



02 CONSULTING

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers

.org Reassignment—RFP Review

19 August 2002

Engagement: 220329820

research consulting measurement community news

Gartner

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Overview

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Background

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) is a non-profit Corporation incorporated and headquartered in California, and is structured to make decisions on the basis of Internet community consensus. ICANN was formed to coordinate the IP address space allocation, protocol parameter assignment, domain name system management, and root server system management functions previously performed by the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) and other entities under contract to the U.S. Government.

ICANN is presently engaged in transitioning the responsibility for the management of the .org domain name from VeriSign to a new operator. This process includes preparing and distributing an RFP and soliciting responses from those organizations that wish to manage this domain. Those initial steps having been completed, ICANN has engaged the services of Gartner and other organizations to independently and objectively score the responses for quantitative and qualitative content and to arrive at a finalist.

Gartner assisted ICANN by reviewing the proposals in relation to specific criteria.

Objectives

ICANN determined that the best means of arriving at the selection of the finalist was to complete an impartial evaluation of the submitted proposals. In order to be even more diligent, ICANN had two separate organizations conduct an unbiased review and scoring of the five criteria indicated below.

Gartner has been retained by ICANN to complete the following:

- Use five of the 11 criteria (numbers 1, 7, 8, 9, and 11) to differentiate and score the applicants
- Score the 11 proposals to arrive at the top three candidate within each of the five criteria.

This Final Report represents Gartner's analysis and findings. We have highlighted the top three proposals for each criterion. The proposal scores are based on our reading and analysis of the proposal documents and supplemental information requested from the applicants.



Approach

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Approach

This section covers the following topics:

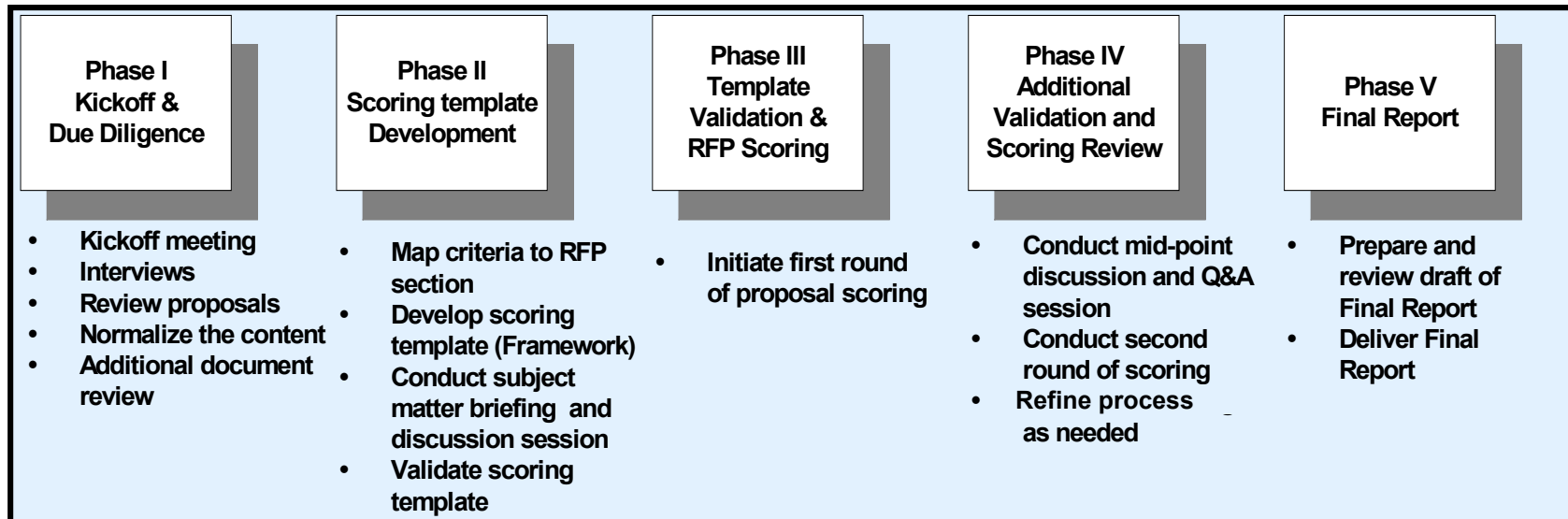
- Methodology—Gartner’s approach to the engagement
- Mapping—Tying the RFP questions to the scoring criteria
- Two-step Scoring Process—The scale and method of scoring

Review Methodology

Gartner's Approach to the Engagement

Gartner's review involved these five steps:

- **Initiation:** Conducted interviews with ICANN team members and reviewed documentation to understand the overall project and prepare for the review
- **Scoring Template Development:** Mapped the RFP sections and questions to the criteria, and developed a scoring scale
- **Conducted Review:** Tested the template by conducting the first round of scoring
- **Completed Scoring:** Continued with the second round of scoring and refined process as needed
- **Developed Final Report:** Prepared and delivered a report with recommendations



Mapping

Tying the RFP Questions to the Scoring Criteria

The RFP was divided into several sections. Section C contained the requirements that need to be evaluated using ICANN's document titled "Criteria for Assessing Proposals". The mapping below ties the scoring criteria (described in Appendix A) with the appropriate RFP question and sub-question.

1. **Need to preserve a stable, well-functioning .org registry:** C3, C4, C6, C7, C12, C13, C13.1, C13.2, C13.3, C13.5, C13.6, C14, C15, C17, C17.1, C17.2, C17.3, C17.4, C17.5, C17.6, C17.7, C17.8, C17.9, C17.10, C17.11, C17.12, C17.13, C17.14, C17.15, C17.16, C22, C28, C32, C33, C50.3, C50.4, C50.5.
7. **The type, quality, and cost of the registry services proposed:** C17, C17.5, C17.8, C17.9, C17.10, C17.11, C17.13, C17.14, C17.15, C17.16, C21, C22, C25, C26, C27, C28.
8. **Ability and commitment to support, function in, and adapt protocol changes in the shared registry system:**
C17.2, C17.3, C17.11, C17.12, C18, C18.1, C18.2, C18.3, C18.4, C18.5, C18.6, C21, C22
9. **Transition considerations:** C18, C18.1, C18.2, C18.3, C18.4, C18.5, C18.6, C18.7.
11. **The completeness of the proposals submitted and the extent to which they demonstrate realistic plans and sound analysis:** C2, C3, C4, C6, C7, C8, C9, C17, C17.1, C17.2, C17.3, C17.4, C17.5, C17.6, C17.7, C17.8, C17.9, C17.10, C17.11, C17.12, C17.13, C17.14, C17.15, C17.16, C18, C18.1, C18.2, C18.3, C18.4, C18.5, C18.6, C18.7, C21, C22, C25, C27, C28, C50.1, C50.2, C50.3, C50.4, C50.5.

Two-step Scoring Process

The Scale and Method of Scoring

- 1) The following five point scale was used to score the response to each RFP question.
 - 5 – Provides superior response backed up by excellent detail and demonstrated ability
 - 4 – Provides above average response backed by detail that demonstrates the applicant's understanding of the topic
 - 3 – Provides the basic information requested by section, and meets any established expectations
 - 2 – Partial information provided. In cases where the question requires comments from multiple respondents, one or more were omitted.
 - 1 – Applicant does not specifically provide the requested information, or does not meet the criteria
- 2) The scores for each question were summarized according to the scoring criterion mapping. Then the scores were averaged and weighted using intra-criterion weights to arrive at the score per criterion for each applicant. The overall score was then developed based on weighting for each criterion.

Note : The final score can be interpreted using the above scale. However, averaging several high scores can obscure a low score to a key requirement. Please refer to our comments in Appendix B for details.



