

CCNSO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Learning Loop: a CIP that pays ccTLDs back

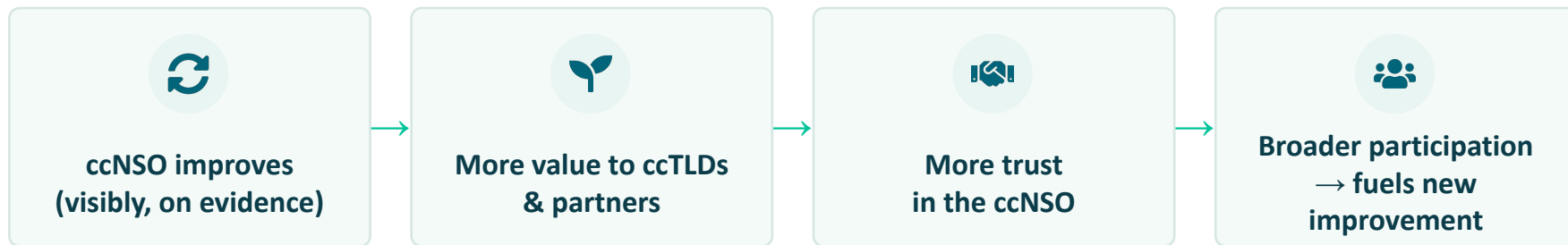
Why the ccNSO needs a Continuous Improvement Program, how the learning loop shapes the method — and how Criteria & Indicators, M&E Protocols and the Engagement Plan run it together.

ccNSO Webinar · 6 August 2026



WHY THE CCNSO NEEDS A CIP

A ccNSO that visibly improves is a ccNSO worth every ccTLD's time.



This reinforcing loop is the business case. A voluntary, multistakeholder body lives on legitimacy: members keep investing time only if they experience improvement done with and for them — and see the results return.

5 principles	20+ criteria	80+ indicators	26 months to embed
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THE PROBLEM THE LEARNING LOOP SOLVES

Improvement efforts fail in two predictable ways. The CIP is built to avoid both at once.



Rigorous but inert

A clean study that describes the problem precisely — and changes nothing. Reports pile up; the ccNSO stays the same.

M&E as accounting function



Energetic but forgettable

A lively workshop: sticky notes, good feeling — and no durable knowledge. Six months later, nobody can say what was learned.

Engagement without evidence

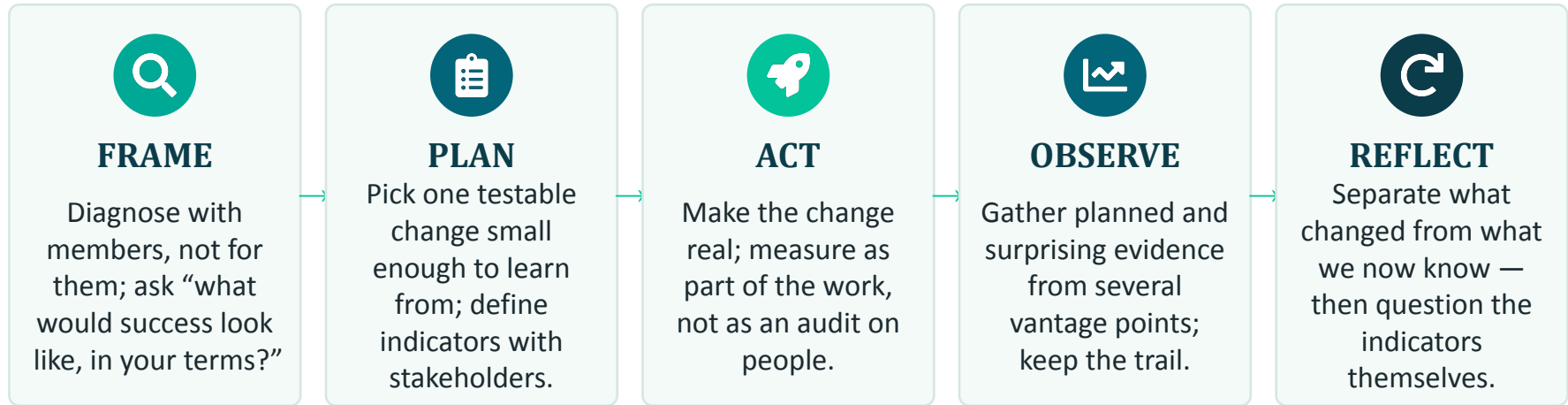


The CIP's answer: every loop must leave two things behind.

