
ICANN Transcription

IDNs EPDP

Friday, 17 December 2021 at 13:30 UTC

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DEVAN REED:

Good morning, good afternoon, good evening. Welcome to the IDNs EPDP call taking place on Friday, 17th December 2021 at 13:00 UTC. In the interest of time, there'll be no roll call. Attendance will be taken by the Zoom room. If you're only on the telephone, could you please let yourselves be known now?

We have apologies from Emily Barabas and Steve Chan, staff, and Tomslin Samme-Nlar. All members and participants will be promoted to panelists for today's call. Members and participants, when using chat, please select "everyone" in order for everyone to see the chat. Observers will remain as an attendee and will have "view only" chat access.

Statements of interest must be kept up to date. If anyone has any updates to share, please raise your hand or speak up now. If you need assistance updating your statements of interest, please e-mail the GNSO secretariat.

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All documentation and information can be found on the IDNs EPDP Wiki space. Recordings will be posted on the public Wiki space shortly after the end of the call. Please remember to state your name before speaking for the transcript.

As a reminder, those who take part in the ICANN multi-stakeholder process are to comply with the expected standards of behavior. Thank you, and over to our chair, Donna Austin. Please begin.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thank you, Devan, and welcome everybody. This is going to be our last IDN EPDP call for this year. We realize that we will have a number of staff that are out next week. So we won't be going ahead without them. Because we can't. So we won't have a call next week. But we our intention is to resume on the 6th of January in 2022. I know Maxim has said that at least in Russia, that first week continues to be holiday. So we may revisit that just before at the beginning of January. But our intention is to resume on the 6th of January next year.

So for today, we just want to go back—you'll recall that two weeks ago, Ariel or Emily, I can't remember which one, sent our proposed responses and recommendations for A1, A2 and A3. And we didn't have any comments back from any of our team members. So we're assuming that everyone has read the draft recommendations and that they are okay with it.

In reviewing the recommendations ourselves, and staff, Sarmad had called out something that he thought was important, that in

recommendation 1.2, just qualifying, that the applicant believes that the label is valid as per the RZ LGR, but the DNS stability panel has incorrectly assessed it as invalid. So we did a little bit of wordsmithing or thinking about it in the leadership team. And what Ariel is displaying on the screen now is alternate phrasing for recommendation 1.2.

So we just wanted to highlight it here. And I'll give folks 10 seconds or so just to have a look at that language and see if anyone has any concerns about it or if there's anything they want to discuss or understand why we thought it was important to qualify just a little bit of the reasons why an applicant might believe—I'm not making any sense. I'm just going to leave it there. And if anyone has any questions or any immediate reaction, I'm happy to consider that now. Otherwise, we'll leave it out until 6th of January, we'll come back and close this for now. I don't think it's substantive. It's only intended to qualify what we were aiming to get to with the recommendation. So I don't see any hands. Dennis, go ahead.

DENNIS TAN:

Thank you, Donna. I think the alternative phrasing for what I see in [text box] I believe translates the spirit of what we had discussed. The applicant is not challenging the root zone LGR itself, but the application of it. So that sense I think this makes sense.

DONNA AUSTIN:

That's a good way to put it, Dennis. Yeah. Okay, we've got Satish plus one in chat. Okay, so we'll make that change. Ariel, I think if

we just flag that on the list after the call, I'm sure it's going to be reflected in the notes, with recommendations associated with charter questions, A1, A2, A3, we didn't have substantive comments from any of the team members. So we think they're all good, we can move forward. And there's just that one small change to 1.2 based on some feedback from ICANN staff.

All right. So if we can have the agenda backup. Okay. I just wanted to make a bit of a point around A6. So we had conversation around charter question A6 last week. And we've been having a few conversations about it on the leadership team and doing some drafting on the recommendation. And we think it's a bit more challenging to get the words on paper to reflect the conversation that we had last week. So we're still working through that. And the intent is that we'll have that language back on our first call in January and have some discussion around that, and then hopefully finalize that language and get A6 out of the way.

But for today, we're going to focus on charter questions, A9 and A10. And who knows, maybe if we can get through these quickly—although every time a chair says that, it doesn't happen—we might wrap up a little bit earlier today. So Ariel, I'm going to hand it over to you. As usual, Ariel has put all the background work and documents together for us. So she'll take us through the charter questions, A9 and A10.

ARIEL LIANG:

Thanks, Donna. Would you like to mention why we're skipping A8?

DONNA AUSTIN: A(is the question that relates to what other policies and things we've forgotten about. Is that the one, Ariel?

ARIEL LIANG: Yeah, catchall question?

DONNA AUSTIN: So we're skipping over the catchall question because it is a catchall question. And I think the idea is that if anything comes up during our discussions that we think fits into the A8 category, we'll park that somewhere. And then we'll come back to A8 later in our discussions. How much later, I'm not sure yet. But we didn't think it's a question we can answer now. So it's because of the catchall nature of it. So we will come back to A8 at a later time. Thanks for the reminder, Ariel.