Results

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Results

This section covers the following topics:

- Scoring summary and top three scores
- Scoring consistency
- Scoring ranges
- Overall ranking
- Findings summary and recommendations

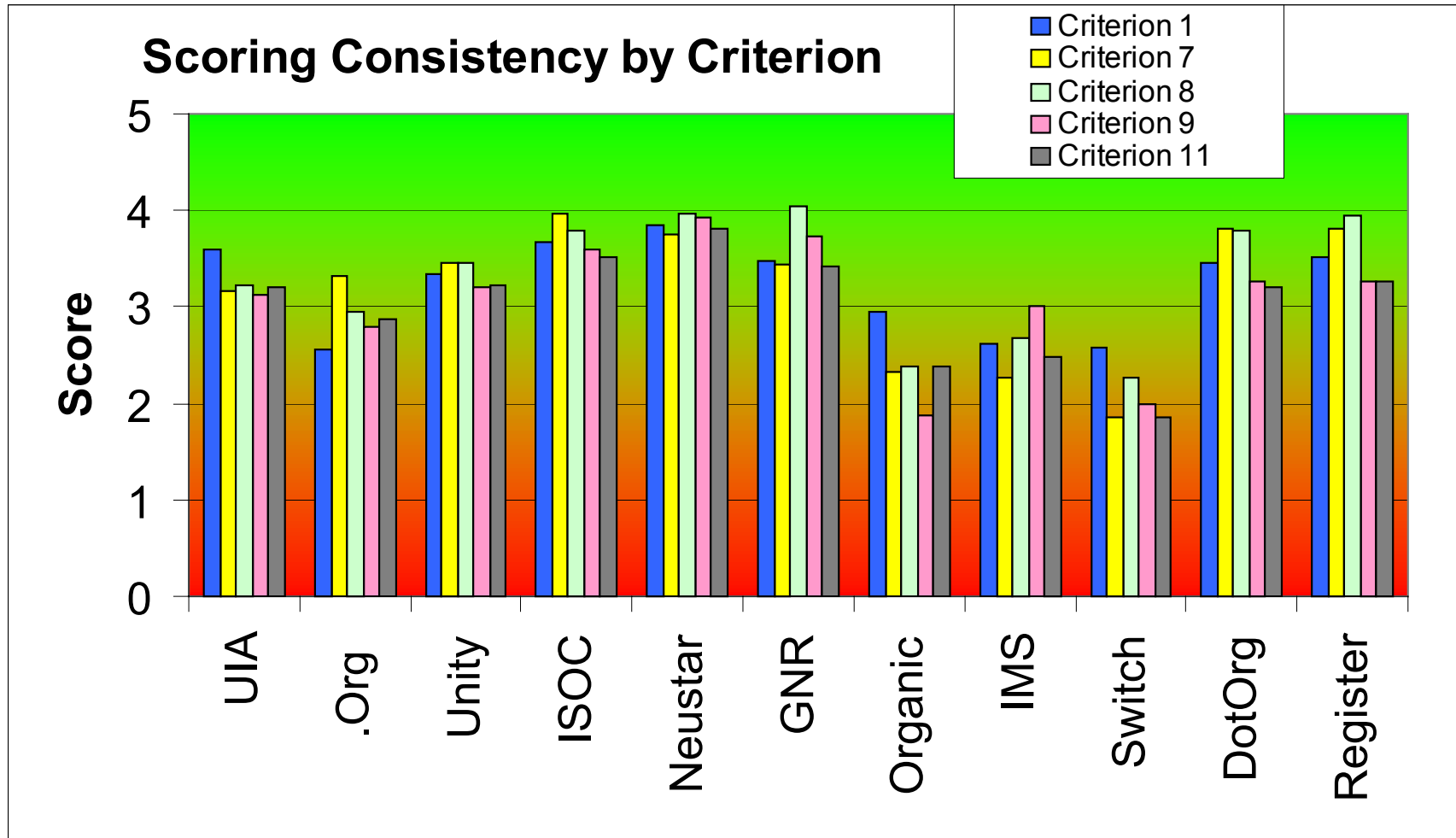
Scoring Summary and Top Three Scores

This is an at-a-glance view of the applicant's scores in each criterion. The green shading indicates the top three scores in each criterion. Comments supporting each applicant's scores are provided in Appendix B.

	UIA	.Org	Unity	ISOC	Neustar	GNR	Organic	IMS	Switch	DotOrg	Register
Criterion 1	3.60	2.55	3.33	3.67	3.85	3.48	2.95	2.61	2.58	3.45	3.51
Criterion 7	3.16	3.32	3.46	3.96	3.74	3.44	2.32	2.26	1.85	3.81	3.81
Criterion 8	3.23	2.95	3.46	3.80	3.96	4.05	2.38	2.68	2.26	3.79	3.95
Criterion 9	3.13	2.80	3.20	3.60	3.93	3.73	1.87	3.00	2.00	3.27	3.27
Criterion 11	3.21	2.87	3.23	3.51	3.82	3.41	2.38	2.48	1.86	3.20	3.27

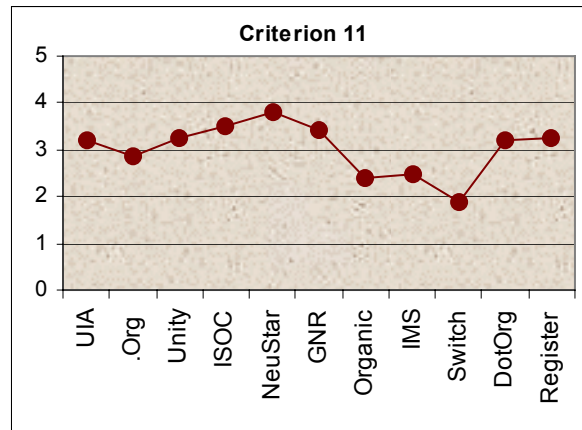
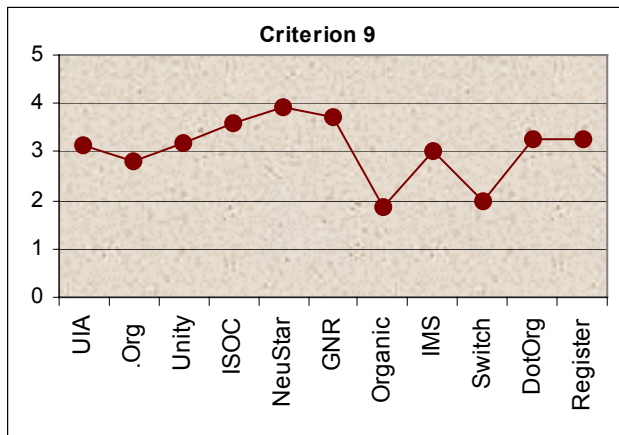
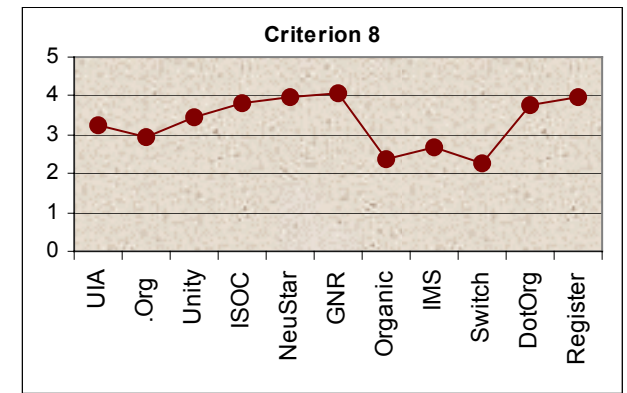
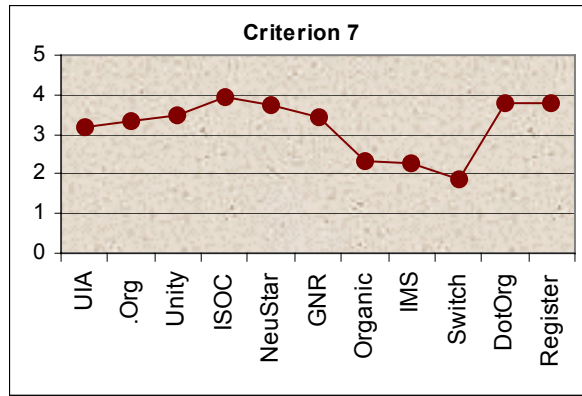
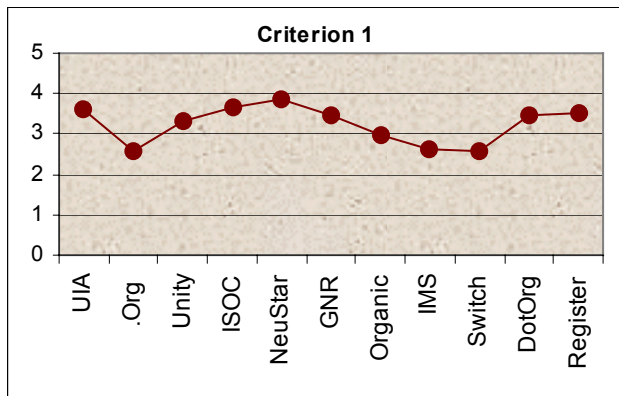
Scoring Consistency