A real improvement in how the ccNSO works for ccTLDs, and knowledge documented well enough that someone who was never in the room can reuse it. That is what turns a circle into a spiral.

THE METHOD BEHIND THE METHOD

One loop, three traditions: action research, design thinking, and SPICED measurement.



Action research (Lewin)

Iterative plan–act–observe–reflect; yields reusable knowledge.

Design thinking

Empathetic discovery keeps the problem from being closed too early; prototype and test

SPICED indicators

Success defined with stakeholders; measures stay provisional until reality talks back.

PRINCIPLE, CRITERIA & INDICATOR

The CIP Framework Structure

PRINCIPLE

High-level value statement. What the ccNSO commits to. Successful collaboration, effective governance, trusted stewardship.

CRITERIA

Conditions for achieving principle. How to know it's working. Membership satisfaction, engagement rates, documented decisions.

INDICATOR

Specific, measurable evidence. What we actually count. Survey scores, participation numbers, attendance logs.

Each principle is operationalized through 4-5 criteria, yielding 80+ indicators across SMART (accountability) and SPICED (learning)

THE FIVE PRINCIPLES

What ccNSO Commits to Achieve

- 1 Fulfilling Purpose** The ccNSO is fulfilling its purpose
- 2 Effective Structure** The structures are effective
- 3 Efficient Operations** The ccNSO operations are efficient
- 4 Accountability** The ccNSO is accountable internally and externally
- 5 Collaboration** The ccNSO collaborates to further ICANN's mission

These five principles provide a common base across all ICANN structures.
Each principle is operationalized through 3-5 criteria and measurable indicators tailored to ccNSO's unique needs.⁶

PRINCIPLE 3: EFFICIENT OPERATIONS

Criteria Operationalizing Efficiency

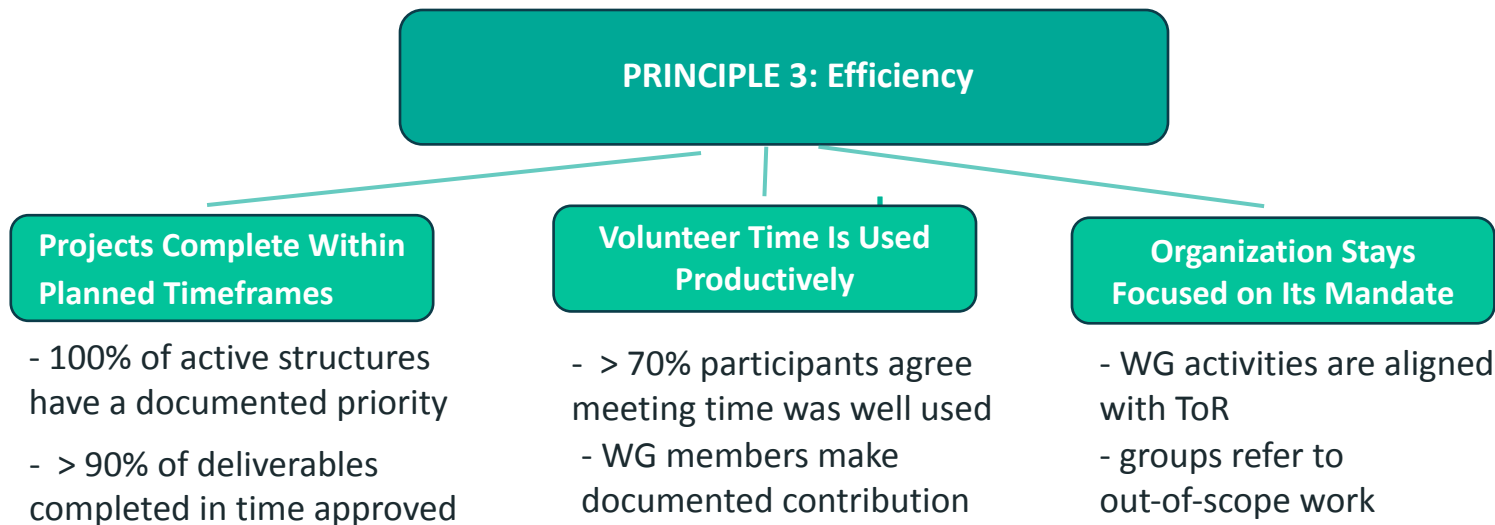
- 1 Projects Complete Within Planned Timeframes
- 2 Volunteer Time Is Used Productively
- 3 Organization Stays Focused on Its Mandate
- 4 Meetings are result-oriented (Time produces Results)

