



ICANN

The IANA Functions

An Introduction to the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) Functions

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The IANA functions include the management of protocol parameters, Internet number resources and domain names. The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) performs these functions on behalf of the global Internet community.

The IANA Functions

The IANA functions are the coordination of some key elements that keep the Internet running smoothly. These functions are typically divided into three core areas:

PROTOCOL ASSIGNMENTS

Management of protocol parameters involves maintaining many of the codes and numbers used in Internet protocols. This is done in coordination with the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). See page 7 for more details.

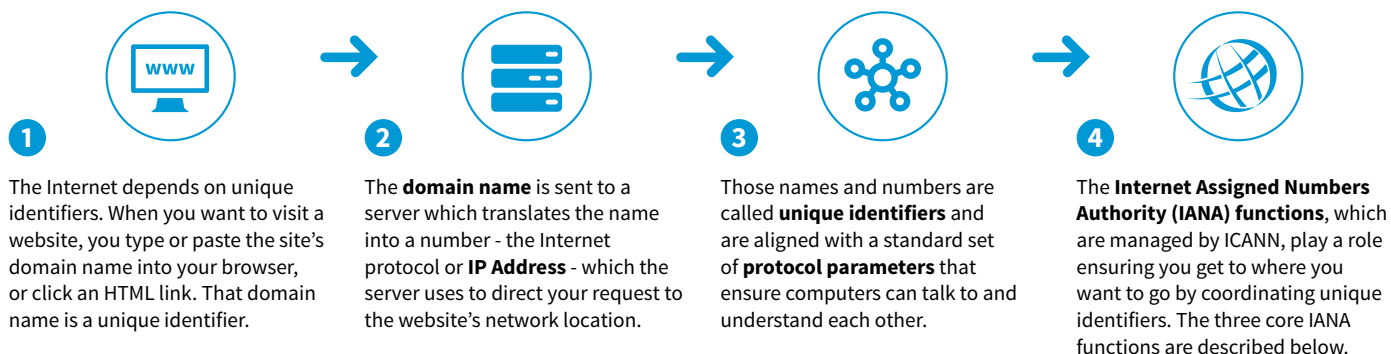
INTERNET NUMBER RESOURCES

Management of Internet number resources involves the global coordination of the Internet Protocol addressing systems, commonly known as IP addresses. The allocation of blocks of autonomous system numbers (ASNs) to regional Internet registries (RIRs) is another part of this function. See page 12 for more details.

ROOT ZONE MANAGEMENT

Management of the root zone involves assigning the operators of top-level domains, such as .uk and .com, and maintaining their technical and administrative details. The root zone contains the authoritative record of all top-level domains (TLDs). See page 14 for more details.

WHAT ARE UNIQUE IDENTIFIERS?



THE HISTORY

The IANA functions were developed during the administration of the ARPANET, a U.S. government-funded Department of Defense network. Originally, just one person - Jon Postel - performed the functions. Since then, the Internet has grown and the IANA functions are now managed by ICANN.

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

The actual maintenance requirements and administrative actions necessary to perform each of the IANA functions differ, but all involve the same basic principles:

- **All activities are performed in a professional, fair and neutral manner according to the policies and guidelines developed by the applicable IANA functions' stakeholders.**
- **Accurate and authoritative registries are maintained and made available to the public without cost.**

THE IANA FUNCTIONS OPERATOR DOES

- ✓ **Create registries based on policies from the community**
- ✓ **Maintain existing registries**
- ✓ **Allocate Internet number resources**
- ✓ **Publish all registries for general public use**


THE IANA FUNCTIONS OPERATOR DOES NOT

- ✗ **Determine what can be a domain name**
- ✗ **Create or interpret policy**
- ✗ **Choose TLD managers**

More details about what ICANN does and does not do in its performance of the IANA functions can be found in the following sections: Protocol Parameters on page 7, Internet number resources on page 12 and domain names on page 14.

Defining the Policies Governing How the IANA Functions are Performed

The policies for protocol parameters, Internet number resources and domain names are defined by organizations representing the global Internet community. These organizations use various forums provided by ICANN or use other well-established policy development processes to develop consensus-based policy. More details about how policy is defined for each of the IANA functions can be found in the following three sections. Participation in these organizations and all others that develop policy that may impact or be impacted by these services is encouraged.