This view represents the applicant's scoring consistency for each criterion.



Scoring Ranges

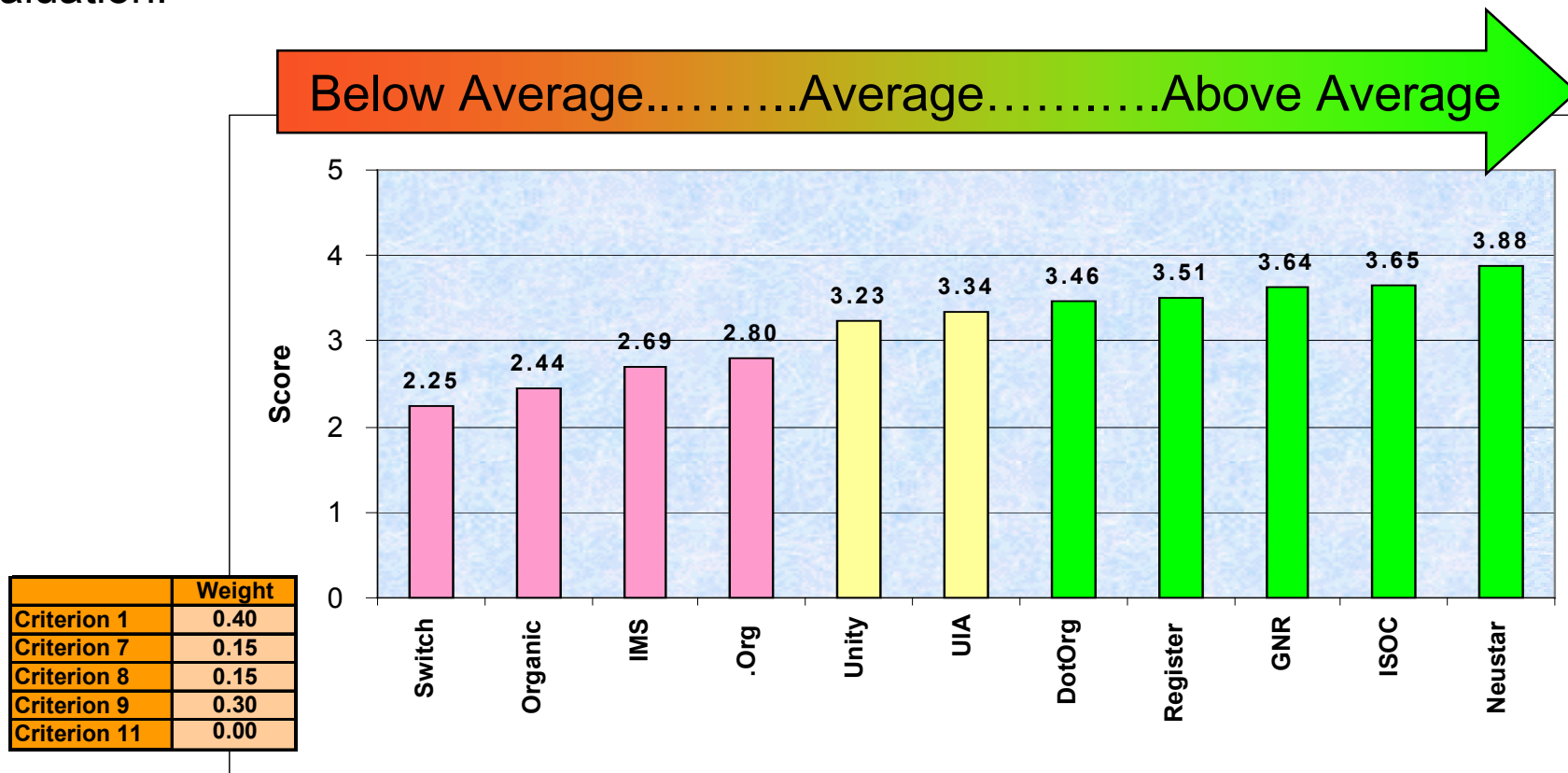
These charts indicate the range of response for each criterion. Some criterion have a smaller spread indicating comparable findings, while those with a greater spread signify more differentiation between the stronger and weaker applicants.



	Mean	Std. Dev.
Criterion 1	3.24	0.48
Criterion 7	3.19	0.72
Criterion 8	3.32	0.66
Criterion 9	3.07	0.65
Criterion 11	3.02	0.57

Overall Ranking

The chart below shows a sorted list of weighted applicant scores for criteria 1, 7, 8 and 9. Criterion 11 is not included in the overall ranking by Gartner since it is mapped to all 10 criteria and criteria 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10 were not part of Gartner's review. Each criterion is weighted to reflect our understanding of the level of importance to the overall evaluation.



Findings Summary and Recommendations

All 11 applicants showed a willingness to step up to the role of being the next operator of the .org registry. The task of identifying the best candidates was done by evaluating the responses to the RFP questions and completing both a best practices assessment as well as a side-by-side relative comparison to arrive at the scores.

We have grouped the applicants into three categories (listed alphabetically within each group). We would recommend selecting the next .org registry operator from among the “Above Average” category.