What This Means for ccNSO

Efficient operations ensure that ccNSO's work is done well, on time, and with appropriate resources. Each criterion translates into specific, measurable indicators that ccNSO will use to assess whether it is operating efficiently and identify where improvements are needed.

PRINCIPLE 3: EFFICIENT OPERATION

From Abstract Principle to Measurable Indicators



Each indicator is measurable and sources are known: meeting minutes, calendar records, decision logs. Removing any level breaks the connection between values and data.

Run two Indicators sets: a SPICED set that learns, a SMART set that accounts.



Learning Indicators — SPICED

- Evolves each loop; owned by the people in the situation.
- Captures trust, equity, resonance, feeling heard.
- Gathered via annual survey, regional interviews, World Café — co-designed with members.
- Indicators revised, retired, added at every Reflect.

Used for: learning and course-setting with members



Accountability Indicator — SMART

- Lean, stable, held still for comparison across years.
- Thresholds, completion rates, participation counts.
- Gathered via Secretariat records, governance audits, document analysis — largely automatable.
- Gives Council and ICANN an audit trail they can benchmark.

Used for: upward reporting and cross-year comparability

THE IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

Three documents, one loop — each runs a different stage of the cycle.



Criteria & Indicators

FRAME & PLAN — WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

5 principles → 20+ criteria → 80+ indicators, classified SMART / SPICED / Both, with tools and sources. The candidate answers to “what would success look like?”

Without protocols, indicators stay abstract.



M&E Protocols

ACT & OBSERVE — EVIDENCE, ON THE RECORD

Measurement calendar, quality standards, disaggregation, cross-checking, reporting cadence and action triggers that force a response.

Without engagement, SPICED data never arrives.



Engagement Plan

FRAME & REFLECT — WITH MEMBERS

Stakeholder map, methods inventory, cadence tied to the ICANN meeting cycle, and closing-the-loop standards for sharing findings back.

Without indicators, engagement has no focus.

Remove one and the loop breaks: indicators define the questions, protocols quality-assure the answers, engagement supplies the voices — and returns findings to members within 90 days.

WEIGHING THE IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

A participatory learning loop, piloted then scaled — measured against three alternatives.



Proposed: pilot the loop, then scale

- Test on Principles 2 & 3 (effectiveness, efficiency) — timed to feed Council's working-methods review from March 2027.
- Uses data the Secretariat already keeps; SPICED machinery built alongside, not before.
- A full Reflect phase (5 months) corrects tools and indicators on evidence before rollout.
- **Each pass leaves improvement + reusable knowledge — the spiral, not the circle.**

One-off external review

Rigorous but inert: a snapshot, no loops, no ownership; improvements stall when reviewers leave.