 More information: icann.org/policy

IANA Functions' Stakeholders

The United States Department of Commerce's National Telecommunication and Information Administration (NTIA) currently, pursuant to a contract, plays a role as steward of ICANN's performance of the IANA functions. Various other stakeholder organizations also play important roles with respect to ICANN's performance of the IANA functions, some through written agreements with ICANN.

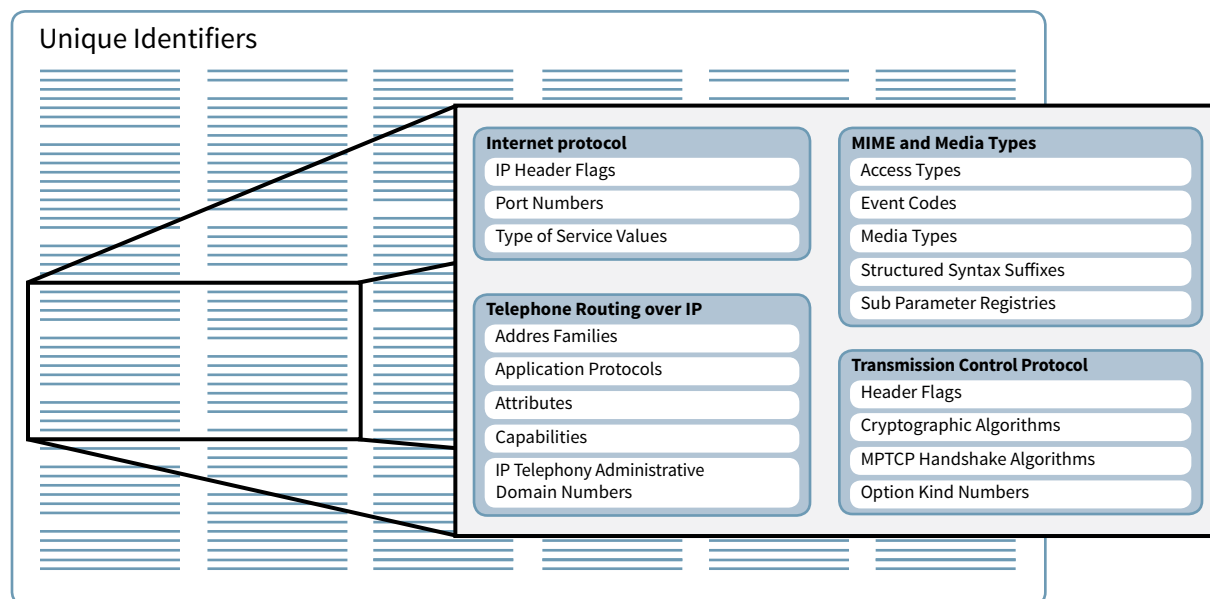
The IANA Functions

The IANA Functions: Protocol Parameters

- The Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) develops Internet protocols and policy for those protocols.
- The Internet Architecture Board (IAB) reviews ICANN's performance of the protocol parameter function as delineated in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ICANN and the IAB and the IETF.
- ICANN creates and maintains the tables containing protocol parameters and coordinates the requests for assignments of parameters.

What are Protocol Parameters?

Protocols are sets of agreed upon forms of communication. Standardization of Internet protocols is essential for ensuring the Internet continues to work and enables those using equipment or software from different vendors to communicate effectively. While domain names and Internet number resources are specialized forms of protocol parameters, there are many more Internet protocols that require coordination. All Internet protocols have values or parameters that must be globally unique.



All Internet protocols have values or parameters that need to be globally unique.

These Internet protocols and their parameters define a common language by which devices can communicate with each other in an understandable way. Typically, each protocol defined by the IETF will have one or more protocol parameter registries that allow independent implementers of the protocols to select the right values to enable those implementations to interoperate.


Some common types of protocol parameters are:

- Port numbers: e.g. port number “80” is used for web page transmission, i.e. “HTTP.”
- Private Enterprise Numbers (PENs): unique identifiers typically used in network management systems to uniquely identify network components.
- Language tags: used to mark content on the Internet based on which language it contains, e.g. “fr” for French or “en” for English.
- HTTP Status Codes: e.g. status code “404” meaning “Page Not Found.”
- Media Types: used to mark the file format of content transferred over the Internet, such as “video/h264” for video streaming. See diagram below.