- Below Average—There are four candidates that have not demonstrated, through their proposals, an ability to substantially meet the needs of the .org registry
 - IMS
 - Organic
 - .org Foundation
 - Switch
- Average—The next set of candidates demonstrate the ability to meet the needs of the .org registry, but were out paced by other applicants in key criteria
 - UIA
 - Unity

Findings Summary and Recommendations (cont)

- Above Average—These candidates have scores that would allow them to be considered among the leaders in almost every criterion. They have clearly demonstrated an above average capability to meet the needs of the .org registry.
 - Dot.Org
 - GNR
 - ISOC
 - NeuStar
 - Register



Appendix A

Scoring Criteria Description

Scoring Criteria Descriptions

The RFP's questions and sub questions were mapped to the five criteria described below

Criteria #	Criteria Description
1	<p>Need to preserve a stable, well-functioning .org registry. ICANN's first priority is to preserve the stability of the Internet, including the domain-name system (DNS). Inasmuch as the .org TLD presently contains over 2,700,000 second-level domains, a principal consideration will be ICANN's level of confidence that a particular proposal will result in technically sound, high-quality services that meet the needs of .org registrants. Proposals should include specific plans, backed by ample, firmly committed resources, as to how the proposed operator intends to operate the .org TLD in a stable and technically competent manner. (See also criterion 9 below, on transition plans.) In evaluating proposals, ICANN will place significant emphasis on the demonstrated ability of the applicant or a member of the proposing team to operate a TLD registry of significant scale in a manner that provides affordable services with a high degree of service responsiveness and reliability.</p>
7	<p>The type, quality, and cost of the registry services proposed. The specific registry services proposed should allow uninterrupted provision of all services presently provided to .org registrants. In addition, plans and provisions for additional registry services that will benefit .org registrants will be considered. Consideration will be given to proposed quality-of-service commitments. Any proposal should match or improve on the performance levels of the current .org registry. In view of the noncommercial character of many present and future .org registrants, affordability is important. A significant consideration will be the price at which the proposal commits to provide initial and renewal registrations and other registry services. The registry fee charged to accredited registrars should be as low as feasible consistent with the maintenance of good-quality service.</p> <p>The .org TLD will be operated with a shared registration system providing numerous (currently over one hundred) competitive registrars from around the world with equivalent access to registry services. Operation of a large TLD registry employing a shared registration system involves many aspects. In addition to the recording of registrations and provision of nameservice, necessary capabilities include Whois service, data escrow, certification of registrars for connection to the registry, processing of transfers between registrars, and technical and other support of registrars. Consideration will be given to the means proposed to supply all services required for operation of the .org TLD.</p>

Scoring Criteria Descriptions (cont)


8	<p>Ability and commitment to support, function in, and adapt protocol changes in the shared registry system. The selected registry operator for .org will be required to provide registry services to ICANN-accredited registrars through a shared registry system, under which those registrars provide services (either directly or through resellers) to registrants. Consideration will be given to the proposed methods of providing registry services on an equivalent basis to all accredited registrars. Applicants should show a commitment to making registration, technical assistance, and other services available to ICANN-accredited registrars in different time zones and relevant languages. The current .org registry uses a registry-registrar protocol documented in RFC 2832. Proposals should demonstrate the ability to support registrar communications under that protocol at the time of the successor registry operator's commencement of service. The applicant should also commit to adapting to meet changes to this protocol as adopted by the ICANN process.</p> <p>In particular, the provreg working group of the Internet Engineering Task Force is currently working on specifications for a standard for registry-registrar communications, and it is expected that unsponsored TLD registry operators will comply with any standards that result. Consideration will be given to provisions for migration in a manner that minimizes burdens on registrars. (See also "Transition considerations", below.)</p>
9	<p>Transition considerations. A smooth transition to a new operator of the .org TLD is essential. Proposals should include detailed plans (including plans for significant contingencies) for the transition. They should also commit to provide data to allow ICANN's evaluation of the .org transition process.</p>
11	<p>The completeness of the proposals submitted and the extent to which they demonstrate realistic plans and sound analysis. ICANN intends to place significant emphasis on the completeness of the proposals and the extent to which they demonstrate that the applicant has a thorough understanding of what is involved, has carefully thought through all relevant issues, has realistically assessed all requirements for implementing the proposal, has procured firm commitments for all necessary resources, and has formulated sound plans for executing the proposal. Applicants are strongly encouraged to retain well-qualified professional assistance (e.g., technical, engineering, financial, legal, marketing, and management professionals, as appropriate) in formulating their proposals. Proposals that are presented in a clear, substantive, detailed, and specific manner will be preferred.</p>



Appendix B


Scoring Detail by Vendor

Findings Detail—UIA

 = Top Three Position within Criterion


Criterion	Score	Comments
1	3.60	Excellent data center design with two SRS data centers plus a backup and an outstanding track record of availability. Highest score on five of 16 technical criteria. Commitment to deploy real-time updates with the proposed "Atlas" platform. Will implement a thin registry initially. Only proposed to meet the contract minimums for SLAs. Contracting registry operations with VeriSign. VeriSign currently operates the .org, .net and .com registries supporting 31.5M domains and 109 Registrars.
7	3.16	The applicant meets baseline service requirements while noting some additional end-user benefits through enhanced services. The applicant demonstrates an adequate ability to provide services based on existing experience administering the ".org" registry. The core services proposed will be priced at \$6 per unit with additional costs for enhanced services. Non-fee based services are primarily customer service related as well as real-time updates of both Whois and DNS.
8	3.23	The applicant's transition process is sufficiently outlined and meets timeframe requirements. Although a specific schedule is not provided, the applicant is committed to a seamless transition through the use of 24 x 7 end-user support, use of existing registrar software systems, test environments, software development kits, and a lengthy parallel operation of EPP and RRP. A code of conduct and equivalent access certification process supports the commitment to meeting the requirements of a shared registry system. The proposed service criteria are based on historic performance or ".org". The proposed specifications meet the baseline service requirements for availability, performance, and response time. Individual service performance is not specifically broken-down.
9	3.13	Since the back end registry operator remains VeriSign, only a high level single page transition plan is provided. It basically addresses training of new personnel and the RRA document creation and execution between Diversitas and the Registrars. There will be no transition impacts, nor will there be any risks, therefore there are no contingency plans. No special coordination needed with VeriSign as they are the current operator of .org. No discussion of non-technical transitions such as business processes. There is no mention of how fees or costs will be managed between the two organizations.
11	3.21	Based on existing experience supporting UIA registry, demonstrates an understanding of the technology and services required to meet expectations. Detailed proposal that provides above average responses for all primary categories. In some cases, however, the content is a reiteration of the requirement and does not provide enough detail on specifically how the requirement will be met other than stating it will be met. It is important to provide supporting documentation on process to demonstrate competence and confidence in the statements.

Findings Detail— .ORG

 = Top Three Position within Criterion


Criterion	Score	Comments
1	2.55	Will subcontract registry functions to eNom. eNom will deploy Windows based SRS, DNS, and Whois servers. Although eNom is one of the largest registrars, they have no experience operating a registry. Will deploy RRP initially and migrate to EPP within 135 days of proposed standard. Did not provide a strong commitment to customer service (e.g., no OT&E environment, no Multilanguage support). Did not propose real-time updating of Zone files and Whois database. Contracting with eNom to be the Registry Service Provider. eNom is a DNS service provider providing real-time updates for 1.2M domain holders. eNom is also a registrar. eNom is not a registry provider.
7	3.32	The applicant commits to minimum performance requirements and provides detailed service level guarantees for each service proposed. The committed maximum price is \$4.95 for registry services and all existing services are proposed to be included in the pricing. Additional non fee-based services are primarily focused on transition and end-user support. A breakdown of costs is provided justifying the composition of the registry fee.
8	2.95	The applicant commits to complying with a stated registry code of conduct along with provision of services in a fair and neutral manner. The transition plan notes major milestones and general transition windows for completing migration tasks, but does not provide details, schedules or specific aspects of customer support to promote a smooth transition.
9	2.80	Three transition subcategories created - business, MIS, and technical. Shows some insights into this effort. Reasonable detail shown in actual technical migration plan. VeriSign has offered to do DNS hosting for up to one year after the cutover and they can maintain a parallel database for that duration in case they are needed to restore stability to the environment. Registrants and users will be minimally affected. Overall sound plan with transition failover to VeriSign, but the applicant lacks experience in having done such a transition. Minimal metrics provided for ICANN oversight of the transition.
11	2.87	Overall a sound proposal. The detail and justifications are particularly good in sections where the applicant has current experience. Responses indicated a good understanding and anticipation of registrar needs. Good letter of agreement between .org and eNom. Proposal provides a good picture of what is to be provided, but lacks certain detail that would support the vision and demonstrate capability .

