DRAFT .net Request for Proposals

9 November 2004

RFP Introduction

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is being issued by ICANN to solicit applications for designation as the successor registry operator for the .NET Top-Level Domain following completion of the term of the current Registry Agreement between ICANN and VeriSign, Inc. The current .NET Registry Agreement was signed in May 2001, and will expire on 30 June 2005. VeriSign is eligible to be considered for designation as the successor registry operator.

The procedure for selecting the successor operator was developed through an open and transparent process incorporating opportunities for public review and comment at multiple stages. The final procedure was approved by ICANN's Board of Directors on 29 June 2004.

Procedure

The following outlines the procedure that will be followed for the designation of a successor registry operator for .NET. The procedure was initially announced on 29 June 2004 and is established in accordance with Section 2.1 of the current .NET Registry Agreement. The target schedule listed may be adjusted to the extent circumstances warrant. If adjustments are made, notifications will be posted on www.icann.org. In addition, general information about past procedural actions can be found at <http://www.icann.org/tlds/dotnet-reassignment/dotnet-general.htm>.

1. Finalization of RFP (Target completion date: 29 November 2004)

> ICANN will take public comments into consideration prior to posting the finalized RFP documents and before publishing a full timeline for the submission and evaluation periods.

> The RFP selection criteria are based primarily on the GNSO Council's consensus recommendation concerning the criteria for designating a successor operator for the .NET registry. The criteria are divided into absolute and relative criteria. Absolute criteria are those criteria that ICANN, in consultation with the GNSO, has determined the successor registry operator must satisfy to ensure that the .NET Top-Level Domain is administered at a very high level of safety, security, efficiency and fairness. Relative criteria are those criteria that ICANN has determined will be most helpful in distinguishing the qualified applicants from each other on the basis of enhanced stability, security, competition, and services. Each application will be reviewed first to determine whether the applicant satisfies all of the absolute criteria. Any applicant who fails to achieve one or more of the absolute criteria will be eliminated from the process, without regard to how well or poorly the applicant performs against the relative criteria. Similarly, all applicants who meet the absolute criteria will thereafter be judged against each other solely on the basis of the relative criteria, without regard to the absolute criteria, except where this RFP explicitly states otherwise. Some relative criteria are closely related to, and differ only in a matter of degree from, some absolute criteria.

2. Proposal Submission Period (29 November 2004 - 18 January 2005)

> A proposal submission period will be established in which interested parties may submit applications to become the successor .NET registry operator. Questions regarding this RFP may be emailed to the following designated ICANN email address: net-rfp@icann.org. All questions submitted to this mailbox, together with the answers to the questions, will be posted on the ICANN website. To ensure the fairness and integrity of the RFP process, no telephone inquiries about the process will be accepted.

As indicated below, applications will consist of two parts, general information and confidential technical and financial information. The general information in each application will be posted on the ICANN website shortly after the end of the proposal submission period.

To help provide all applicants with equitable access to information about the process as they prepare their applications, an online question period will open at 23:59 UTC 1 November 2004 and close at 15 November 2004 at 23:59 UTC.

Responses to substantive written questions submitted during the application period will be posted on the ICANN website within a reasonable timeframe. Those sending questions are encouraged to take this into account when framing their questions.

3. Public Comment Period (19 January 2005 – 2 February 2005)

There will be a two-week period in which the community will have the opportunity to review and post comments regarding non-confidential portions of the proposals.

4. Evaluation and Reporting Period (19 January 2005 – 9 March 2005)

ICANN will select a team of independent technical and business/financial experts to evaluate the .NET proposals. The panel members will be selected based on their experience, talent and skills as they apply to the evaluation task as outlined in the RFP.

The independent panel of evaluators will evaluate both the public and the non-public portions of the applications against the criteria in the RFP. As indicated above, the evaluators will first determine whether an applicant meets the absolute criteria set forth in this RFP. Thereafter, but only with respect to those applicants the evaluators determine have satisfied the absolute criteria, the evaluators will evaluate the applicants against the relative criteria, and will preliminarily rank the applicants from strongest to weakest based upon performance against the relative criteria. The evaluators will then prepare a preliminary written report on each applicant. This written report on a given applicant will be provided privately to that applicant only, and each applicant will be given a specified number of days to respond to the report. All responses must be in writing. When the time period for responding to the evaluators' preliminary written report has expired, the evaluators will review their initial evaluation and ranking, together with the responses from the applicants, and prepare their final rankings of the applicants.