One protocol parameter is the type of content attached to emails or embedded in web pages. For example, if you wanted to find out more about the MPEG 4 audio media type, this is what you’d see in the IANA registry:


SAMPLE EXTRACT OF MEDIA TYPE REGISTRY		
NAME	TYPE	REFERENCE
mosskey-request	application/mosskey-request	RFC1848
mp4	application/mp4	RFC 1848, RFC6381
mpeg4-generic	application/mpeg4-generic	RFC3640
mpeg4-iod	application/mpeg4-iod	RFC4337
mpeg4-iod-xmt	application/mpeg4-iod-xmt	RFC4337
mrbs-consumer+xml	application/mrbs-consumer+xml	RFC6917
mrbs-publish+xml	application/mrbs-publish+xml	RFC6917
msc-ivr+xml	application/msc-ivr+xml	RFC6231
msc-mixer+xml	application/msc-mixer+xml	RFC6505

ICANN maintains over 2,800 protocol parameter registries and sub registries.

 More information: iana.org/protocols

Who Creates Internet Protocol Parameters?

The IETF is an inclusive technical forum open to anyone that develops Internet technical standards and protocols. It does this by using a defined standards-drafting process and consensus-based approval process. The IETF's standards-drafting process results in the creation of documents called Requests for Comments (RFCs). RFCs describe the communication mechanism in use, or proposed for use, for Internet protocols.

 More information: ietf.org

Who Determines the Policies?

It is up to the IETF community to determine the policies for the protocol parameter registries maintained by ICANN. All IETF protocol parameter registries are created through the publication of RFCs. In those RFCs the policy for the registration procedures that ICANN implements for each registry are defined.

Non-IETF registries may be created by other processes. For example, the “IPv4 Recovered Address Space” registry was created to implement a community-developed policy (see page 13). A public comment period was opened and the results led to the creation of this registry. No RFC relating to this registry was published.

 More information: iana.org/go/rfc5226

PUBLIC COMMENT IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS TO
PROVIDE INPUT AND FEEDBACK ON ALL AREAS OF ICANN'S WORK.
FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE PROCESS AT ICANN.ORG/PUBLIC-COMMENTS



Administration of the .ARPA Domain

The .ARPA domain, the management of which is an IANA function, is used for protocols that require some form of operational infrastructure in the domain name system; for example, a way of translating an IP address into a domain name.


The .ARPA top-level domain houses various sub-domains that are used for Internet infrastructure purposes. ICANN administers the .ARPA domain in line with the policy outlined in RFC 3172 and in close liaison with the Internet Architecture Board (IAB). The IAB is charged with the technical and engineering development of the Internet and is responsible for managing and developing the policies associated with .ARPA.

 Read more: iana.org/go/rfc3172

 More information: iana.org/domains/arpa

What Review is Involved?

ICANN implements the protocol parameter function pursuant to agreements with the IAB and IETF. ICANN and the IETF entered into a MoU in 2000 concerning the technical work of the IANA functions (see: iana.org/go/rfc2860). Every year since 2007, ICANN and the IETF have reviewed the supplemental service level agreement that includes annual deliverables and performance goals for the protocol parameter work. Service level agreements can be found at icann.org/resources/pages/agreements-en

 More information: iana.org/protocols

ICANN's Role in Performing the Protocol Parameter Function

As Internet protocols are used globally, there must be a publicly available record of the authoritative answer to the following question: What value should be used in a particular situation for each protocol used on the Internet? ICANN, in accordance with policy established by the IETF and pursuant to agreements with the IETF and the IAB, maintains the definitive repository of the protocol parameter registries used in most Internet protocols documented in the RFC series.

REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION OF IANA CONSIDERATIONS

As a draft RFC nears its approval stage, ICANN's IANA specialists participate in the RFC review process, identifying where protocol assignments should be located within the registries that ICANN maintains. Most RFCs include a section called 'IANA Considerations' which describes the protocol parameter-related actions to be implemented by ICANN upon approval of the draft document. These actions include, as applicable, creating new registries and/or modifying existing registries to add or modify protocol parameter entries.

Once a protocol parameter registry has been published, subsequent updates to the protocol or new features within that protocol may require updates to that relevant registry. In many cases, it is ICANN's IANA specialists' task to evaluate any requests for additions and modifications and ensure all records are updated correctly. In other cases, the IANA specialists will consult with community experts to make protocol parameter registry modifications. Some protocols allow for updates to be made directly by ICANN's IANA specialists rather than requiring a new RFC to be published.

