
MSA Change Service: Transition Plan Guidelines

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Version 2.0

Registry operators (ROs) should use the following guidelines when developing a plan to transition services from a current Registry Service Provider (RSP) to a proposed RSP. Note:

- “Current RSP” refers to the RSP *from which* the services are being transitioned.
- “Proposed RSP” refers to the RSP *to which* the services are being transitioned.

If you have any questions please reach out to your Account Manager or submit a general inquiry case through the [Naming Services portal \(NSp\)](#).

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1. General Requirements

The transition plan must:

- Contain detailed steps to be executed
- Describe which RSP will execute each step of the transition plan.
- Include blocking steps that must be completed before continuing with the plan.

Confidential information (e.g., TSIG keys) may be communicated between the current and proposed RSPs. If communicating confidential information, describe the security mechanisms for non-repudiation and privacy.

2. IANA Updates

The transition plan must include when and who will execute the updates to the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) information as applicable:

- Sponsoring Organization
- Contracts
- Name Servers
- Delegation Signer (DS) Records

The transition plan should consider that IANA updates are not immediate and may be a blocking step(s). If an RO is removing all name servers and adding a new set to the root zone, IANA may require the RO to justify the change.

2.1 IANA Technical Requirements for Authoritative Name Services

The transition plan must comply with the IANA technical requirements for authoritative name services available at <https://www.iana.org/help/nameserver-requirements>. The following requirements may be waived after providing justification to IANA:

- Network diversity
- Consistency between authoritative name services - serial number
- Matching DNSKEY

3. Rollback

Provide contingency steps in the event that any part of the registry transition is unable to move forward according to the plan.

4. Monitoring

Describe the processes and systems that will be used to monitor the different services during the registry transition process.

5. Exceptions

- Provide a list of potential exceptions and the steps to be taken.
- Identify exceptions that may generate a rollback and exceptions that could be handled after the transition.
- The transition plan should include a description of communications with registrars regarding potential exceptions.

6. Decommissioning of Services by the Current RSP

The transition plan must contemplate the decommissioning of services by the current RSP. The proposed RSP must obtain confirmation from the current RSP that the services have been decommissioned and shut down.

7. Data Escrow

The transition plan must describe how the current RSP will transition its data escrow deposits to the proposed RSP:

- Previous data escrow deposits must be transferred to the proposed Data Escrow Agent, if applicable. If the Data Escrow Agent remains the same, the plan should specify that the Data Escrow Agent will transfer the deposits from one account to the other.
- Include in your transition plan that the proposed RSP and the Data Escrow Agent will send data escrow reports and notification to ICANN immediately after the RSP transition.

8. Monthly Reporting

- If for a given month there are transactions in both the current and proposed RSPs, describe how the proposed RSP will incorporate the partial information of the monthly report.
- Describe any steps to be taken for the values of the fields in the report based on the transition process. For example, no new registrations will be possible six days before the transition in order to clear the Add Grace Period (AGP) of all domain names.

9. Onboarding Information Requests (ONBIR)

As part of the transition process, the proposed RSP must provide new ONBIR information to ICANN in order to continue meeting the requirements for Zone File Access (ZFA), Centralized Zone Data Service (CZDS), Bulk Registration Data Access (BRDA), and Uniform Rapid Suspension (URS). Note that the proposed RSP must reach agreement with ICANN org on the timing for applying the new ONBIR information and the estimated timeframe should be included in your transition plan.

10. Registry Services in Exhibit A

If Registry Services offered by the current RSP will be phased out, provide a phase out plan that minimizes the impact to registrants. **Important note:** a *Registry Service Evaluation Policy (RSEP) request is required to remove Registry Services from Exhibit A. If approved, the RSEP request may lead to a Registry Agreement amendment.. Further information can be found on the [RSEP Process webpage](#).*

- List the Registry Services that will be offered by the proposed RSP in the transition plan.
- Describe how Registry Services in Exhibit A will be transitioned from the current to the proposed RSP.

11. Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs)

- Identify differences between the IDN languages/scripts and IDN tables supported by the current and proposed RSPs. **Important note:** an *IDN Service request is required to make changes to the IDN languages/scripts listed in Exhibit A of the Registry Agreement. This applies when the IDN languages/scripts supported between the current and proposed RSPs vary.*
- Identify differences between handling of variants by the RSPs and the code points supported for the same IDN language/scripts. For example, you may include: “The IDN table for Spanish language in the proposed RSP does not support the LATIN SMALL LETTER A WITH ACUTE (e.g., á, U+00E1) code point, which is supported by the current RSP.”

12. Searchable WHOIS

If the current and proposed RSPs offer searchable WHOIS, describe the mechanism to migrate the users between services if needed.

13. DNS Service

Describe how the DNS and DNSSEC services will be transitioned from the current RSP to the proposed RSP.