The final ranking of the applicants, together with the evaluators' final written report in support of that ranking, will be provided to the ICANN Board of Directors. A redacted version of that report, with confidential information about any applicant redacted, will be posted on the ICANN website. Immediately following the announcement of the evaluators' final rankings, the applicant who was ranked the highest will be invited to begin intensive and speedy negotiations with ICANN on the terms of the .NET registry operator agreement. ICANN's proposed form of agreement will be posted online by 31 January 2005. If the highest ranking applicant and ICANN are unable to reach a mutually acceptable agreement within two weeks following the release of the rankings, then (i) ICANN will prepare for the ICANN Board a summary of the contractual points in dispute, upon which the applicant will be invited to comment prior to its submission to the ICANN Board, and (ii) the ICANN staff will immediately begin negotiations with the next highest ranked applicant with the goal of reaching an agreement mutually acceptable to that applicant and ICANN.

After the posting of the evaluators' report and rankings, the applicants, the internet community and the public at large will be entitled to comment on the report, the rankings

and other topics of interest to them relating to the selection of a successor .NET registry operator.

5. Consideration by the ICANN Board (March 2005 Board meeting)

At the ICANN Board meeting in March 2005, the ICANN Board will consider the following factors in determining who the next .NET registry operator will be: (1) the final report from the evaluators, (2) any comments from applicants, the internet community and the general public on the evaluators' report and ranking, (3) the status of negotiations toward an acceptable contract between ICANN and the highest ranked applicant and (4) if negotiations with the next highest ranked applicant have begun pursuant to the process outline above, the status of negotiations with that next applicant. Based upon its evaluation of these factors, the Board will determine which applicant will be the next .NET registry operator. The Board's choice may be conditioned upon the applicant agreeing to specified contractual terms and may designate an alternate choice in the event the designated applicant refuses to agree to the specified contractual terms.

6. Announcement of Successor .NET Registry Operator (March 2005)

Following the Board's decision, the concurrence of the US Department of Commerce will be sought by ICANN pursuant to Amendment 3 to the ICANN/DOC Memorandum of Understanding. Also immediately following the Board's decision ICANN will make an announcement of the designated successor .NET registry operator.

RFP Structure

In order to assist applicants and to standardize the type of information submitted to ICANN, there are two parts to the RFP.

Part 1: General Applicant Information

Part 2: Technical and Financial Information

In the interests of balancing commercial confidentiality with open and transparent processes, all of Part 1 (General Applicant Information) and significant portions of Part 2 (Technical and Financial Information) will be made publicly available. Sections 2, 3a and 6(c) of Part 2 will remain confidential to the independent evaluators and ICANN.

Applicants are encouraged to read the selection criteria carefully and structure their application according to the questions in each section.

Any applicant who intends to contract out to another party any significant aspect of the registry function must (i) describe the functions that the applicant intends to contract out and (ii) provide the information required by Parts 1 and 2 of the application for each such other contracted party.

Application Deposit and Fee

The application deposit is US$200,000. The full deposit must be received by ICANN by the last day of the submission period, by wire transfer to:

> Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers
> Account number 09142-07182
> Routing indicator 121000358
> SWIFT Code BofAUS3N
> Bank of America Branch 0914
> 4754 Admiralty Way
> Marina del Rey, CA 90292 USA
> Telephone +1 310 247 2080

The application fees are calculated to offset the estimated costs of the entire RFP process. Depending on the number of applications, US$100,000 to US$150,000 of the US$200,000 deposit will be returned to each unsuccessful applicant according to the schedule below. The remaining part of the deposit is non-refundable.

Number of Applicants	Applicable Refund for Unsuccessful Applicants
3 or fewer	US$100,000
4	US$133,000
5 or more	US$150,000

Non-Compliant Proposals

The proposal forms must be fully completed in all respects. A proposal will not be considered if:

- The submission deadline is missed. Late proposals will not be accepted.

- The application deposit has not been paid prior to submission of the application.

Application material received after the application deadline will not be accepted unless specifically requested from the applicant.