ARIEL LIANG: No problem. Thank you, Donna, for the explanation. So now, I will help guide you through the context and background of charter question A9 and A10. And in fact, these two questions are related. So I'm displaying them together in one slide, just to read the word of the questions.

First, A9 is asking that a given internationalized domain label set may be in one of the following non exhaustive status: delegated, withheld same entity, blocked, allocated, rejected. The working group and the SubPro IRT to coordinate and develop a consistent

definition of variant label status in the IDL set. And then A10 is, what is the procedure to change the label status for individual variant labels? So these are the two questions.

First, we probably want to understand why these two questions are asked. So as you know that variant labels just like other non-IDN labels, they can take a range of possible status or states. And then there's actions that correspond to their status or states. In the variant management mechanism, it should include both the active use of labels as well as the preventions of labels from use in a DNS. So that's a kind of general point about status and states of the variant labels.

And the reason we're asking this question is because we need to develop some consistency in terms of understanding what these different label status mean, and then also use consistent terminology to define them. And if you recall, previously, we had this discussion about variants in general. So this term wasn't new, because in the 2012 rounds, there's those self-identified variants. But right now, we have clarified the terminology as variant, it's only variant if it's calculated by the RZ LGR. And everything else that's not calculated by the RZ LGR, such as alternative spelling, they shouldn't be called variant. So that's where we got consistent terminology. And we won't have misunderstanding when we refer to variants, what they are.

So this exercise is carried over here in order to develop consistent understanding of different variant state and label status, and in the future, when we refer to them, it will be the same across the board. So that's one important point, the why.

And then the second why is that the label status can result in different user experience and impact various stakeholders in the Internet ecosystem. So these are some of the stakeholders that we highlighted here, such as ICANN, registry operators, registrants, software developers, law enforcement, security, and end users. So these stakeholders, they will have different relations to the labels in different status. So for ICANN, as you know, it's the top level for sure. And the registered operators will be dealing with the operational side, managing these TLDs, the variant labels on the top level, and then registrants need to understand what can be registered and what can possibly be allocated to them but cannot be activated and what needs to be blocked. So when they register for domain names, they will have different relations to these labels based on their different status.

And then for the software developers, law enforcement and end users, they're mostly dealing with only the labels already delegated in the root zone. So the active use of these labels. So the labels, when they have different status, they will have different impact to the users across different stakeholder groups. So that's the second why we need to understand the status and then the impact.

And then the third why is regarding the stable and secure operation of the DNS, and to avoid failures regarding DNS resolution or inconsistent resolution. This is basically to uphold the mission of ICANN because when we have these variants, we probably have expectations how they will behave. But if we don't have a clear understanding of the status and how they transition from one status to another, it could result in inconsistent

performance that's different from an expectation and resulting surprises for users and can cause instability or irritation by different users. So that's why, for these reasons, we need to understand these two questions.

So for the possible status for variant labels, there are already some existing studies and reports that provided the idea that this EPDP team can work on. So the first initial study regarding [inaudible] suggestion for the label status come from the integrated issues report. It's a study of issues related to the management of IDN variants TLDs. And that was dated in February 2012. So it was a fairly old report published a decade ago.

In that report, it has provided some suggestions in terms of how the label status could be, and these are blocked, withheld, allocated, activated or active, delegated, and mirrored. So these are the initial list put forward by this report. And later, as you know, the staff have published a paper regarding the variant management mechanism. And that's a very recent report in January 2019. And much of this EPDP charter was developed based on the recommendations and suggestions from that report. So basically, this staff paper has further refined the label status by building on the earlier work done in the integrated issues report. And now the proposed list of status is blocked, withheld, same entity, rejected, allocated, and delegated. So if you recall, these five different label states or status are mentioned in the charter question as well.

It may be a little bit harsh to say these new list supersedes the previous list. But in actuality, because this is a much more recent

report and has been developed based on consideration of previous or earlier work and work later on as well, this EPDP working group should develop its own recommendation based on this latest list here. So that's why these are mentioned in the charter question.

And now let's just take a quick look at the proposed definition of these labels states in the staff paper. I'm not going to read everything on this slide, because then it could be quite technical. So I will just provide some kind of simplified way of explaining what they mean. So for blocked, as we already know, it's something calculated by RZ LGR. So it's a label, it is a variant label that is valid, according to RZ LGR. But it can never be delegated or allocated. So it's blocked. And that's something basically you cannot really dispute this status because it's calculated by RZ LGR. So that what's blocked means here.

