

Executive Overview

Findings on Emerging Criteria and Indicators, Gaps, and Framework Alignment

Foundation: Understanding the Framework

What Are Principles, Criteria, and Indicators?

Principles	Describe the objectives of the Continuous Improvement Program and define its fundamental goals. For Principle 3: "The operations of SO, AC, or NomCom are efficient."
Criteria	The conditions that must be met to comply with a principle. Criteria define HOW a principle will be achieved without themselves being a measure of performance. Each structure should define 3-5 criteria.
Indicators	Measurable states that allow assessing whether criteria are being met. Indicators should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

ccNSO Principles

Criteria and Indicators Analysis

Based on ICANN84 Workshop Discussions

Overview

This section maps the criteria and indicators for each of the five ccNSO principles that emerged from the ICANN84 workshops. It also identifies where the same themes appear across multiple principles.

Think of principles as big goals, criteria as conditions that show you're meeting that goal, and indicators as concrete evidence you can point to. The overlaps between principles reveal fundamental themes that enable ccNSO operations across the board.

Principle 1: Purpose of the ccNSO

The ccNSO provides a global platform for ccTLD managers to undertake policy work, cooperate and learn, and engage with stakeholders.

Criterion 1: Undertake Policy and Policy-Related Work

Indicators:

- PDP completion rates
- Issues Manager reports provided to Council
- Time to deliver recommendations to Council
- Council approval rate of recommendations
- Level of representation and liaison participation
- Number of approvals and rejections as Empowered Community Decisional Participant
- Identification and closure of policy gaps
- Alignment of PDPs with overall ICANN strategies

Criterion 2: Cooperate and Learn

Indicators:

- Number of sessions held (SOPC, Tech Day, TLD Ops forums)
- Attendance levels and number of attendees
- Number of new presenters
- Number of presentations delivered
- Regional collaboration trends across various regions
- Achievement of regional collaboration levels comparable to other SOACs

Criterion 3: Engage with Stakeholders

Indicators:

- Liaison participation and quality of reporting back to ccNSO
- Participation in Cross-Community Groups (CCGs)
- Number of invitations from other groups requesting ccNSO participation
- Frequency of meetings with ccNSO Board members

Additional Qualitative Measure

- Survey to ccNSO members asking "Is the ccNSO fulfilling its purpose?" on a scale of 0-10

Principle 2: Effectiveness of the ccNSO

The ccNSO structures must support its three core purposes: developing policy, facilitating member interaction and learning, and conducting outreach.

Criterion 1: Right Structures Match the Purpose

Working groups and committees need to align with ccNSO's three purposes - not just exist, but actively serve them.

Indicators:

- Structures support both policy development (study groups, working groups) and community engagement (standing committees)

Criterion 2: Results Happen in Reasonable Timeframes

Structures must enable timely progress without sacrificing meaningful consensus.

Indicators:

- Delivery against deadlines - can working groups fulfill tasks within agreed timeframes?

Criterion 3: Agility and Flexibility Are Built In

Small teams with narrow remits can deliver faster, better results. Not every challenge requires a permanent committee.

Indicators:

- Use of lightweight solutions and ad-hoc groups for specific challenges

Criterion 4: Consensus Gets Achieved

Particularly within the Policy Development Process, the ability to reach consensus is a fundamental test.

Indicators:

- Groups can produce recommendations that receive broad support

Criterion 5: Volunteer Engagement (Primary Indicator)

This is the North Star indicator. If you have enough volunteers - or even more than enough - actively participating, your structures are working.

Indicators:

- Number of volunteers signing up and staying engaged
- Pattern: No volunteers → issue not important; Issue not deliverable → no volunteers
- Participation feels rewarding rather than burdensome ("To be a member of WG/Committee looks like fun")

Additional Indicators

- Cross-community participation - are ccNSO members successfully engaging in ICANN's broader working groups?
- Council and Secretariat performance - is the Council operating efficiently? Is the Secretariat providing adequate support?
- Council does what it's supposed to do, work gets done

Principle 3: Efficient Operations of the ccNSO

ccNSO operations should be efficient, balancing speed with effectiveness. The key tension: efficiency is about doing things right with minimal waste, while effectiveness is about doing the right things.