Findings Detail—Unity

 = Top Three Position within Criterion

Criterion	Score	Comments
1	3.33	Currently a registry operator for seven second level ccTLD in the .au. Registry operator for .coop. Has experience operating EPP vr. 06. Very good primary and secondary data center designs. Will outsource DNS to Nomimum - excellent DNS network. Initially a thin deployment. Will upgrade to EPP following successful transition of .org from VeriSign. Services will be provided by Unity Registry - a newly formed partnership between Poptel Ltd and AusRegistry Pty Ltd. AusRegistry (.au ccTLD with 300k domain names using EPP) and Poptel (.coop gTLD with 6.3k domain names).
7	3.46	The proposed services are based on the model for the “.org” registry agreement and support baseline service requirements. Pricing considers economies of scale by lowering from \$5 to \$4 based on the volume of domain registration. Non fee-based services are based on customer support during transition and operation but are also proposed for online reporting and accounting facilities and business advisory services. Performance level guarantees are detailed with minimum performance commitments that meet specified requirements along with a description of the proposed SLA penalty/credit system.
8	3.46	The applicant provides a detailed description of procedures to support equivalent access and business practices that meet the requirements of a shared registry. Customer support is to be provided on a 24 x 7 basis and in all languages required by registrars. This includes the language in which customer service messages are documented. A detailed transition plan is provided demonstrating a very good understanding of what is required to support a seamless migration for end users.
9	3.20	Applicants have proposed a four section transition approach: legal, administrative, support, and technology. There is good detail for the technical piece with insufficient detail for the other sections. The steps for technical migration are well thought out. There are two approaches that trade off risk versus convenience. Contingencies have been identified and alternatives and fixes are provided. Each co-applicant provides sufficient recent experience in executing similar activity. Minimal detail provided about potential impacts. The transition plan is a phased approach, and takes over sixteen months to complete.
11	3.23	Overall, a well thought out proposal. Services and technical areas are detailed but very few specifics regarding procedures or approach to accomplishing what is stated in the proposal. Appears to meet basic requirements. Demonstrated experience based on current administration of “.au”. Provides detail in performance and SLA areas, but in most cases, does not exceed requirements based on services or show details for processes. Excellent set of attachments that provide support to the materials presented in the proposal.

Findings Detail—ISOC

 = Top Three Position within Criterion


Criterion	Score	Comments
1	3.67	Afilias will provide Registry services under contract. Afilias is the Registry operator for the .info Registry with over 850k names. Managed the transition of the gTLD to EPP. Afilias also provides “back-end” registry services for the .vc ccTLD. A total of 925k names are under management. Supports over 100 ICANN accredited Registrars using EPP, accounting for over 99% of current .org registrations. Contracting with IBM for data centers and UltraDNS for managed DNS services. Managed the landrush for .info. Excellent data center design using IBM facilities and best in class hardware and software. DNS will be outsource to UltraDNS, willing to commit to a 100% availability. Will deploy EPP vr. 6.0 from day one. Five minute updates on Zone files. Experienced with customer service.
7	3.96	The proposal details guaranteed performance levels for all components of services to be provided along with a description of the proposed variable SLAs and the associated registrar credit system. The applicant commits to meeting or exceeding all stated performance requirements. The proposal provides an excellent, comprehensive description of all services to be provided and details a wide range of service components from end-user support and registrar interface services to registry administration and operational reporting. Core registration fees are not to exceed \$6 and other noted services are subject to adjustment based on the final terms of the registry agreement.
8	3.80	The applicant commits to meeting the requirements for equivalent services as detailed in the Equivalent Access Certification and Registry Operator Code of Conduct. The proposal includes specifics for equivalent: transition support, customer support, administrative and business services, tools required for data access, billing and account management. The applicant commits to meeting transition and support requirements and provides a very good high-level migration plan focused on customer support.
9	3.60	The transition plan was very well thought out. The plan outlines 19 key steps, and appears to be based on prior experience given the high level of detail. A Gantt chart was not provided, and the topic of staffing and training was not addressed. They do not anticipate any interruption of service to end users for name resolution, and Whois services. Each step in the plan has been assessed for risk, and the risk is categorized and a contingency plan is outlined. In instances of medium or high risk, the main fallback is to have VeriSign continue their role. Experience in doing similar transactions since 1999. Good set of metrics for ICANN to evaluate transition.
11	3.51	Overall, a very detailed and thorough proposal. Demonstrates a good understanding of the needs of the end user. Provides a comprehensive approach to meeting the baseline requirements as well as the additional items stated. Very detailed responses throughout. Applicant demonstrates extensive experience in both non-profit and registry management and has shown a good understanding and anticipation of registrar needs. Applicant could have included process charts and schedules. Also did not specify ISOC related processes that would be ongoing while Afilias manages the technical side.

Findings Detail—NeuStar

 = Top Three Position within Criterion


Criterion	Score	Comments
1	3.85	Registry operator for the .biz gTLD and the .us ccTLD. Transition .us for VeriSign. Currently manages 800k names using EPP vr. 04. Will implement RRP initially, introducing EPP within 135 days of standards. Outstanding shared SRS data centers capable of handling 2,100 tps. Will provide near real time updates to Zone files. Will support thick deployments of Whois and DNS. Outstanding security architecture (two different types of firewalls and IDS). Operates the .biz gTLD and the .us ccTLD. .biz start up in spring of 2001, registrations began in the fall. .us transitioned at end of year 2001. Currently have over 1M names under management (735k in .biz, 302k in .us). Offering real-time registration services for almost a year. Relationships with 90 .biz registrars and 70 .us registrars. Supported a real-time landrush process for .us. Has used EPP for both the .us and .biz registries.
7	3.74	The applicant commits to meeting performance requirements and bases guarantees on existing experience administering the “.biz” registry. Included are performance specifications and SLA administration details for all services proposed. All existing services are proposed to be included as part of the new administration. Existing and planned enhanced services described indicate the applicant has a clear understanding of the support requirements of end-users. The applicant commits to a maximum price of \$5 based on its ability to leverage existing investments in the registry platform.
8	3.96	The applicant commits to a code of conduct based on previous experience in operating in an equivalent service-based environment (".us", ".biz") and proposes to provide technically equivalent services to all registrars, providing business practice guidelines to ensure fair treatment and non-discrimination. The proposal includes provision of support in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian and Korean. Although the proposal does not include a specific transition schedule, the applicant bases its understanding of transition requirements on its active support and contribution to the IETF provreg working group.
9	3.93	The transition plan includes resource plans, roles and responsibility assignments and a high level Gantt chart. Applicant has also included detailed descriptions of each activity. The sections are clear, detailed and specific. Responses also go beyond the purely technical items. Neustar anticipates a one week moratorium on new registration activity to ensure that all migration is done prior to initiating the new setup. There will be no other outages. The contingency plans are excellent, and address all topics that could have a risk of failure. The risks are prioritized, and each one is evaluated and the fallback positions are discussed. Each constituent is individually addressed in this section. The level of detail is very good with rationale for each of their statements. Applicant has also successfully transitioned an TLD from Verisign.
11	3.82	Overall, an excellent proposal. Demonstrates the ability to meet requirements based on previous and current experience. Shows an excellent understanding of all requirements for supporting described services. Clear, well organized, and well thought-out proposal. Provides section highlights and excellent details within each subsection. Shows competence and expertise.