Probity and Conflict of Interest

Proposals will be assessed by an independent evaluation panel. As part of the application, each applicant will be required to covenant and certify that it will not, nor will it permit or encourage any of its officers, directors, partners, agents, representatives, equity owners or any other person, to contact any member of the evaluation panel for any reason whatsoever except to respond to written questions from the evaluators to the applicant, copies of which responses will be provided to ICANN at the time they are delivered to the evaluators. Applicants will further be required to acknowledge that violation of this provision is grounds for disqualification.

Criteria for Selection of Independent Evaluators

ICANN will evaluate the professional background of potential panelists prior to selection in order to assess their areas and level or expertise and to identify any conflicts which would prevent them from making an objective evaluation of the proposals. In addition, panelists will be required to disclose any potential conflict of interest which may arise during the period of the evaluation. All evaluators selected will execute a confidentiality agreement with regard to material contained in the applications under review. Below are specific areas which evaluators must be competent to assess:

Independent Evaluators – Technical

ICANN must be satisfied that the evaluators, in the aggregate, have the ability to evaluate applications based on the criteria below. That ability should be born of skills and experiences developed through the implementation, management and design of complex systems and demonstrated, at both standard-protocol and operational levels, understanding of the subtle features of the Domain Name System and how they are specified and work. An evaluator must demonstrate to the satisfaction of ICANN the ability, based upon experience and education, to review system designs while considering the following:

- General description of proposed facilities and systems, including all system locations; the specific types of systems being used; their capacity and interoperability, general availability and level of security. Further consideration of buildings, hardware, software systems, environmental equipment and Internet connectivity,

- Registry-registrar model and protocol,

- The requirement to keep information synchronized across the various aspects of a TLD's operations,

- Implications of scalability, impacts on caches not under registry control, DNSSEC operations and DNS reliability and scalability in the absence of DNSSEC.

- Database capabilities including database software, size, throughput, scalability, procedures for object creation, editing, and deletion, change notifications, registrar transfer procedures, grace period implementation and reporting capabilities,

- Zone-file generation including procedures for changes, editing by registrars and updates. Address frequency, security, process, interface, user authentication, logging and data back-up,

- Zone file distribution and publication: locations of name servers, procedures for and means of distributing zone files to them,

- Billing and collection systems: technical characteristics, system security, accessibility,

- Backup: frequency and procedures for backup of data; hardware and systems used, data format, identity of suggested escrow agent(s) and procedures for retrieval of data/rebuild of database,

- Data escrow: escrow arrangements, data formats, insurance arrangements and backup plans for data recovery,

- Publicly accessible Whois service: address software and hardware, connection speed, search capabilities and coordination with other Whois systems,

- System security and physical security: technical and physical capabilities and procedures to prevent system hacks, break-ins, data tampering and other disruptions to operations,

- Peak capacities: technical capability for handling a larger-than-projected demand for registration or load; effects of load on servers, databases, back-up systems, support systems, escrow systems, maintenance and personnel,

- System reliability: define, analyze and quantify quality of planned service.

- System outage prevention: procedures for problem detection, redundancy of all systems, backup power supply, facility security and technical security; the availability of backup software, operating system and hardware; the system monitoring, technical maintenance staff and server locations.

- System recovery procedures: procedures for restoring the system to operation in the event of a system outage, both expected and unexpected; redundant/diverse systems for providing service in the event of an outage and describe the process for recovery from various types of failures; training of technical staff who will perform these tasks; the availability and backup of software and operating systems needed to restore the system to operation and the availability of the hardware needed to restore and run the system; backup electrical power systems and the projected time for system restoration; procedures for testing the process of restoring the system to operation in the event of an outage; documentation kept on system outages and on potential system problems that could result in outages, and

- Technical and other support: support for registrars and for Internet users and registrants; technical help systems, personnel accessibility, web-based, telephone and other support services to be offered; time availability of support and language-availability of support.

Independent Evaluators – Financial

ICANN must be satisfied that the evaluators, in the aggregate, have the ability to evaluate applications based on business experience, industry knowledge, and education that will enable them to evaluate the financial strength of each applicant and the viability of the applicant's business model for operating the registry, including an understanding of the following:

- The full description of registry services to be provided,

- An outline of anticipated capital requirements,

- Business and financial model, including pricing and revenue assumptions, expense assumptions, capital expenditure projections and the like,

- The availability and cost of capital,

- A resource requirements projection, and

- Risk analysis, a disaster recovery plan and contingency provisions.