Criterion 1: Projects Complete Within Planned Timeframes

Indicators:

- % of projects completed by their target deadline each year
- % of projects with clearly defined timelines from the start
- Number of working groups producing quarterly progress reports on schedule
- Average time from project start to first draft

Criterion 2: Volunteer Time Is Used Productively

Indicators:

- % of working group members actively participating (at least once per quarter)
- Working group meeting frequency compared to output produced
- Survey results: XX% of participants agree their time in meetings is used well
- Number of working groups with clear time commitments stated upfront

Criterion 3: Work Plans Drive the Work

Indicators:

- % of working groups operating with documented work plans
- % of working groups that review their work plans quarterly
- Number of working groups that complete scope definition before starting work
- Working groups that use project management tools

Criterion 4: Organization Stays Focused on Its Mandate

Indicators:

- % of working group activities that align with their Terms of Reference
- Number of times working groups formally review scope against their mandate
- Stakeholder survey: XX% agree the group stays focused on its purpose
- Documented instances where groups declined work outside their scope

Criterion 5: Resources Are Allocated Cost-Effectively

Indicators:

- Cost per completed project (tracked over time)
- Staff time allocation vs. output produced
- Meeting costs (travel, logistics) vs. outcomes achieved
- Survey results: XX% of participants believe resources are used efficiently

Criterion 6: Communication Reaches Its Intended Audience

Indicators:

- % of target stakeholders reached by key communications
- Survey response rates (low rates may indicate communication problems)
- % of stakeholders who report understanding ccNSO activities
- Website analytics: time to find key information for new users

Criterion 7: Meeting Time Produces Results

Indicators:

- % of meetings that finish on schedule
- % of agenda items completed per meeting
- Participant survey: XX% felt the meeting was productive
- Face-to-face meeting time used for discussion vs. reading reports

Principle 4: Accountability of the ccNSO

ccNSO must be accountable both internally to its members and externally to the wider ICANN community. Key insight: you can't measure accountability without first understanding whether people are interested and engaged enough to hold you accountable.

Criterion 1: Mission and Activities Align with Member Needs

ccNSO must work on issues that actually matter to members - "traveling in the same direction."

Indicators:

- XX% of surveyed members agree that ccNSO priorities reflect their needs
- Member feedback shows shared concerns are addressed in ccNSO work plans
- Members report that ccNSO work resonates with their operational challenges

Criterion 2: Diverse, Active Participation is Maintained

True accountability requires hearing from a variety of ccTLDs - large and small, well-resourced and under-resourced, from different regions. Not just "always the same guys."

Indicators:

- Participation count tracked by unique ccTLDs (not just meeting attendance totals)
- Number of new participants joining annually
- XX% of members participate in at least one activity per year
- Ratio of participation between large and small ccTLDs

Criterion 3: Trust Exists Between Leadership and Members

"Sharing pain and remedies" builds trust. Accountability only works when members trust ccNSO is acting in their interests.

Indicators:

- XX% of surveyed members trust ccNSO Council decisions
- Members report feeling heard when raising concerns
- Succession planning exists (leadership transitions are managed, not crisis-driven)

Criterion 4: Meaningful Engagement with the ICANN Community

External accountability matters. ccTLDs need to engage beyond their own silo on cross-community issues.

Indicators:

- Number of joint activities with GNSO or other SOs annually
- ccNSO participates in cross-community discussions on shared challenges
- XX% of surveyed ICANN community members understand ccNSO's role and contributions

Criterion 5: Barriers to Participation Are Actively Addressed

Being accountable means making space for voices that can't easily show up due to resource constraints.

Indicators:

- Availability of support for remote participation
- Translation or language support services offered

- Active outreach efforts to "silent partners" (measured, not assumed)

Principle 5: Collaboration within ICANN

Ensuring ccNSO collaborates effectively within ICANN. Strong focus on outcomes over activities - not just holding meetings, but achieving tangible results.

Criterion 1: Contribute to Stability and Security

Indicators:

- Actively working to keep DNS abuse low, which directly supports ICANN's mission of maintaining a stable internet

Criterion 2: Uphold the Multistakeholder Model

Indicators:

- Demonstrating that tackling key issues like DNS abuse actually strengthens the bottom-up model

Criterion 3: Demonstrate Efficiency

Indicators:

- Proving the multistakeholder model works by showing faster policy processes

Criterion 4: Act as a Proving Ground

Indicators:

- Being willing to try new approaches first within ccTLDs before wider rollout
- Distilling experiences into clear documentation

Criterion 5: Promote Collaboration

Indicators:

- Actively sharing good practices with gTLDs
- Engaging with GNSO processes
- Creation of common principles and guidelines
- Follow-up with ccTLDs to track adoption

Criterion 6: Be Outcome-Oriented

Indicators:

- Pushing for tangible results, not just holding meetings and activities
- Operational collaboration with PTI/IANA through the Customer Standing Committee
- Technical contributions to DNSSEC and TLD-OPS
- Contributions to ICANN strategic planning
- SO/AC Chairs meetings and roundtables