

# M&E Protocols

How monitoring, evaluation, and learning will be conducted under the ccNSO CIP

|                                                |          |
|------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>1. Why These Protocols Are Needed</b>       | <b>1</b> |
| <b>2. The feedback loops</b>                   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>3. How to Use This Document</b>             | <b>3</b> |
| <b>4. Scope and Operating Principles</b>       | <b>3</b> |
| <b>5. Roles and Responsibilities</b>           | <b>4</b> |
| <b>6. Measurement Cycle and Calendar</b>       | <b>4</b> |
| <b>7. Data Quality Standards</b>               | <b>5</b> |
| <b>8. Reporting Cadence and Feedback Loops</b> | <b>6</b> |
| <b>9. Action Triggers</b>                      | <b>7</b> |
| <b>10. First-Year Implementation</b>           | <b>7</b> |

## 1. Why These Protocols Are Needed

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is the operational engine of the Continuous Improvement Program (CIP). Without protocols, indicators remain abstract: it is the protocols that determine when data is collected, by whom, with what tool, to what quality standard, and how findings flow back into decisions.

In the CIP Criteria and Indicators specific tools and potential sources for data and information are identified for each indicator. The protocols in this document translate that tool inventory into a working operational system for the ccNSO.

The guiding principle is that Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) should function as a learning engine, not an accounting function. Data collection that does not feed into decisions creates a burden without benefit. These protocols therefore prioritise feedback loops over reporting volume.

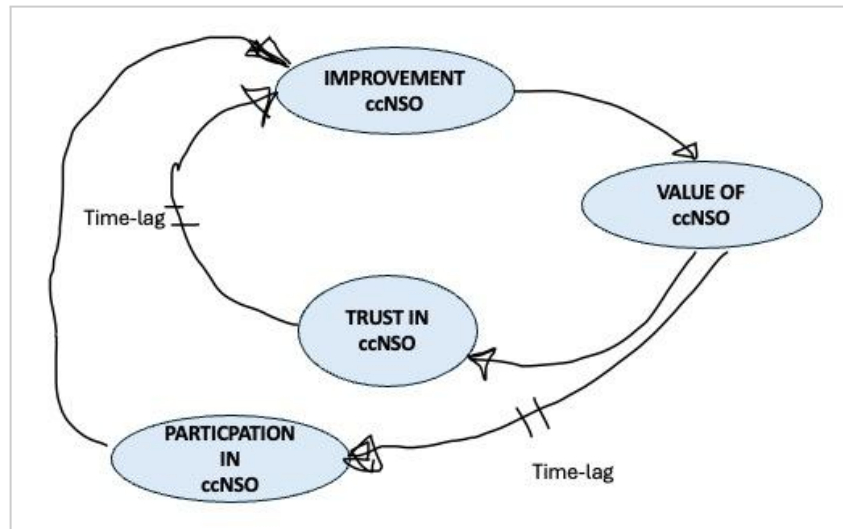
### Why this matters in the ccNSO context

- Voluntary, multi-stakeholder governance bodies face a constant risk of M&E becoming paperwork.
- Geographic dispersion and language diversity require deliberately structured data collection – opportunistic surveys miss key voices.
- A small Secretariat means tools must be high-leverage: protocols specify the minimum sufficient instrument for each indicator type.
- Trust depends on findings being shared back to members – closing the feedback loop is non-negotiable.