SMART-only dashboard

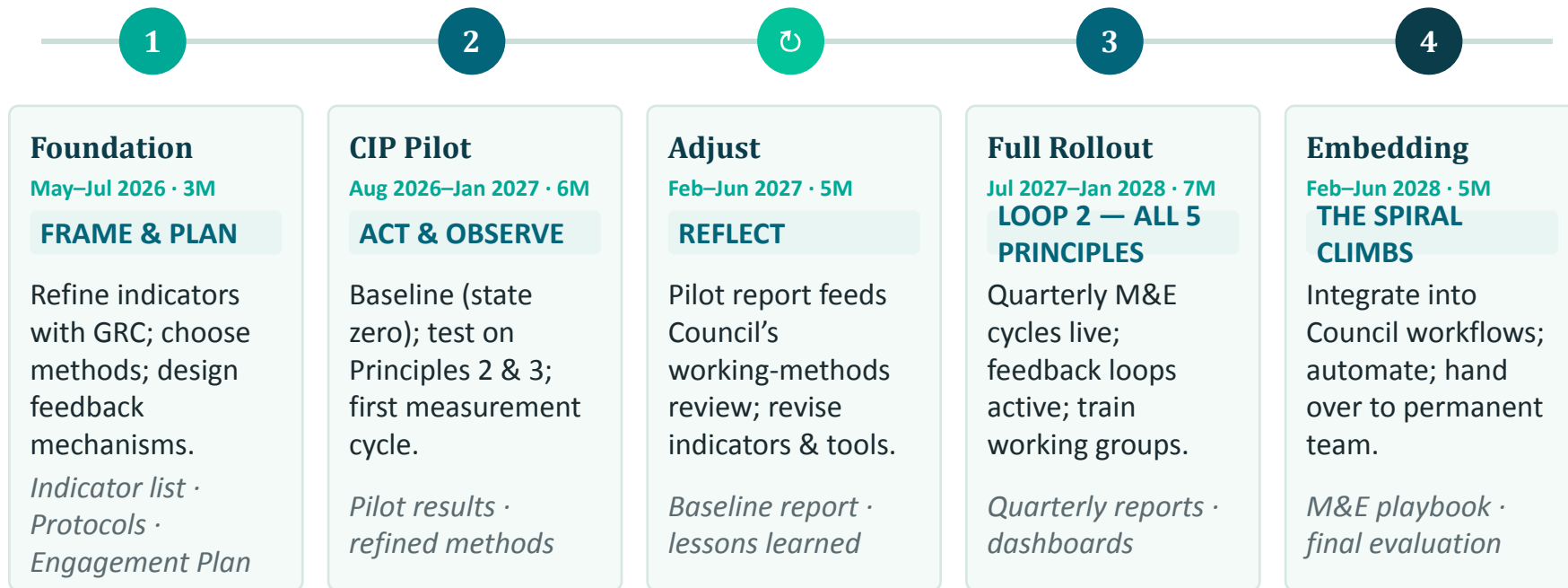
Auditable but blind: misses trust, equity, resonance — the legitimacy factors a voluntary body runs on.

Big-bang rollout, all 5 principles

Overloads a small Secretariat; untested tools locked in at full scale; no Reflect before commitment.

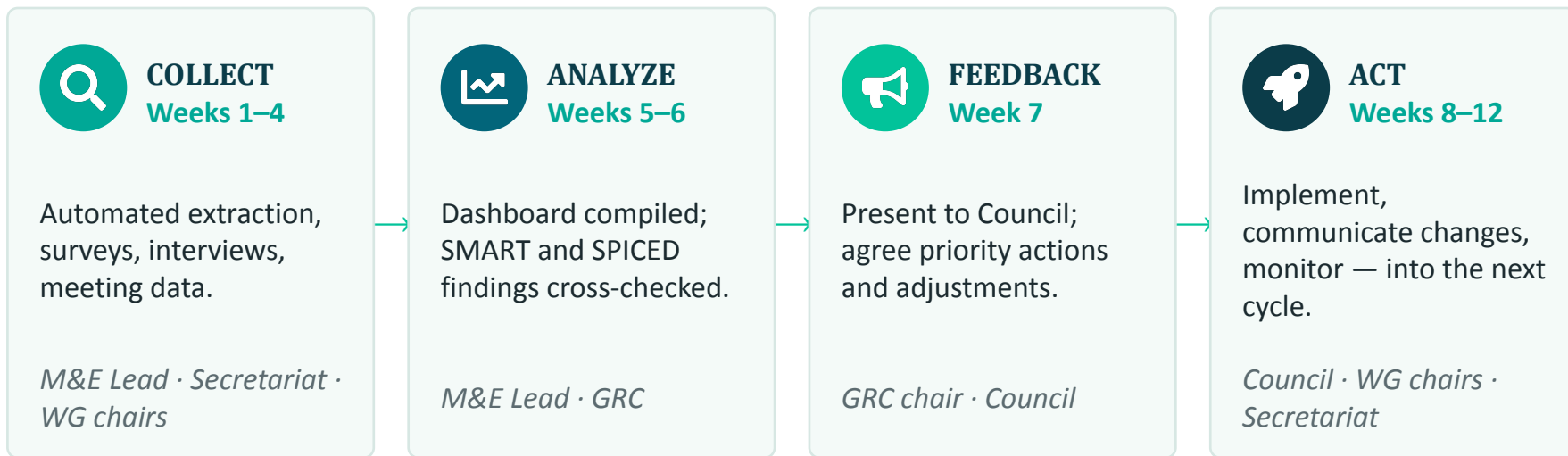
Trade-off accepted: narrower initial coverage of purpose & trust indicators — mitigated by full rollout within 6 months of the adjust phase.