The IANA Functions: Internet Number Resources

- The five regional Internet registries (RIRs) and their communities develop global policy.
- The ICANN Address Supporting Organization Address Council is responsible for reviewing the execution of the global policy development process.
- The five RIRs monitor and review ICANN’s performance of the numbers function.
- ICANN maintains the IANA number resource registries and is responsible for allocation of Internet Protocol addresses (IPv4 and IPv6) and Autonomous System Numbers for various usages including those defined by special reservation and by global policies for the Regional Internet Registries.

IP Addresses: IPv4 and IPv6

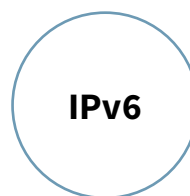


THERE ARE AROUND 4.3 BILLION IPv4 ADDRESSES AND AROUND 340 UNDECILLION (3.4×10^{38}) IPv6 ADDRESSES. AS OF 2014, 99% OF IPv4 SPACE AND LESS THAN 1% OF IPv6 SPACE HAS BEEN ALLOCATED.

At its core, the Internet works by passing data between devices using a system of unique identifiers called IP addresses. Today, there are two types of IP addresses in use:



192.0.2.53



2001:db8:582::ae33

Autonomous System Numbers (ASNs)

ASNs are used to uniquely identify a routing domain controlled by a single administration. For traffic to flow from a source Internet address to a destination, network operators need to “announce” the addresses for which they provide connectivity to other network operators. Network operators often want to define certain policies for subsets of their addresses, for example, to favor one of their neighbor network operators for cost or performance reasons. ASNs allow network operators to group subsets of their Internet addresses to apply these different policies.

The Role of the RIRs

The five RIRs are not-for-profit, membership-based organizations that operate in distinct regions.

Each RIR distributes the Internet number resources allocated to it to network operators in its region according to the allocation and assignment policies defined by its own regional community. These regional policies are developed using the RIRs' individual open, bottom-up, consensus-based policy development processes. Each RIR community is open to all and anyone can take part in the policy development process.



RIRs

Regional Internet Registries (RIRs)

Non-profit corporations that administer and register IP address space numbers within a defined region.

Who Develops the Global Policies?

Global policies are developed collectively by all five of the RIR communities. An identical version of a global policy proposal must have consensus from all five of the RIR communities before it can be recommended for ratification, and then implemented by ICANN.

Who Ensures that the Global Policies are Implemented?

The ICANN ASO Address Council is responsible for ensuring that the documented global policy development process has been followed correctly in each of the five RIR communities.

Other supporting organizations and advisory committees in the ICANN structure are invited to comment on a proposed global policy before it is forwarded to the ICANN Board for ratification.


The five RIRs, working collectively as the Number Resource Organization (NRO), monitor and review ICANN's performance of the IANA functions relating to Internet number resources.

ICANN's Role in Performing the Numbers Function

ICANN is responsible for maintaining the record of allocated and unallocated blocks of IPv4 addresses, IPv6 addresses and ASNs; and is responsible for allocating large blocks of IP addresses and ASNs to the five RIRs according to global policies.

PREFIX	DESIGNATION	DATE	STATUS
5F00::/8	IANA	2008-04	Reserved
3FFE::/16	IANA	2008-04	Reserved
2C00:0000::/12	AFRINIC	2006-10	Allocated
2A00:0000::/12	RIPE NCC	2006-10	Allocated
2800:0000::/12	LACNIC	2006-10	Allocated
2600:0000::/12	ARIN	2006-10	Allocated
2400:0000::/12	APNIC	2006-10	Allocated
2620:0000::/12	ARIN	2006-09	Allocated
2001:B000::/12	APNIC	2006-03	Allocated

A sample list of the reserved and allocated IPv6 address space maintained by ICANN.