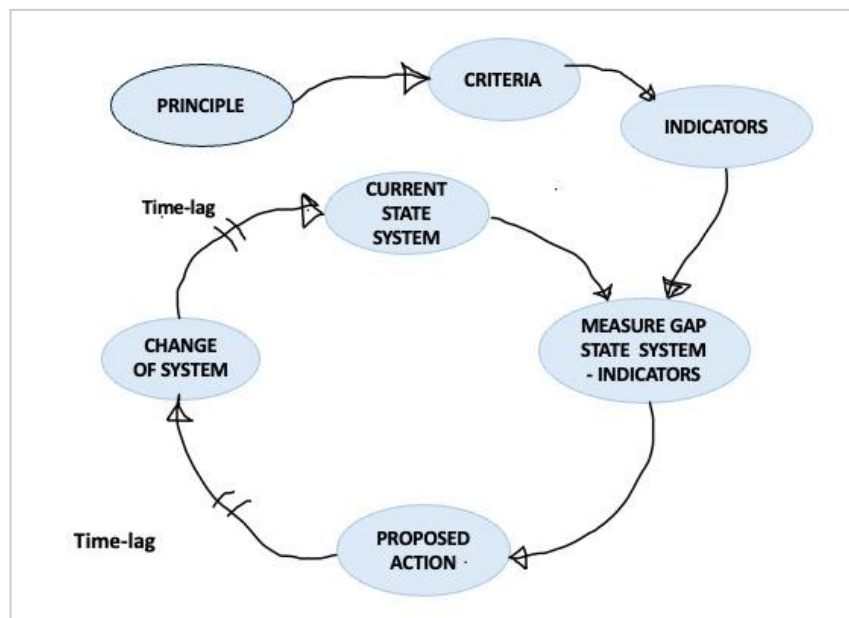
## 2. The feedback loops

Two feedback loops are what make the CIP Framework work rather than a burden without benefit.

**A reinforcing loop** compounds the system: by improving the ccNSO, the ccNSO will have more value to the ccTLDs community and others, which will result in more trust in the ccNSO and broader participation, which are both engines for more improvements.



**A balancing loop** uses indicators derived from a principle/criteria to expose the gap between aspiration and reality to develop levers to adjust the state of affairs, which in time result in a new reality that can be measured again against aspiration.



### 3. How to Use This Document

This document is intended for use by:

- GRC Working Group as the owner of the protocols and primary user during the annual audit
- ccNSO Secretariat as the day-to-day implementer of data collection and registers
- ccNSO Council as the recipient of M&E outputs and the body that takes corrective action
- WG/Committee chairs who contribute local-level data (work plans, post-meeting surveys, scope reviews)

This document should be read alongside two companion documents:

The ccNSO CIP Criteria and Indicators list (which catalogues each indicator and potential source) and the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (which sets out how participatory inputs are gathered).

These protocols are a living document. Annual review by GRC will refine frequencies, thresholds, and tools based on experience. The first 12 months of operation should be treated as a pilot.

### 4. Scope and Operating Principles

These protocols cover all 5 CIP principles, all criteria (P1.1 through P5.3 in the Final Draft), and all indicators identified in the Master List. They apply to data collection, analysis, reporting, and feedback.

#### Operating principles

- **Both frameworks used together** – SMART for accountability and quantitative tracking; SPICED for stakeholder experience and equity. The assessment shows neither alone is sufficient.
- **Participatory wherever possible** – indicators that touch members, are co-designed and co-interpreted with the community where feasible.
- **Disaggregated by default** – every participation metric is broken down by region and operator size, with participant status tracked where appropriate.
- **Burden-aware** – where indicators overlap (P4.1 with P2.1; P5.3 with P1.4), a single instrument serves both. No member should be asked the same question twice in different surveys.
- **Findings shared back** – every survey, interview round, and audit produces a member-facing summary within 90 days. This is a precondition, not an afterthought.
- **Cross-checked** – headline findings are validated against at least one other source before being reported (per the SPICED 'C' criterion).

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

The protocols depend on a clear allocation of responsibilities. The table below summarises the M&E roles for each ccNSO actor:

| Role                              | Responsibilities                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ccNSO Council</b>              | Approves M&E framework and targets; receives quarterly and annual reports; takes decisions in response to findings; closes feedback loops with the community.   |
| <b>GRC Working Group</b>          | Owns the M&E protocols; conducts annual governance audit; reviews indicator quality; reports on patterns and gaps; recommends framework adjustments.            |
| <b>Secretariat</b>                | Maintains data registers (participation, work plans, charters, recordings); runs surveys; produces quarterly data summaries; supports baseline data collection. |
| <b>WG/Committee Chairs</b>        | Submit work plans and progress data; ensure post-meeting surveys are administered; report scope reviews and best-practice sharing.                              |
| <b>Members</b>                    | Participate in surveys, interviews, and World Café sessions; raise concerns through formal channels; review findings shared back to the community.              |
| <b>M&amp;E Lead (recommended)</b> | Cross-cutting coordination role; designated within GRC; ensures methodological consistency, prevents duplication across overlapping indicators.                 |

**Recommendation:** The GRC formally nominates the designation of IRINA DANELIA, with PABLO RODRIGUEZ as alternate as the GRC M&E Lead. This person is the primary point of methodological consistency and prevents duplication across overlapping indicators as flagged.