The evaluators must demonstrate to ICANN's satisfaction that they can read, understand and assess 3 years of audited financial statements (balance sheet, profit and loss statement, statement of cash flows and statement of stockholders equity) for the applicant and, if the applicant is a subsidiary of, or controlled by, another entity, similar financial statements for that other entity.

RFP Part 1: General Applicant Information

Name and Address fields

The full legal name, principal address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address of the applicant, and the URL of its principal World Wide Web site. Additionally, each applicant must provide the Application Deposit Receipt Number issued to the applicant upon ICANN's receipt of the wired funds for the application deposit.

Applicant's Business and Other Activities

Provide a general description of the applicant's business and other activities.

Directors, Officers and other Staff

Provide the full names, positions and the qualification and experience of each of the following persons:

(i)   the person or persons who will have direct responsibility for the business operations of the registry,

(ii)   each person in the chain of command from the person to the CEO of the applicant,

(iii)   the top two financial officers of the registrant,

(iv)   the person with the principal technical responsibility for the operation of the registry,

(v)   each other officer of the applicant who will have significant policy making or operational influence regarding the registry operations, and

(vi)   all directors.

Information provided as to each such person shall include (1) at least the last seven years of work experience, (2) names and contact information for references at each employer covered by the last seven years and (3) the number of employees reporting to that person.

Also identify any persons or entities who own or otherwise control, directly or indirectly, 5% or more of the outstanding voting power held by all persons or entities entitled to participate in the election (or other selection) of the applicant's Board of Directors or other governing body.

Applicant Organization Type

Provide the applicant's type of entity (e.g., corporation, partnership, etc.) and law (e.g., Denmark) under which it is organized. Please state whether the applicant is for-profit or non-profit. If it is non-profit, please provide a detailed statement of its mission. Applicants should be prepared to submit articles of incorporation, or other similar organizational documents later in the evaluation process.

Number of Employees

Provide the number of employees currently employed by the applicant.

Contact Person

Provide the name, telephone and fax number, and e-mail address of person to contact for additional information regarding this application. If there are multiple contacts, please list all their names, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail addresses and describe the areas as to which each should be contacted.

RFP Part 2: Technical and Financial Information

Introduction

The criteria by which the applicants will be evaluated are set forth below. Each criterion is labeled as either absolute or relative.

1.   ICANN Policy Compliance

Criteria: The successor .NET registry operator must comply with all existing consensus policies of ICANN and must agree to comply with all future consensus policies of ICANN. This is an absolute criterion.

Describe in detail your method for implementing ICANN's <u>Inter-Registrar Transfer Policy</u>.

2.   Equivalent Access for Registrars

Criteria: All ICANN-accredited registrars must be allowed to qualify to register names in .NET. The registry operator must treat all registrars that have qualified to operate as .NET registrars equivalently. This is an absolute criterion (except as described below regarding languages).

(a) Describe in detail your methods of providing registry services on an equivalent basis to all accredited registrars having registry-registrar agreements in effect. Your description should include any measures intended to make registration, technical assistance, and other services available to ICANN-accredited registrars in multiple time zones and multiple languages. Please include in your description the name of the languages that you agree to support if you are selected as the .NET registry operator. Support in English is an absolute criterion. Support in additional languages is a relative criterion. In addition, describe the Registry Code of Conduct and other commitments you propose to make to ensure that all such registrars receive equivalent access to registry services. In preparing your response to this item, you may wish to refer to Appendices H and I of the registry agreements ICANN has entered for other unsponsored TLDs (e.g., <u>.biz</u>, <u>.com</u>, <u>.info</u>, <u>.name</u>, .org and <u>.pro</u>).

(b) VeriSign, Inc., the current operator of the .NET registry uses a registry-registrar protocol (RRP) documented in <u>RFC 2832</u>. At the time of the transition, the selected successor operator will be required to continue to support the RRP (unless a migration of registrars in .NET to another protocol has already been completed by that time). In addition, the selected successor operator will be required to implement support for Version 1.0 of the Extensible Provisioning Protocol as specified in RFC's 3730, 3731, 3732, 3733, 3734, and 3735. Provide a detailed description of your plan for supporting RRP at the time of transition, for supporting EPP 1.0, and for providing registrars with a smooth, low-cost migration path from RRP to EPP.

3.   Registry Operations
Criteria: The successor .NET registry operator must provide name registration within the time specified in the Appendix D to the existing .NET registry operator agreement. This is an absolute criterion. The ability to provide additional registry services and/or the ability to provide name registration faster than the specifications on Appendix D are relative criteria. An assessment of this ability will include the evaluators' assessment of the factors described below.

