

# Criteria and Indicators for Principle 4:

## ccNSO's Accountability

### Executive Summary

During the ICANN84 workshop sessions, participants explored what accountability means for the ccNSO—both internally to its members and externally to the wider ICANN community. The discussions revealed a key insight: you can't measure accountability without first understanding whether people are interested and engaged enough to hold you accountable.

Five core criteria emerged from the notes and flipcharts, each focusing on a different dimension of accountability: mission alignment, participation diversity, trust, external engagement, and barrier reduction. These criteria provide the foundation for measuring whether the ccNSO is truly accountable to its stakeholders.

### How We Got Here

The workshop discussions kept circling back to several recurring themes:

- *"Are we traveling in the same direction as our members?"*
- *"It's always the same guys—how do we bring others along?"*
- *"We share pain and remedies—that builds trust and accountability"*
- *"Some ccTLDs simply aren't capable of attending—how do we account for that?"*

These conversations revealed that accountability isn't just about transparency or reporting—it's about engagement, trust, and genuinely representing the community's needs.

### The Five Criteria for Accountability

#### Criterion 1: Mission and Activities Align with Member Needs

The ccNSO must work on issues that actually matter to its members. This means "traveling in the same direction" and ensuring that the organization addresses the real challenges ccTLDs face.

##### 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

A persistent concern was seeing "always the same guys." True accountability requires hearing from a variety of ccTLDs—large and small, well-resourced and under-resourced, from different regions.

##### 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

**Example:** Rather than celebrating "200 attendees at our meeting," a better indicator would track whether 40 different ccTLDs participated throughout the year, with at least 30% representing smaller registries. This shifts focus from quantity to diversity.

### **Criterion 3: Trust Exists Between Leadership and Members**

As participants noted, "know each other therefore trust." Accountability only works when members trust that the ccNSO is acting in their interests. The concept of "sharing pain and remedies" was identified as both building trust and demonstrating accountability.

#### **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 too. The discussion touched on cross-community issues like DNS abuse, where ccTLDs need to engage beyond their own silo. The question emerged: "Should we be accountable to the wider community? How?"

#### **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**

Participants acknowledged that "some ccTLDs are not capable to attend" due to resource constraints. Being accountable means making space for those voices too, not just counting on those who can easily show up.

#### **Indicators:**

- Availability of support for remote participation
- Translation or language support services offered
- Active outreach efforts to "silent partners" (measured, not assumed)

## Moving Forward

These five criteria provide a framework for assessing ccNSO's accountability. The next step is to establish specific targets (the "XX%" placeholders) through stakeholder consultation and determine data collection methods.

The workshop revealed an important truth: accountability isn't just about compliance or reporting—it's about genuinely representing your community, building trust through shared challenges, and ensuring diverse voices can be heard. That's what makes these criteria meaningful.