And then for withheld, withheld same entity, it means a label is set aside for possible allocation only to the same entity of the other labels in the variant set. So this label status would probably need to consider the deliberation in later part of the charter regarding the same entity requirement. But what it really means is that there's a variant label, it's calculated at RZ LGR, it's valid, and it's allocatable. But the applicant didn't request to activate or delegate this label at all. So it's set aside for the same entity. And maybe in the future, it will become activated, but at the moment, it's withheld. So that's what's this label status mean.

And then for rejected, it's basically set aside on administrative grounds outside the ordinary LGR procedure. So what this means is that applicants applies for a variant label that is valid and it is

allocatable, according to the RZ LGR. However, in the application process, it didn't pass the evaluation procedure or process, because for example, there's another label already delegated in the root zone and looks confusingly similar to this variant label. So because it didn't pass those checks in the application process, it's rejected. And then automatically, it changed its own status to withheld same entity. So it's set aside, cannot be allocated. And it's basically just being there, but for the same entity to have, but cannot be activated. So that status kind of encompass both not approved and will not proceed application states in the gTLD rounds. So that's what the rejected status means.

And then for allocated, so basically, this represents the first step on the way to delegation in the DNS. So it means it's basically ready for delegation. So basically, this label is valid. And it's allocatable. And it's also passed all these different checks in the application review process, and nothing surprising happened, and then it's ready for activation. But when it's allocated doesn't mean it's activated yet. So only when it's delegated, which is the last state, that means a label is actually activated in the DNS, there's a name server attached to it and there's registry operators that will help manage it. So these are the basic definition [inaudible]. I heard some noise in the background. If you're not speaking, please mute. And I see a Donna has her hand up.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Keep going, Ariel, we'll come back to it.

ARIEL LIANG:

Okay. Sounds good. So these are the definitions included in the staff paper for your consideration. And there's also an example that helps illustrate how these different labels statuses are reflected. So here in this slide, you see there are a set of five labels, variant labels, they're calculated by RZ LGR as valid labels, and then the applicant requested three of them. So T1, and T1V1, and T1V4. So an applicant request to apply for these three labels. And then as the result T1, and T1V1 are delegated because first, they're allocatable based on the calculation of RZ LGR. Second, they're requested by the applicant for activation. And third, they passed all the other checks in the application procedure. So there are successively delegated.

But then the fate of the other three labels in our set are different. T1V2, it's blocked, because it is not allocatable based on the calculation of RZ LGR and it is not requested by the applicant, so it will be kept in the blocked state for that label. And then for T1V3, it is allocatable based on the RZ LGR calculation, but the applicant didn't request to activate this label as well at all, it didn't apply for this label. So that's why it's kept in the withheld same entity status for T1V3. And then for T1V4, the status is slightly complicated. So the applicant did request to activate this label. And the label also is locatable based on RZ LGR. But it has some issues with, for example, an existing delegated label that looks confusingly similar. So it didn't pass the evaluation process in that procedure, and that's why it's rejected. And once it's rejected, it's automatically placed in the withheld same entity label status. So basically, it has the same kind of status as T1V3. And this is sort of like an example of how the statuses actually work and how the labels are tagged, based on their status.

So as we just mentioned earlier, you can see that label can change from one status to another. So that's called the label stage transition path. And these are some of the possible paths suggested by the staff paper for the EPDP team to consider. So as you see, the first pass from blocked to withheld same entity, it is possible only when the LGR gets an update in the future, and broaden the available labels in the ideal sets. And in that scenario, the staff paper believe the label transition will become automatic. So a blocked label will automatically become withheld same entity if an RZ LGR is updated and broaden the availability for these labels.

And then the second path, rejected to withheld same entity. As mentioned earlier, every rejected label is automatically withheld same entity, as suggested by the staff paper. If this rejected status comes off, the label can be handled as any other withheld same entity label. So that's what's illustrated in the previous slide for one of these variant labels.

And then the third path, from withheld same entity to allocate. So that means an applicant apply to activate that withheld same entity label. And this change happens if the variant was not initially requested for allocation, but later is. And so that's another path.

The fourth path, from allocated to delegated. And that means when the name servers are added, so basically, a label is activated. But then there's also another path from delegated back to allocated, it means the domain, a top level is removed from the DNS and the allocation can remain in place. This happened in the past, but it's very, very rare.

So as you can see, these are some of the possible transitions from one label state to another. And another thing I want to emphasize is that for blocked withheld same entity and allocated labels, they're mutually exclusive. So an allocated but withheld same entity label can never become blocked, because what is blocked is determined by RZ LGR.