Findings Detail—GNR

 = Top Three Position within Criterion


Criterion	Score	Comments
1	3.48	Registry operator for the .name gTLD. 100% uptime since the .name launch (launched operations on December, 2001) using EPP vr. 06. Excellent data center design containing extensive redundancy and resiliency, but surprisingly only minimum SLA commitments were proposed. Outstanding throughput to all of the databases. Includes real-time asynchronous updates to DNS and Whois servers. Proposed excellent failure provisions with demonstrated experience (e.g. the relocation of an SRS datacenter as the result of the failure of KPNQwest). Concentrated DNS deployment containing 4 locations with 24 servers. Whois servers located at the SRS datacenter. Proposes a main datacenter in the UK and the use of a "backup" data center in Norway. Though the backup center does not have the same capacities as UK, failover testing has been successfully performed. The backup center's integration with the main center, and its hardware configuration are minimally described. Operates the DNS Registry containing 144k .name registrations using a thick database. Managed the .name landrush. Currently uses EPP for Registrar communications.
7	3.44	The applicant bases its commitment to meeting performance requirements on its existing performance record associated with administering the ".name" registry. All service levels are detailed along with specified quality control measures. The proposal also includes the provision of multiple system monitoring tools, real-time updates, notification to registrars of scheduled changes, weekly performance and availability reports, and detailed SLA reports. The proposed pricing schedule is scaled based on duration of subscription from \$6 to \$4; the longer the duration, the greater the savings. Core and enhanced services are noted as well as a brief description of non fee-based services that meet baseline requirements.
8	4.05	The proposal details a comprehensive process for meeting protocol adoption requirements based on current experience administering ".name" registry. The applicant has in place a globally/ linguistically diverse team for customer support to assist with transition issues. Included is a detailed code of conduct and specified procedures to support equivalent access via protocols, security, user support, administration, billing and account management. Although the proposed transition schedule does meet the 135 day transition window, the applicant recommends an alternative six month stability period for RPP. Proposed and OT&E environment for Registrars. Will provide EPP and RRP application processors allowing parallel use of EPP and RRP by the Registrars.
9	3.73	The applicant has articulated the key roles for the transition, and has discussed high level functions and mapping for each. They have also included the non-technical transition components in their plan. When multiple options are presented the advantages and disadvantages of each are discussed. Time estimates and responsible parties are identified for key steps. Specific contingencies are identified, and rollback/ recovery is discussed. For some items, prevention and planning is also taken into account. Minimal downtime of registry during the transition period. Applicants insight and expertise in this space is visible. Applicant has also provided a good suite of metrics to monitor the transition and the post transition period.
11	3.41	The proposal provides a very detailed technical approach to meeting service requirements and demonstrates an understanding of the needs of end-users through current experience administering ".name". High degree of technical detail provided specific to current operations of ".name".

Findings Detail—Organic

 = Top Three Position within Criterion

Criterion	Score	Comments
1	2.95	Two SRS data centers and 13 DNS locations. High level of redundancy with good hardware. Throughput is at the lower end of the comparative scale. CentralNic (1.5M domain names) will be providing all the services and facilities used to perform the registry function to Organic Names for a duration of one year following contract award. The founding directors of Organic Names are both board directors of Nominet UK (3.5M domain names), and both are members of its Policy Advisory Board. Nominet UK operates the registry for the .uk country code domain. Nominet UK is prevented by its articles of association from applying for TLDs such as .org and is not a part of the application. "The applicant feels that the extensive experience its directors and advisors have gained from their involvement with Nominet UK is highly relevant to this application and more than fulfills ICANNs requirement that applicants for .org have practical experience of running registries of equal size to .org." Following the first year outsource, all new facilities will be deployed based on the CentralNic design and Nominet executive experience.
7	2.32	The applicant lists core registry services to be provided along with basic non fee-based services. The maximum price for proposed services is \$6. There is no specific cost model noted to justify the stated pricing. The applicant notes the procedure for measuring cross-network nameserver performance, but does not specify performance criteria for other services proposed.
8	2.38	The proposal addresses transition support through the use of a tool kit to assist registrar integration and the availability of multilingual programmer interfaces and a test environment. There is very little detail on transition planning or specifics on how this will occur to enable a smooth transition. The proposal includes limited detail for providing equivalent services, though notes 24 x 7 customer support and use of English, French, German and Spanish languages. Code of conduct parameters describe confidentiality, non-preferential treatment, preventative measures and internal neutrality reviews.
9	1.87	Minimal information throughout this section. No insights and shows a lack of understanding of the complexity of the transition process. Does not deal with the entire set of potential transition issues. CentralNic has capability in this area, yet nothing significant was discussed that would be a source of confidence. Minimal transition assessment metrics shown. This applicant does not demonstrate the ability to transition and manage a large registry.
11	2.38	Does very little to demonstrate the ability or experience in providing proposed services. Minimal detail provided in the proposal. No specifics on how the proposed approach will be implemented, timelines, or quality assurance measures. Most responses provided adhere to the bare minimum for the requirement stated. This proposal fails to demonstrate an understanding of transition process and its significance for a smooth transition to a stable environment. In addition, the plan is to replace CentralNic with Organic's own developed system in one year which may create higher risk and cause service issues for .org users. Registrars will also be affected by the second conversion.

Findings Detail—IMS

 = Top Three Position within Criterion


Criterion	Score	Comments
1	2.61	Did not demonstrate experience as either a Registry operator or a Registrar. Proposing a phased deployment (initially one data center, will add a second data center in year 1, add two DNS server facilities in year two, additional facilities in year three). Responses were very brief (few block diagrams) and many unknowns remain. Standard SLAs proposed. No direct experience as either a Registry or Registrar. Key experiences cited includes the production of BIND software used by Registries to provide DNS service. Operation of the "F" root server. Provide DNS services for 22 TLDs. Has created a test Registry containing 5M objects.
7	2.26	The applicant provides specific performance guarantees, but includes very little detail on how these criteria will be met procedurally or supported via service level agreements. Core registry services are listed along with non fee-based services. Though the services are itemized, there is very little detail describing their provision or support. The maximum price proposed is \$6, although the applicant commits to reducing the price to \$5.50 if it qualifies for the VeriSign endowment.
8	2.68	The applicant commits to a seamless migration strategy based on a phased approach, though very little detail is provided for how this will occur, timeframes, or specified schedules. The proposal details a registry code of conduct and an equivalent access policy that focuses on equivalent customer support, administrative and business services, operational neutrality and technology availability.
9	3.00	A good overall plan. One of the few proposals that discusses non-technical components of the transition such as staffing, facilities, technical support and community activities. Applicant has also included sound process for dual protocol, and thin to thick transition. However, minimal discussion of contingencies and only partial solutions are offered. Although staffing is discussed, the applicant's team does not have the demonstrated ability to conduct the type of transition needed for .org. Transition metrics are only post-transition satisfaction type measures, and do not address the in-process metrics.
11	2.48	The proposal does not demonstrate how services will be provided in a manner that will meet the needs of the end-user. Very little procedural detail or methodology is noted other than to mention that the requirements will be supported as stated. Overall, a thin proposal with little detail and documentation to support responses. Minimal description provided for services. Overall, generic approach to implementation and support.

