
Material Subcontracting Arrangement Change Guide

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Version 2.1

This guide provides instructions on submitting a request to ICANN org for approval of a Material Subcontracting Arrangement (MSA) change, including what documentation is required and how such requests will be processed. Please read carefully before submitting your request.

Table of Contents

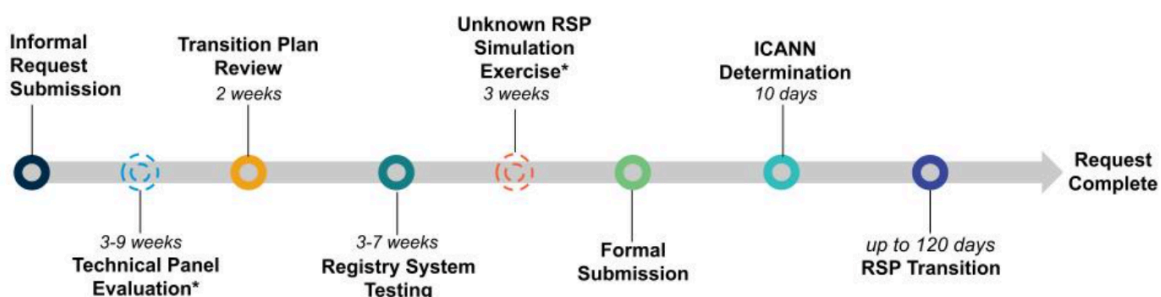
1. Preparation: Before Submitting Your Request	2
2. Submit Your Request: Informal Submission	2
3. Technical Evaluation (unknown RSP only)	3
4. Transition Plan Review	3
5. Registry System Testing	4
6. Simulation Exercise (unknown RSP only)	4
7. Formal Submission	5
8. ICANN Review and Determination	5
9. Finalizing Your MSA Change	6
10. After Your RSP Change is Complete	6

1. Preparation: Before Submitting Your Request

If you haven't yet reviewed the MSA change overview, please do so prior to submitting your request. It contains important considerations you should be aware of before submitting, such as the documentation requirements. If you have any questions, reach out to your Account Manager or submit a general inquiry case through the Naming Services portal (NSp).

Please keep in mind that an MSA change request takes anywhere from **7-12 weeks to complete**. Below is a general timeline of the MSA change process. Click [here](#) for a more detailed [process workflow](#).

MSA Change Request Timeline



**only applicable to unknown RSPs who are either not currently supporting one or more new gTLDs, or not a successfully evaluated RSP in the 2026 Round RSP Program.*

2. Submit Your Request: Informal Submission

Submit your request through NSp:

- Select the applicable type of MSA change:
 - MSA change to a known RSP – the proposed RSP is considered “known” if it currently supports one or more new generic top-level domains (gTLDs) or is a successfully evaluated RSP in the 2026 Round Registry Service Provider (RSP) Evaluation Program.
 - MSA change to an unknown RSP – the proposed RSP is considered “unknown” if it does not currently support one or more new gTLDs or is **not** a successfully evaluated RSP in the 2026 Round RSP Evaluation Program.
- Complete the questionnaire and upload the required documentation:
 - A transition plan – see the [Transition Plan Guidelines](#) for instructions on developing a transition plan.
 - *For unknown Registry Service Provider (RSP) only:* responses to all [MSA Technical Questions](#).

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- For any MSA change request to a 2026 Round RSP that is *solely* a Main RSP type, the following information must be provided at the time of submission:
 - Main RSP
 - DNSSEC RSP
 - At least one DNS RSP
 - Optionally, one or more PROXY RSP(s)

You will be able to track the progress of your MSA change request within NSp once your request has been submitted. Please note, the request submission phase is considered your *informal submission*. The informal submission phase allows ICANN org to review the proposed MSA change and complete the necessary technical prerequisites before formal submission, helping ensure the formal review can be completed within the applicable timeline. During the informal submission phase, you and your proposed RSP provide ICANN org with information about the MSA change and complete specific technical prerequisites as outlined below.

DO NOT submit a cover letter at this time. You will be prompted to submit your cover letter later in the process after successfully completing the applicable technical prerequisites, at which point you will proceed to the [formal submission](#) phase.

3. Technical Evaluation (unknown RSP only)

Note: This step is only applicable for an MSA change to an unknown RSP.

If your request is to transition to an unknown RSP, a technical evaluation of the RSP by a third-party panel is required. The responses to the [MSA Technical Questions](#) will be used for the panel's review. The unknown RSP must pass the evaluation in order to qualify for the remaining steps of the MSA change process. Completion of the technical evaluation generally ranges from three to nine weeks.

You may work with ICANN org to address issues raised during the technical evaluation. However, if your proposed RSP does not pass the evaluation, you may be required to submit a new request.

Estimated Cost: \$14,300.00 USD. *The cost provided is a current estimate. Actual costs may vary and may be updated from time to time. The registry operator is responsible for actual costs incurred and will receive an invoice from ICANN org for the technical evaluation fees. Invoice payment terms are Net 30: payment is due thirty days after the invoice date.*

4. Transition Plan Review

If the gTLD has been delegated, you must provide a detailed transition plan developed between the current RSP and the proposed successor. Instructions for developing a transition plan may be found in the [Transition Plan Guidelines](#).