(a) Provide a full description of all registry services you propose to provide and demonstrate your technical and legal ability to provide them, including your prior experience offering these or similar services. If you propose to offer any registry services that you believe are not now offered,

include for such services your assessment of the benefits and burdens associated with such new services, as those benefits and burdens apply to registrants and registrars.

(b) To enable the evaluators to assess your capability (both technical and financial) to deliver the registry services you propose to provide, please include the following information:

(i) A detailed description of your current business operations, including (A) core capabilities in registry/database and Internet related operations and (B) the services and products you currently offer, with data on how long you have offered them on the current scale. To the extent this description does not fully capture your ability to provide the registry services you propose to offer, add the appropriate supplementary information to fully describe that ability.

(ii) Whether you currently provide any domain name registration services and describe such services.

(iii) A description (including location) of facilities (including available network capacity) available to house staff and equipment necessary to operate the registry.

4.   *Revenue and Pricing Model; Financial Strength and Stability*

Criteria: Each applicant must demonstrate sufficient financial strength and stability, based upon its existing financial condition and its proposed business model for operation of the registry, to provide reasonable certainty that it will be able to fulfill its obligations over the life of the .NET registry agreement. This is an absolute criterion. In building their financial and pricing models, applicants should assume that the following fees will be payable: (i) an annual fee to ICANN of US$132,000 for the first year, increasing by no more than 15% each year thereafter and (ii) registry-level transaction fees totaling non-refundable amounts of US$0.75 for each annual increment of an initial domain name registration and US$0.75 for each annual increment of a domain name re-registration registered by a registrar, to be allocated equally to the following three purposes: (a) a special restricted fund for developing country Internet communities to enable further participation in the ICANN mission by developing country stakeholders, (b) a special restricted fund to enhance and facilitate the security and stability of the global Internet's system of unique identifiers, and (c) general operating funds to support ICANN's mission to ensure the stable and secure operation of the global Internet's systems of unique identifiers. The per-name price charged to registrars is a relative criterion, with lower committed prices being preferable to higher prices.

(a) Provide the following financial statements for the applicant (or, if the applicant is a wholly owed subsidiary of another entity, for the applicant and such other entity on a consolidated basis): three years of financial statements (including balance sheet, income statement, cash flow statement and statement of stockholders' equity), audited by an independent accounting firm and prepared in accordance with either U.S. generally accepted accounting principles or the International Accounting Standards. Applicants who do not have such audited financial statements may substitute such other information and statements about their operations that are reasonably equivalent to such financial statements. The independent evaluators will be responsible for determining whether such information and statements are sufficiently equivalent to allow the evaluators to conduct an evaluation of the applicant's financial strength comparable to the evaluation conducted on those applicants who do submit the requested financial statements.

(b) Provide the applicant's business plan for the operation of the registry, including:

(i) a detailed description of all revenue or commercial benefit to be derived from or related to your operation of the registry, including but not limited to details of the expected or

anticipated revenue and the assumptions about prices charged for services to be offered, and anticipated demand for those services at high, medium and low levels;

(ii) staffing model, showing the number and types of employees needed at the various levels of demand and the expenses associated with that staff. Include information on (A) applicant's hiring policy and training programs (for both new and continuing staff), (B) staffing level to handle both expected and unexpected volume levels, and react to unplanned outages, infrastructure vulnerabilities and security breaches and (C) customer service staff to support on a 24 hour basis in multiple languages;

(iii) expense model, incorporating both the staffing expenses described above and all other anticipated expenses of the operating the registry;

(iv) property, plant and equipment budget;

(v) a projection for the sources and uses of cash, showing the applicant's current cash available and the sources of cash available to applicant in the future to fund operating and capital expenditures.

