

Proposed Procedure for Namespace Allocation

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Updated Proposal

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Until recently, SESAR as the most active allocation agent assigned IGSNs with three-digit namespaces and 6-digits for unique identification within a namespace. In the future we will have longer namespaces and fewer digits for unique identification, because most single investigators do not need all the unique numbers afforded by the 6 digits. IGSN namespaces and IGSN names must conform to the [IGSN syntax](#) guidelines.

Procedure for top-level namespaces

Each allocating agent will have one or more top-level namespace codes, e.g. IE for IEDA, and will have complete authority to assign any subnamespace within these top namespaces. A new top-level namespace is requested by an Allocating Agent.

The process of allocating a new namespace is initiated by an Allocating Agent requesting the allocation of a namespace by creating a new ticket in the IGSN ticket system.

<http://trac.gfz-potsdam.de/igsn/newticket>. The request is reviewed by the IGSN Namespaces subcommittee and communicated to the members. Members may lodge an appeal against this namespace allocation in case of conflicts with existing namespaces or other reasons. The appeal is to be lodged with the executive board within one month of the publication of the namespace request.

If a member appeals against the namespace allocation, it is put up for vote by all members.

There is no quorum for the vote on namespace allocations. The allocation of a namespace is suspended during the appeals period until a final decision is reached.

The approved namespace is added to the IGSN Metadata Store <https://doidb.wdc-terra.org/igsn/> and advertised on the IGSN technical wiki. <http://trac.gfz-potsdam.de/igsn/wiki/igsnNamespaces>.

Unused top-level namespaces

Because top-level namespaces are in high demand, an unused namespace is returned to the pool of open namespaces after one year. A member may re-apply for the previously held unused namespace.

Procedure for subnamespaces

Allocating Agents may extend their allocated namespaces into sub-namespaces by adding characters or numbers. The allocated namespaces and corresponding sub-namespaces are governed by the respective Allocating Agents. The allocating agent is responsible for making sure it assigns unique namespaces within its domain.

IGSN e.V. does not enforce a set length for the total namespace, though it is suggested that the total length of the IGSN should be nine characters. The use of IGSN deviating from the nine-character format is subject to approval by the executive board.

Current text in the wiki

This text is from the IGSN Wiki. The draft of the updated proposal follows at the top of this document.

Currently SESAR assigns IGSNs with three-digit namespaces and 6-digits for unique identification within a namespace. In the future we will have longer namespaces and fewer digits for unique identification, because most single investigators do not need all the unique numbers afforded by the 6 digits (see above for number of samples allowed by 3, 4, 5, 6 alphanumeric digits). A proposal for the workflow of the new naming convention is below.

Each allocating agent will have a two digit supernamespace code, e.g. IE for IEDA, and will have complete authority to assign any subnamespace within it. The user may chose a personal namespace that will come after the allocating agent code. e.g. HS becomes IEHS or HSU becomes IEHSU. The allocating agent is responsible for making sure it assigns unique namespaces within its domain e.g. IE, and can assign any subnamespace under IE immediately. IGSN e.V. does not enforce a set length for the total namespace, though it is suggested that the total namespace (including 2 digit code) is 4-6 digits in length.

If the user wants a namespace that is not a subnamespace of the allocating agent, then the user can request the namespace from the higher IGSN registry (though the AA), but the name will not be granted right away. The IGSN manager will be notified - if it is simple case, the

manager can grant it. If not simple case, then the decision goes to the executive board, or up to the general assembly if necessary.

A module that will complete the task of namespace assignment (described above) is planned for development, pending resources.

Open Questions

Please add comments to the proposed procedure for namespace allocation here.

- What if someone requests a namespace to be saved from an Allocating Agent, but does not register any samples? This occurs at SESAR and sometimes years pass and they did not register any samples, but still ask for the namespace to be reserved.
 - We could define a holding period.
 - We could charge a holding fee, maybe after the end of a free holding period.
- Should we request comments from the membership on the allocation of high-level namespaces?
 - If yes, how would we deal with these comments? Online voting? General assembly?
 - Should there be a general consultation period during which members can comment on an application for a top-level namespace?

Discussion from email

from Jens 7/31/

My time zone is already on the deadline for the namespace allocation paper. There are a few unresolved questions.

What if someone requests a namespace to be saved from an Allocating Agent, but does not register any samples? This occurs at SESAR and sometimes years pass and they did not register any samples, but still ask for the namespace to be reserved.