ICANN org will review the transition plan uploaded to the NSp request and may follow up with clarifying questions as needed. ICANN org's review of the transition plan generally takes two weeks, but may take longer in some instances depending on clarifying questions, explanations, and potential revisions to the transition plan.

The transition plan must be approved by ICANN org prior to Registry System Testing (RST). ICANN org will inform the registry operator of the transition plan approval and reach out via the NSp case to provide instructions on scheduling Registry System Testing.

5. Registry System Testing

[Registry System Testing \(RST\)](#) ensures that a registry operator has the capacity to operate a gTLD in a stable and secure manner. For MSA change requests, RST is referred to as RSP Change Testing, which is designed to ensure that a previously delegated gTLD can continue to run successfully. Completion of RST is expected to take three weeks, however in some instances RST may range from three to seven weeks.

Standard RSP Change Testing typically includes the following test elements:

- DNS – Testing operability with the Domain Name System protocols.
- EPP – Testing the implementation of the protocol used for electronic communication between a registrar and a registry operator for provisioning domain names.
- Internationalized Domain Name (IDN) – Reviewing and/or testing domain names that include characters not written with the basic Latin alphabet (a - z).
- Data Escrow – Testing to ensure that registry operator is able to make successful data deposits with its Data Escrow Agent.
- Documentation – Review of self-certification documents (XML) to ensure required elements are accounted for.

The testing requirements and timing (including scheduling) may vary depending on the type of RSP change, and RST is only applicable to delegated gTLDs. Further information on RST requirements can be found on the [RST webpage](#).

6. Simulation Exercise (unknown RSP only)

Note: This step is only applicable for an MSA change to an unknown RSP.

This set of registry system tests is performed when an RSP does not currently support one or more gTLDs or is not a successfully evaluated RSP in the 2026 RSP Evaluation Program, and the gTLD for which it will provide services is already delegated and has registrants. This testing is in addition to the prior technical evaluation and RST testing.

During this step, the RSP places simulated gTLDs in the production environment, which is then monitored for compliance with the relevant DNS/DNSSEC specifications and the

Service Level Requirements described in Specification 10 of the Registry Agreement. The RSP is required to perform zone signing key (ZSK) and root zone key signing key (KSK) rollovers during the simulation period. The Simulation Exercise typically takes 3 weeks to complete.

7. Formal Submission

Once the prerequisite technical requirements are complete (e.g., technical evaluation, transition plan, RST, and unknown RSP simulation exercise), ICANN org will inform you that you are eligible to submit a formal request to change your RSP.

To do so, you must provide a cover letter in the NSp case. Your cover letter must be on company letterhead and include the following:

- A description of the current and proposed RSPs
- Estimated timing of the MSA change (expected RSP transition date)
- Any other pertinent information related to the MSA change
- A signature from a duly authorized representative of the registry operator (e.g., the registry primary contact, corporate officer, or legal notices contact). The name of the signatory must be printed and signed, and the signature block must include the signature, signatory name, and signatory title.

As you submit your cover letter in the NSp request, you will also be prompted to print and send a physical copy of your cover letter to ICANN org at the address indicated in the NSp request.

8. ICANN Review and Determination

Once your formal submission has been received in the NSp request, ICANN org will review the request and post its determination in the NSp case. ICANN org will either consent or withhold its consent to the request within 10 calendar days of receipt of your formal submission.

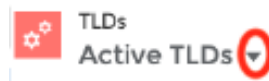
Should ICANN org provide its consent to your MSA change, you must transition to the successor RSP within 120 calendar days from the date ICANN org has provided its consent. If you haven't done so already, provide ICANN org with your expected RSP transition date at this stage.

If you need additional time to complete your RSP transition, you may submit an extension request in the NSp MSA case along with your rationale and the new expected RSP transition date.

9. Finalizing Your MSA Change

Once you have provided ICANN org with your expected RSP transition date, ICANN org will prompt you to update required fields within NSp with your new RSP information.

When prompted by ICANN org, add your new RSP information into NSp within the TLD-Detail object. When you enter into NSp to make the updates, you will find two types of TLD-Detail objects: Pending TLD-Detail and Active TLD-Detail. *Click on the down arrow to the right of “Active TLDs” in order to view the “Pending TLD-Detail”:*



The **Pending TLD-Detail** has been created for you to provide and save all of the required updated information for your RSP change. It will be made active by ICANN org on the day of your RSP transition. It is extremely important for you to use the **Pending TLD-Detail** to input the required fields, NOT the Active TLD-Detail.

The Active TLD-Detail is connected to various ICANN org monitoring systems and is not set up to process live updates. Making changes to the Active TLD-Detail may trigger alerts to ICANN org monitoring systems and will likely result in technical onboarding failure(s).

You will receive a notification and additional instructions in your NSp request on how to access the Pending TLD-Detail object within NSp to input this information in the Pending TLD-Detail.

As mentioned above, the inputs you provide in the Pending TLD-Detail will be made active by ICANN org on the day of your RSP transition. After you've successfully transitioned to your new RSP and ICANN org has activated your Pending TLD-Detail with the RSP changes, your request will be considered complete.

10. After Your RSP Change is Complete

After your RSP change is complete, please be sure to review the current TLD Roles that pertain to your RSP (e.g., Backend Technical Service Provider Primary and Secondary Contact) and inform ICANN org of any required updates by posting the information in your related MSA change request case or by submitting a General Inquiry request with all of the new TLD Role contact information.