26 months, four phases — the first full turn of the spiral.



ONCE OPERATIONAL

A quarterly rhythm runs the loop in miniature — data to decisions in twelve weeks.



Action triggers keep it honest: a missed SMART threshold, an equity gap, or a year-on-year trust drop forces a defined response — no negative finding sits in a report without a next step.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Everyone runs a stage of the loop — most members give about one hour a year.

designated within GRC



CIP / M&E Lead (GRC)

Keeps the loop methodologically honest: consistency across the three documents; prevents duplicate asks. Proposed: Irina Danelia (alt. Pablo Rodriguez).

4–6 hrs / quarter



GRC

Owens the protocols; annual governance audit; reviews quarterly findings; leads the Reflect stage — recommends indicator & framework adjustments.

2–3 hrs / quarter



Council

Approves framework & targets; acts on findings; closes the loop with the community — decisions are where Observe becomes Act.

10–15 hrs / month · 0.25–0.3 FTE



Secretariat

Day-to-day engine: registers, surveys, dashboards, quarterly summaries; keeps the evidence trail intact.

1–2 hrs / quarter



WG / Committee chairs

Supply work plans & activity data; administer post-meeting surveys; implement adjustments in their groups.

1–2 hrs / year



ccTLD community

Co-creators, not data sources: one annual survey (≈15 min), short session polls, optional interviews & World Café — and they define what success means.

“You said, we did” — sharing findings back is what keeps ccTLDs in the loop.



Findings-sharing standards

- ✓ Member-facing summary within 90 days of any survey close.
- ✓ Regional findings interpreted and shared back to each region.
- ✓ Annual report carries a ‘You said, we did’ section linking input to decisions.
- ✓ World Café follow-up reports back on actions at the next ICANN meeting.
- ✓ **If Council does not act on input, the rationale is shared — silence is not acceptable.**

How we’ll know the M&E program itself works

75%	agree M&E adds value
3+	documented adjustments from feedback / yr
90%	of indicators measured on schedule
<15 hrs	Secretariat M&E time per month
60%	report M&E helps improvement

THE ASK

Approve, appoint, announce — and start the first loop.

Month 1 Launch

GRC & Council approve the program; designate the CIP/M&E Lead; announce to membership.

Month 2 Refine

GRC workshop trims and maps the indicator list (SMART vs SPICED); pilot priorities selected.

Month 3 Baseline

Surveys & protocols designed; baseline collection begins; automated tracking established; pilot plan final.

Run enough loops and improvement and understanding stop competing for attention — they start producing each other.

RESOURCES & REFERENCES

Links to Framework Documentation and Working Spaces

ICANN CIP Framework

Global CIP Framework

Reference document establishing the CIP methodology, principles, and measurement approaches used globally across ICANN structures.

 [Open Framework \(PDF\)](#)

GRC Wiki Space

ccNSO Guidelines Review Committee

Working space for GRC policy work, ccTLD documents, and implementation guidance. Access to working drafts, decisions, and collaborative tools.

 [Visit Wiki Space](#)

ccNSO CIP Documentation

Three foundational documents guide implementation: (1) Criteria & Indicators (C&I) define what success looks like through 5 principles and 80+ indicators; (2) M&E Protocols establish measurement standards, quality assurance, and action triggers; (3) Engagement Plan specifies how to gather voice and close the loop with ccTLDs.