- We could define a holding period.

- We could charge a holding fee after the end of a free holding period.

Should we request comments from the membership on the allocation of high-level namespaces?

- If yes, how would we deal with these comments? Online voting? General assembly?

- Should there be a general consultation period during which members can comment on an application for a top-level namespace?

Can members appeal against a decision to grant or deny a namespace? Does an appeal have suspensive effect on the decision?

<<https://docs.google.com/document/d/14g3hsXRmJafSWmLrcRQ4LF5iWCoMUiezd08yBFmpqYk/edit#>>

Should we set up a video conference? It might be difficult to find a suitable time slot.

from Kerstin July 31

Hi Jens,

Thanks for moving this.

SESAR so far did a broad 'name space clean-up', asking for permission to take back name spaces that had no registered samples after a couple of years. I think we should do both

A. define a 'free' holding period

B. charge to hold the name space beyond the free holding period.

Problem will be the administration of charges. The charges have to worth the effort of sending invoices etc.

I think that we should define a time period for comments to the allocation of high-level name spaces, discuss the comments to see how reasonable or unreasonable the members consider them, then put a revised policy up for vote (can do an easy poll).

I think the allocation of high-level name spaces has to go through two steps:

1. review of applications by the subcommittee which makes a recommendation to the membership
2. Short period for appeal by members
3. If a member appeal, the namespace allocation goes up for vote by all members

What do you think?

Kerstin

from Jens 7/31

Extra charges beyond the membership fee will also mean extra work. Holding charges have to be in some proportion to the additional effort. On the other hand, top-level namespaces are a scarce resource. Maybe unused namespaces should automatically be returned to the pool after one year with no holding option. A renewed namespace application would then go through a new review process, which might actually be a better idea because it would allow us to review the causes that lead to not using the top-level namespace.

I agree with the approval process that you proposed for the allocation of top-level namespaces. I was not entirely happy with process I had sketched out because it would have required a lot of rules to make it transparent. The process you are proposing is simpler and more transparent. We have to make the timeline very clear, though.

from Jens 8/11

I added Kerstin's suggestions to the namespace draft. There are still two open questions:

1. What is the length of the period for appeals against namespace decisions? 1 Month?
2. Should there be a quorum on the vote on a disputed namespace allocation? I'd say no.

From Cathy 8/29

1 month sounds good to me

i think I agree with no quorum

Notes from call on 28 Aug 2014

1. **Namespace allocation** Namespaces for allocating agents will require an approval process. To react to a top-level namespace proposal, One month or six weeks seems reasonable for period for appeals against namespace decisions. Start with a month and see if members are dissatisfied for some reason. We are talking about top level namespaces only. There should not be too many of those.
2. **Top level namespaces**
 - a. Top level namespaces, such as IE for IEDA, may have two character namespaces as the root, but that is not necessary. In Perth, the ARC namespace is for the Australian Resource Center. The idea was for the geochemical lab to use ARC. There will not be many "sub-users". e.g. Core repositories should have relatively few namespaces to begin with - 3 or 4 for example for Bremen, whereas allocation agents like IEDA, who interacts with individual investigators, will have more.
 - b. KL: We took the step of beginning namespaces with IE in order to reduce the number of top level namespaces taken.
 - c. The last section of the handbook should give some guidance of how allocating agents assign IGSNs

- d. CC: all namespaces should be associated with someone who is a member of IGSN (and that is the way it is). In other words, groups or Allocating Agents have a supnamespace, like IE, IE takes care of all clients with subnamespaces (up to IEDA). But there could be cases where people have a supnamespace and only use it once.
- e. Note: It is a bit confusing with the 10273 in the handbook. Define the toplevel namespaces - IGSN assigned to 10273 is sort of confusing - especially to include into this document, this is for a completely different use. Response: There is a cultural difference of how people understand the terms, (informed by cultural practices), this text “prefix”, “namespace”, etc.) has been around for a long time, tries to explain the pattern of hierarchical thing and how to get from an IGSN name to a resolvable URL. KL: some things are more generic than they need to be in the document. There could be confusion if 10273 never changes. Sugestion: When talking about 10273, put that in the section describing where to resolve IGSNs. In the next section, it could be about the IGSN itself, and remove the handle section information. That would be more clear to focus just on IGSN. CC: could use a specific example, like the IE case.
- f. KL: can we define a “top level namespace”
- g. We May need to set up a namespace subcommittee (mentioned in the text)
- h. One of the flowcharts is out of date for the Namespace Approval Procedure, if not rejected right away, there is an appeals period. (vs. an approval period). If the IGSN e.V. membership does not react, is an approval. If we seek an approval, we need a vote for all cases, but if it is an appeals period then it goes through unless there is a rejection. The persons who would appeal would be the persons that objected.
- i. A top level namespace can only be given to a new allocating agent. Or, an existing allocation agent serves a new community and wants another top level namespace. For Example: IEDA is building sample registration system for the critical zone observatories. The will ask for the top level namespace CZ. It's agreed, that the top level namespaces are under the responsibility of the Allocating Agent to adhere to the rules of the handbook. AA: that may be something that does not happen in a month. Check: are they a member? Does it conflict with anything else? That can be done in a month. But we need to make sure that the allocation agent is functioning in the way that we envision they are.