- Consider that the monthly Service Level Requirement (SLR) for the DNS service is 0 minutes of downtime.
- The DNSSEC chain of trust must not be broken at any time. RSP should follow the best practices described in RFC 6781.
- If the current or proposed RSP will transfer the zone file on a continuous basis for a period of time, describe the secure mechanisms (e.g., TSIG) that will be used for zone transferring.
- If the algorithms used by the RSPs are different, provide information about the considerations in the transition plan.

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- If the TLD will be transitioned from NSEC to NSEC3 or vice versa, provide information about the considerations in the transition plan.
 - Provide a timeline diagram with the transition and updates of DNSSEC keys, name servers, updates to the root zone and maximum or minimum zone time to live (TTLs). Include in the timeline diagram the originator (e.g, proposed or current RSP) of the zone file used. The timeline should include:
 - Name server set, and Delegation Signer (DS) Resource Record(s) (RRs) at the root in each step.
 - Name server set and keyset at the current and proposed RSPs' name servers.
 - Hostname and IP addresses of the name servers.
 - Describe the mechanism to ensure that the last zone file generated by the current RSP is consistent with the first zone file generated by the proposed RSP.

14. Registration Data Directory Services (RDDS)

Describe how the RDDS service will be transitioned from the current RSP to the proposed RSP, including:

- Consider that the monthly SLR for the DNS service is 864 minutes of downtime.
- Describe the mechanism you will utilize to ensure transition of the RDDS service does not violate your SLR. For example, state “the service will be running on the proposed and current RSPs while the whois.nic.<tld> entry expires from the caches. The TTL of whois.nic.<tld> will be decreased before the transition.”
- Describe the mechanism you will utilize to ensure that the RDDS database is consistent between the two RSPs while the service is being transitioned.

15. Shared Registry System (SRS)

Describe how the SRS service will be transitioned from the current RSP to the proposed RSP.

15.1 Database import:

- Describe the process that will be used to verify the data to be imported.
- Describe the process used to verify that the RDDS database and zone files appear to be consistent between the current and proposed RSPs.

15.2 ROIDs (Repository Object Identifier)

- Explain if the ROID of the different objects will remain the same. If ROIDs will be changed, the proposed RSP must communicate the changes to the registrars.
- Explain the steps to be taken in the case that duplicate ROIDs for the same type of objects are found.
- Explain how registrars will be informed of any changes to the ROIDs of the objects.

15.3 Identifiers (IDs)

- Explain if the identifiers of the different objects will remain the same. Note that Extensible Provisioning Protocol (EPP) supports IDs and ROIDs for the same object type. If IDs will be changed, the proposed RSP must communicate the changes to the registrars.
- Explain what will occur if duplicate identifiers for the same type of objects are found.
- Stipulate that registrars will be informed of any changes to the IDs of the objects.

15.4 Contacts

- Describe steps taken in the case of mismatch in the support of:
 - Contact transfers between the RSPs
 - Contact disclose functionality between the RSPs.
- Describe the steps to be taken if the linked contact objects are not found in the copy of the database from the current RSP.

15.5 Domains

- Describe steps taken in the case of a mismatch in:
 - The supported grace periods between the current and proposed RSPs.
 - The duration of the different grace periods between the current and proposed RSPs.
- Describe any changes to the statuses of the domain names as part of the transition. For example, the proposed RSP will remove server statuses.
- Describe steps taken in the case of domain names not imported based on business rules of the proposed RSP.

15.6 Hosts

- Describe the steps taken in the case of mismatch in the support of host transfers between the RSPs.
- Describe the steps taken in the case of a transition from managing hosts as objects to hosts as attributes or vice versa. Note: Registrars should be notified if there is a change in the mechanism to manage hosts.
- Describe special handling of imported hosts that may become glue records based on the different namespaces managed by the RSP.
- Describe the steps to be taken if any linked host objects are not found in the copy of the database from the current RSP.
- Describe the steps to be taken if you find duplicate hosts objects in the copy of the database from the current RSP.

15.7 Domain Name System Security Extensions (DNSSEC)

Describe the steps to be taken in case that the DNSSEC information required by the proposed RSP has not been captured by the current RSP. For example, if the current RSP uses the DS (Delegation Signor) interface and the proposed RSP requires the KeyData interface, note that in your transition plan.

15.8 Extensible Provisioning Protocol (EPP)

- Describe the mechanism that will be used to ensure the RSPs transition to the EPP service without violating the RO's SLR.
- Describe steps taken in the case of mismatch between the EPP extensions supported by the current and proposed RSP. Registrars should be informed about the differences in the EPP extensions.
- Describe the steps to be taken for the authInfo information. For example, if a new random authInfo will be generated, note that in the transition plan.

15.9 Registrars

- Describe the steps taken in the case that sponsoring registrars for domain names to be imported are not accredited by the proposed RSP.
- Describe the steps taken in the case of mismatch of information about the registrars between the current and proposed RSP.

16. Uniform Rapid Suspension System (URS)

Describe the steps to be taken for domain names in URS Lock/Suspension.

17. Trademark Clearinghouse (TMCH)

Describe the steps to be taken for domain name applications that have not been resolved before the transition.