5.   Technical Competence

Criteria: The .NET registry operator must meet the specifications of the current .NET registry contained in the following sections of the current .NET registry agreement listed below (if a "thick registry" model is being proposed by applicant, the specifications for the current .org agreement, rather than the current .NET agreement, shall apply in the case of Appendices O, P and Q). This is an absolute criterion. The degree to which applicant's proposal commits applicant to exceed these specifications shall be relative criteria:

Appendix C.4, Name server Functional Specifications

Appendix C.5, Patch, Update, and Upgrade Policy

Appendix D, Performance Specifications

Appendix E, Service-Level Agreement

Appendix O*, Whois Specification – Public Whois

Appendix P*, Whois Data Specification – Independent Whois Provider

Appendix Q*, Whois Data Specification – ICANN

Appendix R, Data Escrow Specification

Along with providing the information requested below, the applicant should include its own proposed versions of appendices C, D, E, O, P, Q, and R based on the current .NET registry agreement <http://www.icann.org/tlds/agreements/verisign/net-index.htm> which the applicant would be willing to have included in the subsequent .NET registry agreement. Applicants should ensure that their proposed versions of these appendices include any relevant subsequent updates to the RFCs referenced in these appendices. For example, RFC1035 as listed in Appendix C4 has been updated by RFC2845 and RFC3645, among other updates.

(a) Outline your technical capabilities. Provide a description of your technical capabilities, including information about key technical personnel (qualifications and experience), size of technical workforce and access to systems development tools. Outline any significant prior technical achievements. Indicate how your proposed registry service compares against the

current service (defined as .NET registry operator's monthly reports over the past 12 months) and indicate how you could enhance the service.

(b) Technical plan and capabilities for the proposed registry operations. Present a technical plan and capabilities outline for the proposed registry operations. The technical plan should address the following factors:

(i) General description of proposed facilities and systems. Describe all system locations. Identify the specific types of systems being used, their capacity and interoperability, general availability and level of security of technical environment. Describe in appropriate detail buildings, hardware, software systems, environmental equipment and Internet connectivity.

(ii) Stability of resolution and performance capabilities, including: response times and packet loss targets; availability of authoritative name servers; processes, tools and automated monitoring to ensure accuracy of zone data for resolution; diversity of DNS infrastructure; diversity and redundancy of network and DNS infrastructure to handle bandwidth congestion and network failures of ISPs and host providers.

(iii) Operational scalability sufficient to handle existing registry database and projected growth; DNS queries including peak periods and projected growth; DDoS attacks, viruses, worms and spam; and restart capabilities.

(iv) Describe the registry-registrar model and protocol; availability of a shared registration system, including processing times for standard queries (add, modify, delete); and duration of any planned or unplanned outages.

(v) Database capabilities including database software, size, throughput, scalability, procedures for object creation, editing, and deletion, change notifications, registrar transfer procedures, grace period implementation , availability of system with respect to unplanned outage time, response time performance; ability to handle current volumes and expected growth and reporting capabilities.

(vi) Geographic network coverage, including physically diverse sites and support of growing and emerging markets.

(vii) Zone file generation including procedures for changes, editing by registrars and updates. Address frequency, security, process, interface, user authentication, logging and data back-up.

(viii) Zone file distribution and publication. Locations of name servers, procedures for and means of distributing zone files to them.

(ix) Billing and collection systems. Technical characteristics, system security, accessibility.

(x) Backup. Describe frequency and procedures for backup of data. Describe hardware and systems used, data format, identity of suggested escrow agent(s) and procedures for retrieval of data/rebuild of database.

(xi) Escrow. Describe escrow arrangements, data formats, insurance arrangements and backup plans for data recovery.

(xii) Publicly accessible WHOIS service. Address software and hardware, connection speed, search capabilities and coordination with other WHOIS systems. Frequency of WHOIS updates, availability and processing times. Identify whether you propose to use a "thick" registry model or "thin" registry model.

(xiii) System security and physical security. Technical and physical capabilities and procedures to prevent system hacks, break-ins, data tampering and other disruptions to operations.

(xiv) Peak capacities. Technical capability for handling a larger-than-projected demand for registration or load. Effects on load on servers, databases, back-up systems, support systems, escrow systems, maintenance and personnel.

(xv) System reliability. Define, analyze and quantify quality of service.

(xvi) System outage prevention. Procedures for problem detection, redundancy of all systems, backup power supply, facility security and technical security. Outline the availability of backup software, operating system and hardware. Outline system monitoring, technical maintenance staff and server locations.

(xvii) Ability to support current feature functionality of .NET, including IDNs, support of IPv6, DNSSEC.