3. Rules and Responsibilities of members

- a. CC: in the invoicing letter, we wanted to tell members what the rules and responsibilities are. Must adhere to the namespace policies. What happens if members don't use their namespace, then what? Membership rules refer to the statutes. But something else about the rules of the procedures should be included. If members don't

come to the meetings (are not active), then after a warning, they may not be members anymore. If There is a member that pays their dues and attends the meetings, and they propose a namespace, at that point there is not much else besides saying that the namespace is unique and conforms to the understood rules. But after that, what happens if the group doesn't act on the namespace for 1-2-3 years, OR if they start breaking the syntax. Then what? Also, how do we even monitor that? The registry would have to control the syntax of IGSNs being registered at the registry. It will increase the burden of the organization running the registry and would require some resources.

- b. AA: every year at the General Assembly, then we will get some summary of what has happens. There is a summary once per year. Total, new IGSNs assigned per year. (1) Looking at the activity is something that DataCite does as well, to give a people an overview of what is happening. (2) If a namespace is not being used, for one year, then it should be revoked. There could also be a warning period.

4. IGSN Syntax beyond the suggested syntax

- a. KL: Does there need to be an approval process for changing the syntax of IGSN, and to what level should this be controlled? It's easy to control 9 digits. If someone wants 11 digits, then something would need to be implemented at the top level registry that allows 11 digits for that allocating agent. Maybe you suggest deviations from 9 characters, you need to provide the resources to do the checks. JK: at the moment the system checks if you are allowed to register in that namespace and the webspace, it doesn't check anything else. We could check the format, but do we really want to do that? the hierarchical delegation pattern is good because then you can leave those business processes to the agents and trust that they do things right. KL: but we would also like to make sure they are doing things right as opposed to just trusting them If there are all sorts of syntax modifications, then it will ultimately increase the risk of failure to the system. If someone wants to make changes to the syntax, they can do that, but they should present the changes to the IGSN e.V. to be approved then we reduce the risk of crazy extensions. JK: There seems to be agreement that if it is 9 characters and uses approved characters, then that is fine. But otherwise you must present a case.
- b. The Original use case works fine with 9 characters. There are other use cases (very large repositories) that cannot use only 9 characters. But if IGSN e.V. allows allocating agents to do *anything*, then people will do anything. The standard length is 9, and if you as an allocation agent wants to use more, then make a case to the IGSN e.V.. AA: why would the system break with longer IGSNs? We are uniquely identifying samples so they can be linked in databases and etc. KL: But investigators will not want to use very long, cumbersome IGSNs in their tables and etc. The first paper with IGSNs in it, already had

an example where there was an IGSN with a missing characters, so that IGSN did not resolve. Jens: Elsevier should check to see if the URL resolves.

- c. There seems to be agreement that the capacity to have longer names needs some logic behind it and it needs to be discussed by the IGSN e.V. group. i.e. There are lengths that are “reasonable” to accommodate larger systems but there are unreasonable lengths that are unnecessary and may risk the success of the IGSN.
 5. **Does there need to be a Quorum to decide on namespaces?** - Decided there does not need to be a quorum, but result should be announced. (We basically have this now, but it still requires a manual dimension, it is not fully automated. But it should not happen too often.)
 - a. The only cases to object to namespaces is (1) someone is thinking of that namespace already (2) the namespace is inappropriate in some language.
 6. CC: wants to look at the handbook and can make concrete suggestions about wording.
- Closed the meeting by saying everyone will look at the Handbook before the Sept. 18th meeting. LH numbered the sections in the Handbook.