 More information: iana.org/numbers

The IANA Functions: Root Zone Management of the Domain Name System

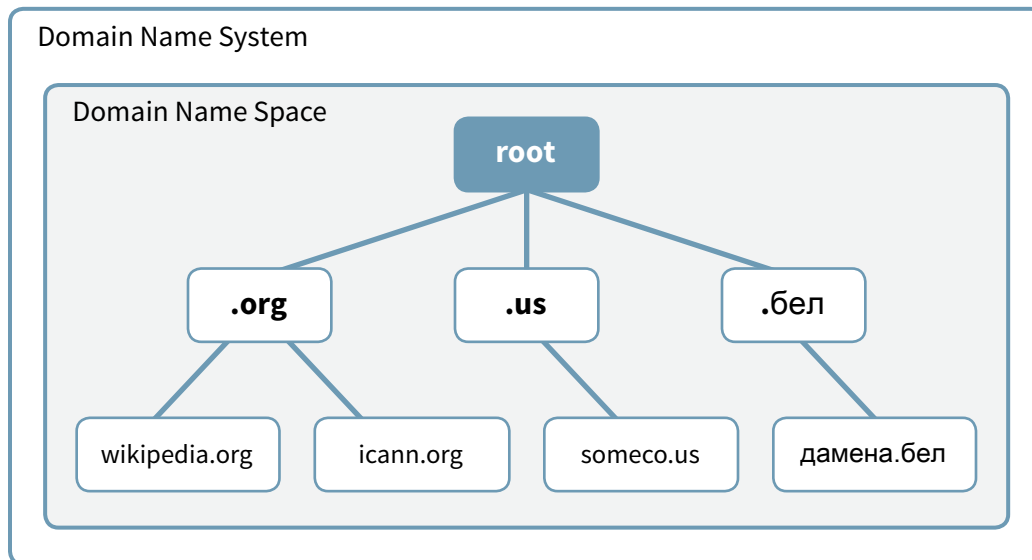
- ICANN's Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) and Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO) develop policy relating to most top-level domains.
- ICANN is responsible for processing change requests for the Root Zone File and Root Zone Database. It evaluates, coordinates and reports on requested changes, as well as managing the Root DNSSEC Key Signing Key (KSK).
- Verisign maintains and distributes the Root Zone File and also manages the Root DNSSEC Zone Signing Key (ZSK).
- The U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunication and Information Administration (NTIA) provides general stewardship of ICANN's performance of the root zone management function. NTIA also verifies that ICANN followed established process in requesting changes to the authoritative root zone and authorizes Verisign to implement changes in the root zone.

DOMAIN NAMES

The Internet depends on domain names as a key type of unique identifier used to access resources online. When you want to visit a website, such as <http://www.icann.org/>, you type or paste the site's domain name **www.icann.org** into your browser, or click an HTML link. That domain name is a unique identifier.

THE DOMAIN NAME SYSTEM (DNS)

The DNS is divided into a hierarchy. Each 'dot' in a domain name represents a new level in the hierarchy.



At the top of this hierarchy is the root. The root contains information about top-level domains:

- **Generic Top-Level Domains (gTLDs)**
General purpose domain names are those such as .com, .org, .click, .info or .公益 or ones that are related to specific fields of interest, such as .coop, .museum or .cat. There are also generic top-level domains for use by a single entity or brand.
- **Country Code Top-Level Domains (ccTLDs)**
These domains are designated to represent a country or territory, and are eligible for delegation based on the ISO 3166-1 standard. ccTLDs may be represented in Latin or other scripts. Examples of ccTLDs include .br, .fr, .mx and .φφ.

ROOT NAME SERVERS

For the DNS to work, there must be servers that respond to the queries that initiate the translation between domain names and the values associated with those names. These servers, called ‘root servers’, form an important part of the DNS. Many root server instances are located all over the world and are operated by 12 different organizations.



THERE WERE AN AVERAGE OF 62 CHANGES TO THE ROOT ZONE FILE PER MONTH IN 2014. SEE PAGE 17 FOR MORE DETAILS.

WHO DEFINES THE POLICIES?

Multiple bodies within the ICANN policy development framework provide input into the policies used to manage the root of the DNS. For TLDs, the ccNSO and GNSO provide global-level policy recommendations to be applied to the management of ccTLDs and gTLDs in the root, respectively. These policies are created using open policy development processes.

Advice on the technical management and configuration of the root is provided by a variety of different communities, including the ICANN Root Server System Advisory Committee (RSSAC) and the ICANN Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC).

ICANN's other two Advisory Committees (the At-Large Advisory Committee and the Governmental Advisory Committee) consider and provide advice to the ICANN Board on policy matters. Open consultation is also used to engage industry experts and operators in activities such as developing the parameters by which Domain Name System Security Extensions (DNSSEC) were implemented in the root.

WHAT REVIEW IS INVOLVED?