So just to wrap up, based on the context and information presented earlier, what are we asking really for this charter question is for a A9, do you agree with the label states and their definitions as proposed in the staff paper? If you do not agree, what do you think is missing and what do you think is misdefined? So those are the things for the EPDP team to consider. And for A10, what it's actually asking is, do you agree with the label state transitions from the states defined in the staff paper? So do you see there's anything illogical based on the paths that you saw on the previous slide? Is there anything missing? So basically, we already have some existing work done and now we are hoping to get your input and feedback on whether you agree with these proposed recommendations will work, and whether you think there's anything that's wrong or missing that need to be further fleshed out by the team. So this is a kind of general presentation of the background context for these two questions. And back to you, Donna.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Ariel. And thanks again for pulling together the background slides and the context, which is really helpful to this discussion. I just wanted to call out that these two questions were intended that the working group and the SubPro IRT would

coordinate to develop a consistent definition of the variant label status. We all know that there is no SubPro IRT yet to be stood up, because the SubPro recommendations are yet to be approved by the Board. So we're kind of going ahead without really—we're making assumptions really about what the SubPro IRT's thinking would be on this as well.

And I think the one that stood out for me is probably rejected, because the rejected state is kind of based on—I only can assume that this is based on the rules from 2012 new gTLD process and assumptions about what would happen in future new gTLD rounds. I don't think there's any wrong assumptions in there. I think it's reasonably sound. But I just wanted to call that out. I know that it's quite a bit to kind of take the time to review the definitions that Ariel has up on the screen there, but are there any first thoughts from folks on what Ariel has presented? Anil and then Dennis.

ANIL JAIN:

Thank you, Donna. I just want to know, this is the definition from the staff paper. Do we have any other definition or any variation in these definitions, either from ccNSO or from GNSO? Any input on this? Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Very good question and I don't know the answer to that. Ariel, do you know, or Sarmad who's on the call with you? Oh, maybe Edmon knows the answer.

ARIEL LIANG: Maybe I'd let Dennis or Edmon go ahead before I chime in.

DENNIS TAN: Thank you, Ariel. First, I just want to say kudos to Ariel and staff leadership would put in these very useful slides. It's a dry subject, and you have put it in a very useful and consumable way. Second, I think Donna, you correctly stated this was supposed to be looked at in conjunction with the SubPro IRT, which doesn't exist today. So that made me think, the idea of these labels states, and I think it's comprehensive, but I just wanted to put out there for completeness and make sure that we are including this in our thought processes. It's not only for variant sets, but if SubPro is to also adopt certain label states, if you will, for those single TLDs, the TLDs that don't have any variants at all, and how would those states play out in those cases? And I think at that point, it would be or in that case, it would be only whether it's the applied for, and then either it's allocated, delegated, or rejected at some point, right? So I think it applies.

The other thing that comes to mind—again, this is just for the sake of our thought process and putting things out there. One of the trigger events that I think of can change from delegation to allocation, delegated to allocated. The reverse way is where essentially there is a change on service provider and one service provider which originally supported variants at the top level, the gaining service provider is not willing to support the variant sets and therefore chooses to not activate or not continue supporting one. In that case, one of those TLDs in the set will need to go back from delegation to allocation, if you will. But again, that would

be a trigger event that maybe we want to capture it somewhere.
Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Dennis, can you expand a little bit on that last point? Because I think I understand what you're saying if it was at the second level. But I just wonder, if we're talking about a variant at the top level, that's a different situation. Because I guess in my mind, that's taking the TLD—Or maybe I've got this wrong, but that will be taking the TLD out of the group, if the RSP couldn't ...

DENNIS TAN:

Yeah. So let me try to paraphrase—and I was referring just to top level TLD level, which obviously have consequences to the second level, if there are second level domain names activated in those TLDs. But I mean thus far, variant TLDs, at least in gTLDs, there are no variant TLDs. There is no example, prior experience on this one. But what we know is that TLDs go from one registry operator to another and by extension service provider to another service provider.

So I see possible that a registry operator that was managing a set of TLD variants, then no longer wants to operate that and transitions to another service provider or another registry operator but this registry operator no longer wants to manage variants because of complexity or the market needs or what have you, right, something along those lines.

And so what happens with that TLD that was a delegated and he doesn't want to manage the complexity of activating variants in

both TLDs but he just wants to manage one? Right, so that one's delegated, he no longer wants, would need to go back again to an allocated state or even all the way to withheld to the same entity. So that goes into reverse, taking a TLD out of the root zone, and all the way to just [inaudible] a state of withheld to the same entity. I would just put in that potential case that can happen in the future.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay, thanks, Dennis. So I think that's a really interesting example. And we may have some different views on that. We haven't answered Anil's question yet whether there are similar definitions in the ccNSO or anywhere else. So I just wonder, Edmon or Sarmad, can you answer that question?

EDMON CHUNG: I guess we can start and we'll look to Sarmad to add to it. Yeah, so I did put up my hand in a little bit response to Anil's question. But if you roll back, I think to slide four, that should give you—yes, this is the one. So I guess in terms of ccTLDs and gTLDs. The integrated issues report was a larger community that included CCs and Gs. And that was a little while back in 2012, as Ariel mentioned, and I echo Dennis's comment to Ariel, great work with the slides and presentation.