(xviii) System recovery procedures. Procedures for restoring the system to operation in the event of a system outage, both expected and unexpected. Identify redundant/diverse systems for providing service in the event of an outage and describe the process for recovery from various types of failures. Describe the training of technical staff that will perform these tasks, the availability and backup of software and operating systems needed to restore the system to operation and the availability of the hardware needed to restore and run the system. Describe backup electrical power systems and the projected time for system restoration. Describe procedures for testing the process of restoring the system to operation in the event of an outage, the documentation kept on system outages and on potential system problems that could result in outages.

(xix) Technical and other support. Support for registrars and for Internet users and registrants. Describe technical help systems, personnel accessibility, web-based, telephone and other support services to be offered, time availability of support and language-availability of support. Ability to support new and emerging technologies.

6.   Security and Stability

Criteria: The entity chosen to operate the .NET registry must: (i) maintain .NET registry functions efficiently and reliably, (ii) demonstrate disaster recovery capability and (iii) deliver high quality of service for all .NET users worldwide. Providing documentation for procedures insuring a very high level of security and stability is an absolute criterion. The ability and commitment to provide even higher levels of security and stability than those offered in the current operation of the .net registry is a relative criterion.

(a) Provision for Registry Failure. Describe in detail how you would assure continuity of operations in the event of operational failure of the registry and make provision for contingencies and a failsafe back-up plan. A commitment to provide ICANN with escrowed data, in and of itself, will not satisfy the absolute criterion.

(b) Provision for Business Failure. Describe in detail what advance arrangements you will implement to ensure that, if your operation of the .NET registry becomes financially non-viable, the registry operations will be quickly, smoothly and efficiently transferred to another operator so as to minimize disruption of the registry functions.

(c) Describe in detail your arrangements to provide a secure environment in which the registry infrastructure is to be operated.

7.   Additional Relative Criteria

The following are additional relative criteria: (i) the degree to which the applicant's proposal promotes competition in the registration of domain names, (ii) the degree to which an applicant's business model relies on multiple, rather than sole source, suppliers, to reduce the impact of failure by any one supplier, and (iii) the degree to which an applicant's proposal results in improved implementation of, and support for, GNSO policies, such as transfers and deletes.

Provide a detailed explanation of the manner and degree to which your proposal accomplishes the three relative criteria described above.

8.   *Transition Plan (for applicants other than VeriSign)*

Criteria: Applicants other than VeriSign should document their plan for migrating .NET from the current registry operator with specific attention paid to maintaining existing functional capabilities as defined at the time of the RFP, performance specifications and protocol interfaces (i.e. registry-registrar protocol RRP to extensible registry protocol EPP migration).

Present a detailed plan for the transition of the registry function from the current facilities and services provided by VeriSign, Inc., to the facilities and services you propose. Issues that should be discussed in this detailed plan include:

- Steps of the proposed transition, including sequencing and scheduling.

- The duration and extent of any interruption of any part of the Registry Function.

- Contingency plans in the event any part of the proposed transition does not proceed as planned.

- The effect of the transition on (a) .NET registrants and registrars, (b) Internet users seeking to resolve .NET domain names, (c) performance of registration system, if any, and (d) performance of resolution system, if any.

- The specifics of cooperation required from VeriSign, Inc.

- Any relevant experience of the applicant and the contracted service parties identified above in performing similar transitions.

- Any proposed criteria for the evaluation of the success of the transition.

RFP Checklist

Please check that you have completed all the following steps to ensure you have fulfilled the requirements of the Request for Proposals:

1. Submitted by wire transfer the application fee.

2. Downloaded and completed all the application materials.

3. Affirmatively evidenced your agreement to all terms and conditions included in the Request for Proposal.

4. Printed, signed and sent to ICANN the final copy of your application.

5. Kept a copy for your records.

When you complete this application and finalize it for sending to ICANN, you will need to confirm the following:

1) By checking this box the applicant agrees to, (if selected as the successor registry operator for .NET), the following:

- Targeting: Dot net remains un-sponsored and un-restricted.

- Grandfathering: There are a number of organizations and individuals that have made an investment in .NET domain names. The cost of migrating to a new domain name is potentially significant. Existing registrants shall not be penalized by changes in policy as a result of a transfer of .NET to a successor registry operator. Existing registrants in .NET must be entitled to maintain their registrations on terms materially consistent with their existing contracts under current policy, including the right to transfer a .NET domain to another party.

- Consensus policies: In the operation of the .NET domain name registry, the registry operator will comply with all existing consensus policies of ICANN and any which are developed via the ICANN process in the future.