When a request is made to change any information contained within the root, the details of the request are transmitted by ICANN to NTIA as a recommendation for implementation in the root. NTIA verifies that ICANN followed established procedure and policy in processing the change request; and then authorizes Verisign and ICANN to implement the change in the authoritative root zone file and root zone database, respectively.


When requests for delegations or redelegations of ccTLDs are made, the ICANN Board of Directors is also called upon to check that ICANN staff correctly followed and applied all procedures in evaluating the requests.

ICANN'S ROLE IN PERFORMING THE DOMAIN NAMES FUNCTION

Based on established policies and procedures, ICANN acts as the global coordinator of the DNS root. It is responsible for:

- Evaluating and recommending for approval, creation of, or changes to, TLDs in the root.
- Verifying the requested changes to the root zone are implemented and the implementation communicated to the requester.
- Evaluating requests for changes to the root zone to ensure that they comply with current policies and procedures.
- Updating the details in the root zone database (including details published in the "WHOIS" service) to reflect changes in the information associated with TLDs.
- Managing the Key Signing Key (KSK) for the root zone, which is central to implementing security of the DNS using the DNSSEC protocol enhancements.

i FIND OUT MORE ABOUT DNSSEC, KEY SIGNING KEYS AND KEY SIGNING CEREMONIES AT:
iana.org/dnssec


 More information: **iana.org/domains**

The IANA Functions: Other Services

- .INT, a TLD designed for intergovernmental treaty organizations, is managed by ICANN as part of the IANA functions.

THE .INT DOMAIN


Domain names within .INT are available for registration by intergovernmental organizations. The .INT domain is used by organizations established by international treaties between or among national governments.

 More information: iana.org/domains/int

ICANN and the IANA Functions

ICANN, a private not-for-profit public benefit corporation, has performed the IANA functions on behalf of the global Internet community since the organization's creation in 1998. The primary governing framework for these functions is a series of contracts commencing in 2000 with the United States Government. Some other key agreements with the various stakeholder groups include:

- A MoU with the IETF, described in RFC 2860: iana.org/go/rfc2860
- An MoU and Exchange of Letters with the ICANN ASO: archive.icann.org/en/aso/aso-mou-29oct04.htm
- Documented relationships with some root server operators: <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/root-server-operators-2015-06-01-en>
- Contracts, MoUs and other accountability framework documents with some of the ccTLD administrators: <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/cctlds/cctlds-en>
- Contracts with gTLD registry operators: <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/registries/registries-agreements-en>

 The current IANA functions contract can be found at:
icann.org/en/system/files/files/contract-01oct12-en.pdf

OUTREACH

Liaisons from ICANN's IANA Department maintain strong working relationships with the IANA functions' stakeholders and engage in discussions about technical implementation issues that require community coordination. ICANN also provides a helpdesk at the IETF Meetings to encourage interaction with one of its largest communities of users — protocol developers (see page 7).

FEES


ICANN does not charge fees for any services related to the performance of the IANA functions. All of the registries maintained by ICANN as part of the IANA functions are available to everyone free of charge. Funding for operational costs associated with

performing the IANA functions is provided for in ICANN's budget.

REPORTING AND FEEDBACK

Reports on performance standards and various other metrics of the IANA functions are published online on a monthly basis. The procedures are periodically reviewed and consultations with stakeholders are held regularly to optimize performance.

ICANN also performs annual customer satisfaction surveys to get feedback from its stakeholders and to make continual improvements to the services it provides.

 More information: [iana.org/performance](https://www.iana.org/performance)

THE RESULTS OF THE 2014 IANA FUNCTIONS CUSTOMER SERVICE SURVEY ARE AVAILABLE AT: <https://www.iana.org/reports/2014/customer-survey-20141217.pdf>

LINKS

Internet Architecture Board (IAB): [iab.org](https://www.iab.org)

Address Supporting Organization Address Council (ASO AC): [aso.icann.org](https://www.aso.icann.org)

At-Large Advisory Committee: [atlarge.icann.org/alac](https://www.atlarge.icann.org/alac)

Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO): [ccnso.icann.org](https://www.ccnso.icann.org)

Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC): [gacweb.icann.org](https://www.gacweb.icann.org)

Generic Name Supporting Organization (GNSO): [gnso.icann.org](https://www.gnso.icann.org)

IANA: [iana.org](https://www.iana.org)

Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF): [ietf.org](https://www.ietf.org)

Number Resource Organization (representing the five RIRs): [nro.net](https://www.nro.net)



One World, One Internet

ICANN.ORG