EDMON CHUNG: So originally, the community looked at six types of statuses and you can see that in 2019, the staff I think consolidated a few of them looking at activated, delegated and mirrored to really consolidate that into delegated. And then the rejected one is added to think through the situation whereby string similarity

reviews and stuff might cause a particular allocatable variant to no longer be allocatable unless certain things happen. So I think, from what I understand, these are the two lists of statuses, the original one from the community that's a little bit more expanded a consolidated one that staff has suggested in 2019. So hopefully that adds a response a little bit to Anil's question.

But then I have a couple things I wanted to add. So first of all, I think the staff approach, the direction is good. But I would suggest actually to consolidate further. I think allocated is, if you look at these five, allocated is really a transitional or temporary state. That should be a sub status under withheld same entity, and it's going through a [particular] process.

And I think Ariel's next slide, slide six explains it perfectly. The slide six, as you can see, in real cases, allocated doesn't really make sense. It make sense, but it's not necessary. It's something that is in between withheld same entity and delegated. And slide seven explains that a little bit better. So you would go from something that's allocatable which is withheld same entity, and through allocated into delegated or back to withheld same entity from delegated to allocated and withheld same entity.

So I think we can further consolidate it for our purposes so that it's even clearer, what we're talking about, because allocated is really just a little star based on the withheld same entity, that it's gone through some ICANN process so to speak. So I would suggest that we can further consolidate it.

So the final thing is in response to Dennis's suggestion, I think that's a good discussion to have. But on the concept of the states

or the statuses, that's probably not something that we need to consider. Again, it's something that is delegated, and then it might need to go through some transition again. As I said, there's some transition, it's some transitional state, where a registry wants to sunset a particular variant. And I think some of the considerations for sunsetting an entire TLD would be in play, maybe those who are utilizing that need to be informed and given time through certain processes and certain time before a variant TLD that was delegated gets deprecated and go back to withheld same entity state.

So I don't think the specific A9—certainly A9 is not so relevant, but A10 may be that it needs to go through some process, but that's some process. I don't know whether it would be A10 or some later discussion that we talk about the exact process for doing that, but I think it's useful to point out that that is a possibility. So hopefully, those three things are useful for the discussions.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Edmon. I think that's really helpful. I wonder with your suggestion on kind of rolling up allocated into withheld same entity, I'm just curious as to what others think about that because sometimes a little bit more information helps to take away ambiguity. So interested to see what others think about Edmon's suggestion to roll allocated into withheld same entity.

With the delegated and back to allocated status, I think that's a bigger discussion that we need to have. I know that in the deck Ariel has, rare, but not new. So I'd like to understand what those rare cases are so we've got a bit of context to that discussion,

particularly along the lines of what Dennis's suggested. So I think we've got Sarmad and then Hadia.

SARMAD HUSSAIN:

Thank you, Donna. I have at least two different comments, one on the states, and then one on, I think something which Dennis has raised. So as far as the original question on these states was concerned, as also, Edmon pointed out that there was some earlier work, there's also been other terms which have been used, for example, we talked about synchronized TLDs in the ccTLD space. Bundling was also one of the terms which was used, which looks at technical solutions similarly as mirrored. And eventually, over the last many years, the technical community has gone through it and decided that there is no technical solution for this. And so eventually, when we did this staff paper, we were looking at the current state and trying to simplify as well as obviously not trying to capture the technical side of things, except of course, I think delegated, which is a well understood concept.

So, at least what we did was we looked at earlier, I guess, relevant terms and then suggested a set of terms which of course, seemed to represent the different states which could be possible. In terms of allocated, basically, I guess it is certainly transitional from gTLD side, because I guess one could think of it as that the contract, for example, has been signed with a registry, but the delegation has not happened. So that is, for example, a time when basically, you could say that a string is allocated, but not actually delegated.

It also actually applies in the CC space, where the country code top level domains concretely go through two processes. There is a string evaluation step, I'm talking about IDN ccTLD fast track process. It goes actually through a string evaluation process, after which actually the string, once the IDN ccTLD goes through the string evaluation process, it is announced that the string has been evaluated successfully. And that's a clear, I guess, milestone which can't be kind of called withheld same entity, it is actually a clear allocation of the string to the ccTLD.

And then, after that step, then the country code ccTLD manager goes into the delegation phase and eventually gets a delegation done. But that may or may not be immediate. So in some cases we've seen it can take actually multiple years from going from allocation to delegation, at least in the ccTLD space. I'm not really sure—I don't have numbers for the gTLD side.

And since this whole framework is designed for not just gTLDs but also for ccTLDs, the allocation step actually does represent a significant milestone, at least on the ccTLD side, and I guess to some extent on the gTLD side as well. So that was my first comment.