- Policy development: Any future .NET registry agreement must specify that policy development for .NET will take place in an open bottom-up process, which enables input from the full Internet community via ICANN's processes.

- Registrars: All ICANN-accredited registrars must be allowed to qualify to register names in .NET. All registrars that have qualified to operate as .NET registrars must be treated equivalently by the registry operator.

2) By checking this box, the applicant certifies that (a) he or she has full authority to make this application on behalf of the applicant and to make and fulfill all agreements, representations, waivers, and undertakings stated in this transmittal form and accompanying materials; copies of the documents demonstrating this authority are attached and (b) all information contained in this application transmittal form and accompanying documents is true, accurate and complete to the best of the person's and the applicant's knowledge and information. The undersigned acknowledges on his or her own behalf and that of the applicant that any material misstatement or misrepresentation (or omission of material information) will reflect negatively on any application.

3) By checking this box, the applicant acknowledges that there are five parts of the Request for Proposals that have been thoroughly reviewed and considered in their entirety by the applicant. The applicant (or, if there are multiple applicants, each applicant) understands that failure to fully follow instructions or the requirements set forth for each of the documents transmitted with this Application Form will be a factor negatively affecting consideration of this application.

4) By checking this box, the applicant (or, if there are multiple applicants, each applicant) hereby authorizes ICANN to:

- *contact any person, group, or entity to request, obtain, and discuss any documentation or other information that, in ICANN's sole judgment, may be pertinent to this application;*

- *take any other steps to verify, elaborate on, supplement, analyze, assess, investigate, or otherwise evaluate the information contained in this application or other information that, in ICANN's sole judgment, may be pertinent to this application; and*

- *Consult with persons of ICANN's choosing regarding the information in this application or otherwise coming into ICANN's possession.*

5) By checking this box the applicant (or, if there are multiple applicants, each applicant) understands that difficulties encountered by ICANN in verifying, elaborating on, supplementing, analyzing, assessing, investigating, or otherwise evaluating any aspect within or related to this application may reflect negatively on the application. In consideration of the review of the application conducted on behalf of ICANN, the applicant (or, if there are multiple applicants, each applicant) hereby releases ICANN (and each of its officers, directors, employees, consultants, attorneys evaluators, attorneys, accountants, and agents, hereinafter jointly referred to as "ICANN Affiliated Parties") from any and all claims by any applicant that arise out of, are based upon, or are in any way related to, any action, or failure to act, by ICANN or any ICANN Affiliated Party in connection with ICANN's review oft his application, investigation or verification, any characterization or description of applicant or the information in the application, or the decision by ICANN to determine the next .NET registry operator. Each applicant further indemnifies ICANN and the ICANN Affiliated Parties from any and all liability to applicant in any way related to or in connection with, any of such matters..

6) By checking this box the applicant (or, if there are multiple applicants, each applicant) hereby authorizes ICANN and ICANN Affiliated Parties to publish on ICANN's web site, and to disclose or publicize in any other manner, any materials submitted to, or obtained or generated by, ICANN and the ICANN Affiliated Parties in connection with the application, including ICANN's (or their) evaluations and analyses in connection with the application or ICANN's investigation or evaluation of the application, other than the material included in Sections 2, 3(a) and 6(c) of Part 2, which will remain confidential to ICANN and the independent evaluators. The applicant(s) further certify that it has obtained permission for the posting of any personally identifying information included in the application materials. The applicant understands and acknowledges that ICANN does not and will not agree to keep any portion of the application or materials submitted with the application confidential except for Section s2, 3(a) and 6(c) of Part 2. The applicant (or, if there are multiple applicants, each applicant) grants ICANN and ICANN Affiliated Parties a license to use any copyright or other intellectual property that applicant may have in any portion of the application for this purpose.

7) By checking this box the applicant (or, if there are multiple applicants, each applicant) hereby gives ICANN permission to use the applicant's name, descriptive materials and/or logo in ICANN's public announcements (including informational web pages) relating to top-level domain space expansion.

8) The applicant agrees that the applicant information, certified by the undersigned (a) that he or she has authority to do so on behalf of the applicant and, on his or her own behalf and on behalf of the applicant, (b) that all information contained in this proposal is true and accurate to the best of its knowledge and information. The applicant understands that any material misstatement or misrepresentation (or omission of material information) will reflect negatively on any application of which this proposal is a part and may cause cancellation of any selection to operate a registry based on such an application.