Findings Detail—Switch

 = Top Three Position within Criterion

Criterion	Score	Comments
1	2.58	Operates registry for .ch and .li TLDs (484k names and 45 Registrars). Both registries use a proprietary pre-EPP type of protocol. Operates the .ch gTLD and the .li ccTLD. Proposing two data centers linked via fiber. Appears to have sized equipment at the lower end of the comparative scale. Excellent DNS services. Will initially deploy a thin Registry. Will deploy a thin Whois, upgrading to a thick version "if the need arises". Each registrar will be required to run an independent and full Whois directory service. No detail was provided on SLAs - considered unresponsive.
7	1.85	The proposal points to the registry agreement in response to meeting the requirement for proposed registry services. The maximum price proposed is \$5 in the initial phase with final pricing to be determined based on uncertainties in the fees collected by ICANN. The non fee-based services proposed include transactions and registrar services (helpdesk), though no detail on services is provided. The proposal includes specified quality of service for performance only.
8	2.26	The applicant commits to a specified code of conduct and equivalent business operations and proposes global support of operations in English, Spanish, French, Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, and German. Very little detail is provided for the methodology proposed to promote equivalent business practices. The proposal includes no timetable or description of ability to meet transition requirements. It is unclear how this approach will be rolled out or how it will provide a seamless transition for users to meet the applicant's commitment that the transition will be "transparent" to registrars.
9	2.00	Poor transition plan. The applicant does not communicate their understanding of the components of a major TLD transition. Minimal data is provided with no supporting explanation. Applicant does not demonstrate understanding of "contingency", and instead discusses their plans to be prepared. Convincing information not provided to demonstrate competence to conduct a smooth transition. Applicant has inadequately addressed the section on transition monitoring.
11	1.86	The proposal lacks detail and does not demonstrate a clear ability to meet the noted requirements. Very little detail provided in most key sections. In many cases, applicant refers to the content of ICANN documentation as a basis for their response. Does not indicate current operational experience to support their proposal commitments. Applicant has presented a poorly laid out and inadequately completed proposal for review. Often, the reader is called on to search through thick sections of appendices to find documentation that is not indexed by page numbers. The proposal is consistently lacking in detail and substance and lacks the means to convince the reader that the .org operation can be operated by the applicant.

Findings Detail—Dot.Org

 = Top Three Position within Criterion

Criterion	Score	Comments
1	3.45	Outsourcing to Registry Advantage (RA), a division of Registry.com. RA is a registry outsource provider to .pro and (un-named) ccTLDs. RA has agreements with 8 registries, which have over 15K names registered “in them”. Currently have agreements with 19 registrars. Registry.com provides DNS services to 3.4M domain names as a registrar. Two SRS datacenters in different hemispheres. One datacenter is existing, the backup data center will be new. Only partial redundancy within the backup center was proposed. A complete transfer to the backup is estimated to take less than two hours. The proposal included outstanding SLAs including 100% DNS availability, 99.99% SRS availability, and 99.99% Whois availability. The datacenters included a high availability design using server clustering, storage arrays, and loadbalancing. Hardware and software proposed with extremely high throughput and scalability. Experienced with SRP, will deploy EPP day one. Includes near real time updates of Whois and DNS.
7	3.81	The applicant commits to meeting or exceeding the best of breed SLAs for the exiting TLDs and provides performance criteria that meet requirements. Services proposed include: 24 x 7 customer service, registrar toolkit, testing environment, transactional reporting services, compliance capabilities, and registry website services. In addition, the applicant provides a detailed description of enhanced services that are non fee-based and focus on support for non-commercial organizations. Pricing will not exceed \$6 and could be lower once many service variables are clarified.
8	3.79	The applicant meets the requirement for equivalent access and includes a detailed description of procedures, internal reviews, notice to registrars, global access, toolkits and 24 x 7 customer service. The proposal includes a detailed transition plan with a specific transition timeline along with software development tools, testing systems, and end-user support to assist during transition.
9	3.27	The transition section is identical to Register.org. The applicant has shown an eight step process for the transition, which includes all the key steps to move the operations from VeriSign to Registry Advantage. The steps include the creation of a test environment where registrars can test the RRP and EPP protocols. Good details are provided along with a Gantt chart. The materials also identify and address potential failures within the transition plan. Applicant describes several successful transitions that have been performed by Registry Advantage, and several that are in progress to demonstrate that they are capable of conducting these activities without any issues. Applicant has also provided a good set of metrics to monitor the transition.
11	3.20	Overall, a good proposal. Provides enough detail on transition planning and technical criteria to demonstrate an understanding of their responsibilities. Detailed technical approach to meeting requirements. There is no mention of their association with Kintera until well into the document. The section on VeriSign roles and responsibilities in the transition was not as developed as other sections. This proposal has the same degree of strengths in the components associated with stability and smooth transitions, as the proposal from Registry.org, since Registry Advantage is the common party involved in running the back end systems.

Findings Detail—Register

 = Top Three Position within Criterion

Criterion	Score	Comments
1	3.51	Outsourcing to Registry Advantage (RA), a division of Registry.com. RA is a registry outsource provider to .pro and (un-named) ccTLDs. RA has agreements with 8 registries, which have over 15K names registered “in them”. Currently have agreements with 19 registrars. Registry.com provides DNS services to 3.4M domain names as a registrar. Two SRS datacenters in different hemispheres. One datacenter is existing, the backup data center will be new. Only partial redundancy within the backup center was proposed. A complete transfer to the backup is estimated to take less than two hours. The proposal included outstanding SLAs including 100% DNS availability, 99.99% SRS availability, and 99.99% Whois availability. The datacenters included a high availability design using server clustering, storage arrays, and loadbalancing. Hardware and software proposed with extremely high throughput and scalability. Experienced with SRP, will deploy EPP day one. Includes near real time updates of Whois and DNS.
7	3.81	The applicant commits to meeting or exceeding the best of breed SLAs for the exiting TLDs and provides performance criteria that meet requirements. Services proposed include: 24 x 7 customer service, registrar toolkit, testing environment, transactional reporting services, compliance capabilities, and registry website services. In addition, non fee-based services focus on customer support and assistance during transition, reporting services, web services, and market outreach. The maximum pricing proposed is \$6.
8	3.95	The applicant provides a very detailed approach to meeting the needs of the end user and provides equivalent access. A sound understanding of the needs of the customer are demonstrated through specific outreach and assistance programs, development software, and test environments. Also included are a comprehensive code of conduct, a description of auditing and reporting, and a conflict of interest compliance plan. The proposal includes a detailed transition plan with a specific transition timeline along with software development tools, testing systems, and end-user support to assist during transition.
9	3.27	This section is identical to Dot.Org. The applicant has shown an eight step process for the transition, which includes all the key steps to move the operations from VeriSign to Registry Advantage. The steps include the creation of a test environment where registrars can test the RRP and EPP protocols. Good details are provided along with a Gantt chart. The materials also identify and address potential failures within the transition plan. Applicant describes several successful transitions that have been performed by Registry Advantage, and several that are in progress to demonstrate that they are capable of conducting these activities without any issues. Applicant has also provided a good set of metrics to monitor the transition.
11	3.27	Overall, a good proposal. Provides enough detail on transition planning and technical criteria to demonstrate an understanding of their responsibilities. Detailed technical approach to meeting requirements. The section on VeriSign roles and responsibilities in the transition was not as developed as other sections. This proposal has the same degree of strengths in the components associated with stability and smooth transitions as the proposal from Dot.Org, since Registry Advantage is the common party involved in running the back end systems.



About Gartner

consulting

ICANN
.org Reassignment
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Gartner Overview

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Description

More analysts with more data points than any other research and advisory firm in the world

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August 19, 2002

M. Stuart Lynn
President & CEO
ICANN
4676 Admiralty Way, Suite 330
Marina del Rey, California 90292

Re: .ORG Reassignment RFP Review

Dear Stuart,

Gartner is pleased to have completed its evaluation of the eleven proposals that were submitted by the applicants seeking the privilege of operating the .org TLD. We are submitting this letter as a supplement to our final report.