In response to Dennis's comment, I think in the current stage, going from delegated variant back to allocated variant may not actually, at least my understanding is that at this time, that is not a straightforward process. Because if a variant gets undelegated, it would likely go to EBERO. And when it goes to EBERO, it actually takes all the other variants with it because of same entity requirement.

So if the working group thinks that one variant actually can be undelegated without other variants getting undelegated, I think that's a much larger discussion which the working group probably could have and decide whether that fragmentation is possible or not possible. But I don't want to, I guess, say more on it. That's something which potentially could be discussed and decided by the working group. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Sarmad. So if I can just pick up on the allocated piece and the fact that it does have meaning for ccTLDs. I wonder whether—I think I accept that we need to be cautious about the idea of rolling allocated up into withheld same entity as Edmond suggested, but I think there's also a secondary thing that you've identified here, is that it does have meaning for the ccTLD fast track process. So, is that consistent for what we're considering here from effectively a gTLD process as well? So thanks for raising that. Ariel, did you want to respond to something that's been said? I might bump you up, and then we'll come back to Hadia.

ARIEL LIANG:

Thanks, Donna. Actually, I have some clarification regarding this flow charter, two points, I'd like to clarify. But if we want to stay on what is being discussed right now, I can wait after Hadia.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Okay. So Hadia, go ahead?

HADIA ELMINIAWI:

Thank you so much. If we can go back to the previous slide. For me, I see two different positions. One, you have a string label. A string label could take one of several values, which could be— maybe the slide before that. So a string label could take one of several values, regardless of the entity to which it is related to. So a string label could have a value of blocked, allocatable, valid, invalid. So those are our status for strings. Those are values that the string can take.

And then the string also could take a value or a status in relation to a certain entity. And I think those are two different things. So if I'm evaluating a string using the tool, I could do that, you could do that, anyone could do that. And it's still not related to any of us. And it could take any state, it could take any value. So any one of us could evaluate a string and it comes out as a allocatable, as invalid, as valid, but it does not relate to any one of us. But if I am applying as an entity for a string, that's a different thing.

Donna is saying allocated and allocatable. Yes. And that's the point. And I think we need to have both. You need to have a value for a string which is not related to anyone, and a status for a string that is related to someone or to an entity. And I guess here comes the difference between withheld to a same entity and allocated. So I do think we do need to have a value called allocatable which is different than allocated to some entity. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Hadia. So I think what you've uncovered here is similar words with quite different meanings. So, I think that's something we need to be cognizant of. Ariel, and then Anil.

ARIEL LIANG: Thanks, Donna. I just want to make two clarifications with regard to label state transitions. So one about withheld same entity, this label state, I just want to mention that even earlier I said, we have a charter question that deals with the same entity requirement. But if you recall, SubPro already has put forward recommendations for same energy requirement for future gTLDs. So this label basically kind of makes sense for future gTLDs even though this EPDP team hasn't gone to that section yet. But based on what SubPro proposed, this seems to be a good one to consider. And this group is going to consider the same entity requirements' implication for existing gTLDs. So we can go back and discuss this label state in the context of existing gTLDs later on. So this is the first clarification.

And the second clarification is the label transition from rejected to withheld same entity, even though it was mentioned that rejected label is automatically withheld same entity, but it's actually not so automatic, because a rejected status can be kept there until the ground for rejection is removed. So for example, if there's a variant TLD that's allocatable and it's also applied for by the applicant, but didn't pass the evaluation process due to confusing similarity to a delegated label for another one, then it will stay rejected. But if the other label for some reason get undelegated, then the ground for rejection is gone. Then in that case, the rejected state will transition to withheld same entity state, because

it can become a candidate for future allocation due to there's no more competition or contention with regard to that label. So I just want to clarify that this stage transition, path two, is not automatic, per se, it's kind of based on certain conditions that are removed. Hopefully that makes sense.

DONNA AUSTIN: I understand what you're saying. But it makes for a very complicated process. But I hear what you're saying. So and now back to you, Anil.

ANIL JAIN: Thank you Donna. This is based on what Sarmad has briefed about the status of various words which are used for this allocation. I just want one question again from Sarmad, whether the synchronized or bundled or [inaudible] used, which were used in different places, are they still in use, or they are removed? So this is one question which I want to ask from Sarmad.

The second, I may be introducing more confusion in the discussion which is already being held. I personally feel that withheld same entity is allocatable, not allocated. So, once a process of delegation started from withheld to delegation, then in between, allocated process comes. But till the process is not done and it is in the static stage, that withheld same entity can be called as allocatable. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Anil. So, Sarmad.