## 6. Measurement Cycle and Calendar

Each indicator in the SMART & SPICED Assessment has been mapped to a measurement cycle. Frequencies are set so that:

- Operational efficiency indicators (meetings, attendance, agenda completion) are tracked in near-real-time.
- Stakeholder experience indicators (trust, satisfaction, resonance) are tracked on an annual cycle to allow time for action and re-measurement.
- Foundational indicators (Purpose, structure-to-goals mapping, succession) are reviewed bi-annually since they change slowly.

| Frequency                        | Tool / Activity                                                                      | Indicators Covered (with reference)                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Per-meeting</b>               | Post-meeting survey (Mentimeter /online); meeting minutes log                        | Meeting face-to-face time use (P3.4); agenda completion; participant productivity rating; time-on-discussion ratio.                               |
| <b>Quarterly</b>                 | Secretariat data summary; WG participation register update                           | Active participation % (P3.2.1); meetings on schedule (P3.4.1); priority record updates (P3.1.1); new volunteer retention check (P4.2.1, P4.4.3). |
| <b>Per ICANN meeting cycle</b>   | Mentimeter polling; World Café session; SOPC/Tech Day attendance log                 | Session satisfaction (P1.3.3); cross-community engagement (P1.4); attendance (P1.3.2).                                                            |
| <b>Annually</b>                  | Member survey; governance audit (GRC); achievements report; participation statistics | Trust in Council (P4.3.1); priorities reflect needs (P4.1.1); charter currency (P2.2.1); transparency indicators (P4.5); diversity ratios (P4.2). |
| <b>Bi-annually (every 2 yrs)</b> | Purpose review; structure-to-goals mapping; succession plan review                   | Purpose reconfirmation (P1.1.3); ICANN Mission alignment (P1.1.2); structures support all goals (P2.1.2); succession planning (P4.3.3).           |
| <b>Continuous (rolling)</b>      | Public comment submissions log; CCG participation tracker; correspondence register   | Use of public comment opportunities (P1.4.4); CSC participation (P5.1.2); concrete suggestions in public comments (P5.3.1).                       |

This cycle is designed to minimise survey fatigue while ensuring that all 5 principles are measured at least annually. The total estimated effort for members is 1 annual survey (≈15 minutes), 2–3 post-session surveys per ICANN meeting (≈3 minutes each), and optional participation in regional interviews or World Café sessions.

## 7. Data Quality Standards

Data quality determines whether findings can be relied upon for decisions. The following minimum standards apply:

### Disaggregation

All participation, attendance, and survey indicators are reported with a breakdown by:

- Geographic region (using the 5 ICANN regions: Africa, Asia/Australia/Pacific, Europe, Latin America/Caribbean, North America).
- Operator type /size category (categories to be defined collaboratively with members in the baseline phase).
- Participant status (Council, WG/Committee member, observer, ICANN staff, formal liaison).

### Response rates and validity thresholds

- Annual member survey: minimum 25% response rate to be considered representative; below this, results are reported with caveats and supplemented with qualitative data.
- Post-meeting surveys: minimum 30% of attendees; below this, treat as indicative only.
- Regional diversity: minimum coverage of 3 of the 5 ICANN regions to be reported as cross-regional.

### Cross-checking

Per the SPICED framework, headline findings are validated through at least two methods. For example:

- Annual survey on Council trust (P4.3.1) cross-checked with focused listening sessions (P4.3.2)
- Charter compliance audit (P2.2.1) cross-checked with WG self-assessment of scope alignment (P3.3)

### Privacy, retention, and access

- Surveys anonymised at point of analysis; raw data retained by Secretariat with controlled access
- Interview transcripts treated confidentially; only thematic findings published
- Aggregate data and findings published on the ccNSO website (per P4.5 transparency criterion)
- Data retention: 5 years for trend analysis; longer retention requires explicit member consent

## 8. Reporting Cadence and Feedback Loops

The reporting cycle is designed so that data flows back to decision-makers — and to members — in time to influence the next cycle of action.

