

## Registrar Stakeholder Group (RrSG) Comments to the RAA

On behalf of the Registrar Stakeholder Group (RrSG), the following comments are submitted to ICANN concerning the proposed 2013 Registrar Accreditation Agreement (RAA).

A small number of registrar representatives participated in negotiating this agreement with ICANN staff for well over a year and we are pleased to have the negotiation process completed. Our group comments will be kept to a few pivotal issues for registrars, but as the RrSG represents a broad spectrum of different business models and perspectives on the RAA, we have encouraged our members to submit individual comments that represent their specific viewpoints.

One of the many new additions to the 2013 RAA is the “Special Amendment” process which would allow the ICANN Board to amend the RAA based on “Substantial and Compelling Reason in the Public Interest...” This concept, though greatly improved from its original form as put forth by ICANN staff, continues to be of concern to registrars.

We would implore ICANN to provide specific examples of items that would be subject to this process as well as items that clearly would be outside the scope of this process. Without concrete examples of what issues might flow through this process, there continues to be a great deal of uncertainty surrounding this proposed process and leave registrars facing a great unknown regarding how the Board might look to amend the agreement in the future.

Further, we would like to request that ICANN specifies this Special Amendment process is not used to amend itself including anything that affects the scope of the agreement itself. We would also formally request ICANN commit to a review of the Special Amendment process every 24 months to ensure the process continues to be needed and, if used during that time period, allow for a thorough review of the how the process actually functioned.

One additional area of concern to our members is the desired across-field Whois validation as indicated in the Whois accuracy specification. While the RrSG stands ready to collaborate with ICANN in the formation of a working group as specified in the transition addendum, it gives us great pause to be undertaking this effort outside of the existing policy development process. The notion of across-field Whois validation is a dramatic change to the registration of domain names and will have far-reaching implications both for registrar operations as well as for prospective registrants. The RrSG is eager to engage in a meaningful dialogue with the greater ICANN community about the feasibility of this proposal, but has serious reservations about the ability to implement such a system on a global scale without harming (and potentially disenfranchising) legitimate registrants.

Now that negotiations over the agreement have concluded, it's imperative for ICANN to now focus on education and outreach to registrars to ensure the new obligations in this new agreement are understood by existing registrars. This published 2013 RAA contains significant new obligations for registrars and does allow for a transition period for many of the new requirements, but ultimately these

requirements will need to become operational and it is critical for ICANN to work together with registrars to roll out these significant changes to the operation of the domain name registration process. The RrSG looks forward to working collaboratively with ICANN staff on this outreach effort to all ICANN accredited registrars.