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Thank you, Donna. Just to very quickly respond to Anil. So, synchronized is still applicable, because there are two pairs of IDN ccTLDs which were delegated as synchronized TLDs through Board resolution. So, that remains in practice. And I guess that's being discussed by the ccNSO as well. As far as bundling is concerned and mirroring is concerned, those have been used in the past in the technical context. One could potentially use it, but I guess we don't use that because as I explained, there is no clear technical implementation for variant TLDs. So initially, there were some attempts and some wording was being used to describe it. But eventually, I guess at some point, the technical community came to the conclusion that there was no solution. So I think in some cases, that seems to be abundant. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Sarmad. So I have a couple of questions based on the discussion. Dennis, I think you're the liaison to the ccNSO work. And Anil, you're the backward liaison to here. The label states, is that something that the ccNSO is considering for cc IDNs?

DENNIS TAN: We haven't discussed this question yet. It's upcoming.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. All right. Do we need to be cognizant in this discussion that we are only talking about gTLDs? And that's a general question for this group. So I think it will be easier for our discussion if we're

just talking about gTLDs, because the processes are different to applying for a new gTLD than the IDN fast track as I understand it. So, do we need to be clear here that what we're talking about is gTLDs? Edmon.

EDMON CHUNG:

Thank you. In quick response to your question, I think in this particular group, it's probably good to stay within the scope of gTLD. However, that's what the liaisons are here and there for. And this, I do think is something that we should have some common ground, if not complete identical. So I think this is something that we should definitely coordinate.

This brings me to an earlier question that you have as well. You talked about the SubPro IRT and that it's not existent right now. It's good to raise that, although I think when we did the charter, we also understood that even if—the point is that this group should not wait for the SubPro IRT and the other way around as well. So I just want make sure people understand that we don't need to wait for that, either.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Yeah, thanks, Edmon. There was an update to the GNSO Council, I think, on the last Council call and we called it out that some of the charter questions do assume that the SubPro IRT is in place and operating. We acknowledge that's not the case. It's not going to hold up our work. But it may impact some of our assumptions or means that we have to identify some of our assumptions. So we're not going to hold up our work, because we could be holding it up

for a very long time. But we do recognize that we just like to be—I don't know—dutiful and call out that we're moving ahead regardless, but just call it out that we're making assumptions that sometimes we need to fill a void that's not there, because it's subprime. Sarmad.

SARMAD HUSSAIN:

I think when the TLD states were being designed, as you can probably appreciate, they are done from a perspective of TLD, I guess, without distinguishing between gTLD and ccTLD. And so I think that's one reason why this is here, the allocated state, but even for I wanted to say that gTLDs, it is still applicable because withheld same entity does require an explicit application even for gTLDs to allocate it before it is delegated. So I guess saying that something which is withheld for same entity can go directly for delegation, I guess one would probably still need to explain that that transition will require an application. So I guess having this, even if it's seemingly a transitional state for gTLDs, if that can bring, I guess, an explicit step out and also make it consistent with the ccTLD where this is a very significant step for IDN ccTLDs, I think that may actually help things consistent as well as more explicit. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Sarmad. And I think that is a very common sense and practical approach. Hadia.

HADIA ELMINIAWI: Okay, thank you. My question is really related to what Sarmad just said, because I was thinking that maybe a withheld same entity string can never become allocated. And my question was to Sarmad, if this actually happened, do you have a withheld same entity string that is never allocated? And from what Sarmad just said, it seems that it is possible if the entity never puts in an application in order to change the status of a string from withheld to allocated, that it could stay withheld and never move to allocate it in order to move to the delegated status. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Hadia. Sarmad, did you have a response to that?

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Right. So yes, a string can actually stay with the same entity indefinitely until it's applied for of course. And there eventually, it's a very likely scenario, because there may be multiple variants for some strings. And only very few of them will eventually be delegated, and many of them will just remain withheld for the same entity. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks. I'd like to welcome Jeff Neuman to the call. Jeff, you put a question in chat. Did you want to—maybe not in a position to speak, but if you can.

JEFF NEUMAN: Yes. Sorry. I'm in a hotel room. So I think we should look at this from as well, like, people that do research on the strings, right? And so if I'm looking to apply for a string, and I just see the term, okay withheld same entity, the next obvious question is, okay, well, what is this string a variant of that's already been delegated? And the second question is, who is that same entity? I suppose if you know the first answer of what it's a variant of, you can look it up. But I guess my question is, is there a way, from looking at the statuses, that one could then take the next step and figure out who that same entity is and/or what that string is a variant of?

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Jeff, I see Sarmad has his hand up.

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Thank you, Donna. So just a very quick response to Jeff. Yes, that would be possible, right? That is just an operational matter. So if you think this is going to be useful, for example, you could even include an implementation guidance to ICANN to just implement the tool that way. But TLD is associated with the entity, and that information is available in the IANA repository. So you could actually look up the TLD and look at who it's assigned to.