We recommend that ICANN select the next operator for the .ORG TLD from among the five candidates show below (alphabetically). These applicants are above average and have demonstrated their competence through their proposals.

- DotOrg
- GNR
- ISOC
- NeuStar
- Register

In addition to the comprehensive findings contained in the report, Gartner wishes to augment its conclusions and recommendations with the following advisory. The advisory is necessitated because one of the characteristics of computed and averaged scores is that higher scores can compensate low scores. In some cases the final score can obscure shortcomings. Although none of the issues identified within this Advisory are material, we believe ICANN should be aware of their existence. We have noted the exceptions in our comments (Appendix B of the final report), and are summarizing them here.

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The DotOrg Foundation

The DotOrg Foundation has proposed a technical design containing the highest Service Level commitments of all of the proposals. The Registry operations will be outsourced to Registry Advantage (RA), a division of Registry.com. RA is a registry outsource provider to the .pro and (un-named) ccTLDs. RA has agreements with 8 Registries and 19 Registrars. Registry.com provides DNS services to 3.4M domain names as a Registrar.

Following a thorough review of the proposal, Gartner believes that the DotOrg Foundation would be capable of successfully operating the .org Registry. However, we believe the following issues warrant additional attention should they be awarded the .org Registry.

- 1) Registry Advantage Registries currently only has “over 15K names registered in them”. This is on the relatively diminutive side of experience as compared to the other top applicants.
- 2) Technical observations include:
 - a) Proposal indicates only one firewall tier, comparable proposals include a second firewall tier protecting the core SRS databases.
 - b) The secondary site is not fully redundant, comparable proposals include equivalent redundancy between the primary and backup site.
 - c) Running the Registry entirely from the backup Tokyo location raises unknown issues.
- 3) The number of languages supported was not specified.
- 4) No Operations Testing Environment was proposed.

The Global Name Registry

The Global Name Registry (GNR) proposal includes a technical design that is possibly based on the use of the infrastructure currently used to support the .name gTLD Registry. The .name registry launched operations on December, 2001. GNR also operates the DNS Registry for .name, the registry contains 144k .name registrations using a thick database. GNR also managed the .name landrush using EPP for Registrar communications.

Gartner

Following a thorough review of the proposal, Gartner believes GNR would be capable of successfully operating the .org Registry. However, we believe the following issues warrant additional attention should GNR be awarded the .org Registry.

- 1) Gartner had a difficult time determining the extent of GNR's experience. GNR claims (source location in parenthesis)

(C18.6) - "3. A registry (partly outsourced) connected to all ICANN-accredited registrars through the EPP protocol."

(C18.6) – "Global Name Registry has transferred a part of the .name Registry function to VeriSign under an agreement to operate part of the .name TLD, at the same time as Global Name Registry maintains and operates a mirrored Registry in the United Kingdom. Global Name Registry and VeriSign therefore run similar and redundant services on each side of the Atlantic and have thereby created the world's first inter-continental registry.

Gartner wonders if, as a result of a combination of responses and specifically the use of the term "mirrored Registry", the Primary SRS data center for the .name gTLD is actually currently operated by VeriSign and that GNR is responsible only for the operations of the backup SRS datacenter. We found several statements that were difficult to interpret resulting in an inability to firmly establish the actual responsibilities for operating the .name SRS datacenters.

Should GNR be considered for award of the .org registry, Gartner highly recommends ICANN review the agreement between Global Name Registry and VeriSign, Inc. for services provided by VeriSign Global Registry Services in the .name gTLD to determine the party responsible for the operation of the primary SRS data center. Gartner would recommend discounting GNR's experience level should VeriSign prove to be responsible for the primary SRS data center operations.

- 2) GNR has limited experience in terms of the length of time GNR has operated the .name registry. The .name registry has only been in operation since December, 2001
- 3) At 144k registrations, GNR could be considered to have comparatively low numbers of registrations.

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- 4) Only four regional DNS server sites were proposed, the proposal included no discussion of capacity, volume or response time.
- 5) The proposed service levels of SRS uptime of 99.4%; DNS uptime of 99.999%; Whois 99.4% were at the lower end of the proposals.
- 6) Unknowns exist with regards to the backup data centers capacities. Capacities were not clearly stated.

ISOC

The ISOC proposal specifies the use of Afilias as the provider of Registry services under contract. Afilias is the current Registry operator of the .info TLD. Afilias also provides “back-end” registry services for the .vc ccTLD. Between the two TLDs, Afilias manages a total of 925k names. Afilias also supports over 100 ICANN accredited Registrars using EPP, accounting for over 99% of current .org registrations. Afilias contracts with IBM for data centers and UltraDNS for managed DNS services. ISOC is experienced at transitioning an existing TLD to EPP. ISOC is also experienced at managing a landrush.

Gartner believes ISOC would be capable of successfully operating the .org Registry. However, we believe the following issues warrant additional attention should ISOC be awarded the .org Registry.

- 1) Conflicting data was presented regarding the SLA commitments. C17.13 proposes SRS availability of 100%, DNS availability of 99.999%. C28 proposes SLA ranges from 99.3% to 99.93%. No data was presented in C17.13 to substantiate or reinforce the higher percentages.
- 2) No SRS failover time was provided. Furthermore, the proposal includes the statement that "The secondary data center may perform at a degraded level"
- 3) Very little information was provided on the database architecture.

NeuStar

NeuStar operates the .biz gTLD and the .us ccTLD. .biz start up in spring of 2001, registrations began in the fall. .us transitioned at end of year 2001. Currently have over 1M names under management (735k in .biz, 302k in .us). Offering real-time registration services for almost a year. Relationships with 90 .biz registrars and 70 .us registrars. Supported a real-time landrush process for

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.us. Has used EPP for both the .us and .biz registries. NeuStar also managed the transition of the .us Registry from VeriSign

Gartner believes NeuStar would be capable of successfully operating the .org Registry. However, we believe the following issues warrant additional attention should NeuStar be awarded the .org Registry.

- 1) NeuStar's Registry experience only extends over the past year.
- 2) No commitment to provide an Operations Test Environment for the Registrars.

Register.Org

Register.Org has proposed a technical design containing the highest Service Level commitments of all of the proposals. The Registry operations in both cases will be outsourced to Registry Advantage (RA), a division of Registry.com. RA is a registry outsource provider to the .pro and (un-named) ccTLDs. RA has agreements with 8 Registries and 19 Registrars. Registry.com provides DNS services to 3.4M domain names as a Registrar.

Gartner believes Register.Org would be capable of successfully operating the .org Registry. However, we believe the following issues warrant additional attention should they be awarded the .org Registry.

- 1) Registry Advantage Registries currently only has "over 15K names registered in them". This is on the relatively diminutive side of experience as compared to the other top applicants.
- 2) Technical observations include:
 - a) Only one firewall tier, comparable proposals include a second firewall tier protecting the core SRS databases.
 - b) The secondary site is not fully redundant, comparable proposals include equivalent redundancy between the primary and backup site.
 - c) Unknown issues regarding the running of a Registry entirely from the backup Tokyo location.
- 3) The number of languages supported was not specified.
- 4) No Operations Testing Environment was proposed.

Gartner

With regards to items raised for all of the top five candidates; we believe that these issues, with the exception of the lack of experience, can be successfully addressed during contract negotiations.

We appreciate the opportunity to assist ICANN on this most important and challenging project. Please let us know if we can be of further assistance.

Kind regards,

Mark Gilbert
Director
Gartner

CC: Louis Touton – ICANN
Steven Buckley - Gartner
Jamshid Lal - Gartner