?
6. What are the understandings of other Supporting Organizations and of Advisory Committees of the mandate of the ASO?
7. Does the ASO have a continuing purpose in the ICANN structure?
8. Does the rationale for ASO as spelled out in the ASO MoU need to be revised, and in which sense?

3.2 PART II – Functioning of the ASO

9. Does the ASO operate in an accountable and transparent way? Are there any changes to the ASO ways of operating that might enhance its accountability and transparency?
10. Are the ASO's internal working mechanisms suitable and sufficient to guide all the aspects of its present work?

⁶ See www.aso.icann.org for more information about the ASO

12. Has the ASO had the resources necessary to accomplish its tasks? Was the support provided by NRO to the ASO-AC consistent and sufficient with the needs of ASO in terms of personnel resources, as well as in administrative and operational terms?
13. Are there regular and suitable communication and collaboration mechanisms in place between the ASO and other ICANN's Supporting Organisations and Advisory Committees?

ANNEX-1: Proposal Assessment Grid

Bidder:

Name of proposal evaluator:

Max score **[M]**

Evaluator's score **[S]**

Minimum threshold **[T]**

Understanding of the assignment [M=25] [S=0] [T=15]

- Understanding of the Terms of Reference 15
- Understanding of the NRO, the ASO and ICANN and their mandates 10

Qualification of bidder [M=40] [S=0] [T=25]

- Previous similar activities for national / local organizations 5
- Previous similar activities for other international organizations 10
- Previous similar activities carried out within ICANN or the NRO 5
- Geographic and cultural diversity, multilingualism, gender balance 10
- Suitability of proposed CVs 10

Proposed methodology and tools [M=55] [S=0] [T=30]

- Suitability of timetable 10
- Work organization and methodological approach 15
- Suitability of proposed data gathering tools 15
- Suitability of proposed data analysis / validation methods 15

Financial offer [M=20] [S=0] [T=10]

- Max efforts respected or acceptably justified in case of deviations? 10
- Overall value for money? 10

OVERALL SCORE [M=140] [S=0] [T=75]