### Quarterly Secretariat Data Summary

- **Audience:** Council, GRC, WG chairs
- **Content:** Key operational indicators (P3.1, P3.2, P3.4); flag list of emerging issues; participation statistics
- **Format:** 2–3 pages; standard dashboard

### Annual M&E Report

- **Audience:** Council, then publication on the ccNSO website
- **Content:** Full indicator scorecard; baseline comparison; SPICED qualitative findings; recommended Council actions
- **Format:** Aligned with the Baseline Report structure (see companion document) for cross-year comparability
- **Timing:** Issued 60 days before the ICANN fiscal year ends (allows input into the ccNSO Workplan)

### Biannual CIP Review

- **Audience:** Full ccNSO membership, publication on the ccNSO website
- **Content:** Key operational indicators (P1.1.2, P2.1.4). Trend analysis over 2 years; framework-level recommendations; updated targets
- **Format:** Member-facing summary plus full GRC report

### Closing the loop

For SPICED indicators, results must be shared back to the participants who provided the data. Practical mechanisms:

- Member-facing summary of survey findings within 60 days after the survey is closed.
- Regional findings shared back to the relevant region (per the SPICED 'I' – Interpreted criterion)
- World Café follow-up sessions report directly back to participants on actions taken, and broader community
- Annual report includes a 'You said, we did' section linking member input to Council decisions

## 9. Action Triggers

M&E without action is reporting. The protocols specify trigger conditions under which a finding requires a defined response, ensuring the system functions as a feedback loop rather than a passive log.

| Trigger Condition                                                                                             | Required Action                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>A SMART threshold is missed by more than 10 percentage points</b>                                          | Secretariat flags in next quarterly report; GRC reviews root cause; Council briefed at next meeting.                            |
| <b>Equity gap detected in disaggregated data (e.g. small TLD participation, regional underrepresentation)</b> | Trigger barrier analysis (P4.2.3, P4.4); targeted outreach within 6 months; report back to the community.                       |
| <b>Trust or 'feeling heard' indicators (SPICED) drop year-on-year</b>                                         | Convene a focused listening session (regional interviews / World Café); share interpreted findings back; Council action plan.   |
| <b>Binary/process indicator absent or out of date (charter, succession plan, work plan)</b>                   | Secretariat issues compliance reminder; GRC tracks; escalates to Council if unresolved within 90 days.                          |
| <b>Indicator data unavailable for 2+ cycles</b>                                                               | GRC reviews indicator viability; either redesign measurement, change tool, or recommend striking from framework.                |
| <b>Member-survey response rate below threshold (e.g. &lt;25%)</b>                                             | Review survey design and channels; consider engagement plan refresh; do not rely on results alone – supplement with interviews. |

These triggers should be reviewed and refined after the first full measurement cycle. The principle is that no significant negative or anomalous finding should sit in a report without a designated next step.

## 10. First-Year Implementation

The first 12 months of M&E operation are a pilot phase, focused on establishing baselines and refining tools.

### Phase 1 - Foundation: May 2026 - July 2026

- Adopt these protocols and the ccNSO CIP Criteria and Indicators as the working framework
- Designate M&E Lead within GRC; confirm Secretariat support arrangements
- Identify Secretariat registers (participation, work plans, charters, recordings, public comments)

### Phase 2 - CIP Pilot: August 2026 - January 2027

- Focus on Principle 2 and 3 as test
- Co-design with member representatives (GRC members) and run first annual member survey
- Conduct first governance audit (charters, work plans, transparency criteria under P4.5)
- Hold first World Café session at the next ICANN meeting (ICANN88), if feasible and prudent
- Collect baseline data on all SMART indicators with XX% placeholders

### Gather Feedback and Adjust - February 2027 - June 2027

- Produce CIP Baseline report for principles 2 and 3 to close pilot testing and as input to improvement of working methods

- Recommend Year 2 targets to Council, and areas of improvement
- Identify data gaps and tool refinements if needed

### Phase 3 – Full Rollout: July 2027 – January 2028

- Quarterly reports operating; first annual cycle complete
- Year 1 retrospective; protocols refined; framework v1.1 issued

### Phase 4 – Embedding: February 2028 – June 2028

- Automation of data collection & Sustainability Plan
- Final evaluation