And as far as a particular withheld string is concerned, we can make a small program which can—you put in a string, it will calculate what are the variant sets, and if it's withheld to the same entity, it can find out which is the delegated variant or set of variants and may make that information available. So we can do that. If you think that's a useful thing to have, you may even want

to call out. It's not directly available right now. One could obviously infer that by using the existing LGR tool online. But we can add on this function functionality as well, if needed. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Sarmad. So when you say add on—well, actually, it doesn't matter how long it would take. If others think this is something that we could raise as an implementation guidance issue, then that would be the way to respond to it, I guess. Okay, so there's some discussion about—Edmon, we've got a bit of time. So if we want to have a bit of discussion about this as a conversation rather than me trying to unpack the chat.

EDMON CHUNG:

Happy to jump in. I guess Jeff asked how we do it. And as Sarmad said, the tool that calculates the variants is a useful one. I don't disagree, I think the tool to generate the variants would allow you to generate back and forth what the variants might be, and you can figure it out. But I also think, Donna, you would remember, just before I transitioned to my status right now, I raised it to the leadership group that there's a missing question to think about the IANA database or the IANA WHOIS depending on how you want to call it, and consider how it needs to tell people what the variants are and their respective statuses. And also what happens if you search for the variants, what will come back? And will it tell you the primary TLD? That set of questions seems to be missing. I'm not blaming Dennis on the work in the charter, because I was in the charter working group as well, but it seems like we missed that

particular question. And I agree with Jeff that that is an important question and that this group should work on.

I note that there is a catchall question later on that we can deal with this issue. And we definitely need to deal with this issue. So that's what I guess I would like to add. And I think it's useful to be able to figure it out, not just using the tool because the tool just generates the variants blindly, you wouldn't have the nuances of whether it's rejected, whether it's allocated, what status the TLD label might be in. So I would think that some way of indicating that, whether it's the IANA WHOIS or how the IANA WHOIS might work is something that we should think through.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Okay, thanks. So I think we pick this up. We do have a parking lot. We can add that to the parking lot. And maybe it falls into A8, which is a bit of a catchall. But I guess what I'm not connecting the dots on here is the relevance of that to what we're discussing here about the possible label states and the definitions. So my brain hasn't connected those dots. So if someone could connect it for me, that'd be great. Jeff.

JEFF NEUMAN:

The reason why it was connected in my mind is because of who does the research to care about what the labels are? And I still find myself going back to New gTLD program or whatever that site was that lists the states of each of the applications. And so it's important, not just because we're trying to define terms, but it's

important because of those that will look at these terms and should understand what they mean.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. I'm still not there yet, but I'm sure I'll get there once I have a bit of time to review and think about this a little bit more. but I think regardless, we have picked this up as a question or an issue that we need to discuss and respond to, so we won't lose it. Hadia.

HADIA ELMINIAWI: Thank you, Donna. Just one more question in relation to withheld. So, how can you get to the status of withheld by the same entity? Do you put in an application, do you pay some money? And so, what does it really entail to move to withheld by the same entity? So, as Sarmad explained, to move from withheld by the same entity to allocated, you need to put in an application. But before that, what do you need? What needs really to happen? Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Sarmad.

SARMAD HUSSAIN: So basically, for having some labels in the withheld for same entity, you have to apply for at least one TLD label. And if you get that allocated to you, then its variants will be assigned to you as an entity. So the first condition is that you have to have at least

one TLD application. And that will allow its variants to be withheld to same entity through that particular application. Thank you.

HADIA ELMINIAWI:

And then my understanding is that if you want to move that, any of the variants from withheld to allocated, then you put in an application for that specific variant in order to move it to allocated, which then moves to delegated. So to me, honestly speaking, I do think that we need that status to exist. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Hadia. And of course, notwithstanding that we haven't addressed that issue of—I think it's question A4 or A5 about whether the number of variant labels that can be applied for should be kept small. So that's still an outstanding item for us. And I might be a little bit confused here. But Jeff, the same entity issue was dealt with by the SubPro. But we need to have a conversation here about existing TLDs. So that's something that we'll get to at some point.

Okay, so Edmon, sometime back in the chat here, you had identified maybe there are some—you suggested a kind of schema with regard to withheld same entity. Did you want to speak to that?

EDMON CHUNG:

Sure, I'll quickly point out. Again, I would also add that I don't feel strongly about it and I look to the group to determine the final outcome. But I think, if you look at it, and Sarmad has agreed,

right, the withheld same entity essentially means it's allocatable based on the root zone LGR. So you have blocked and allocatable.

So if you change the word have withheld same entity, it's actually allocatable as a result of the root zone LGR. Once you have that, then you could go into a situation where it's withheld same entity, and then bracket, it was rejected for some reason. And then you could also have a situation where it's withheld same entity, but bracket, it's allocated, it's gone through some process, or you can have withheld same entity and it's unknown. It's just allocatable in that sense.

So what we'd really end up with is three overarching states: blocked, allocatable, and then delegated. So in that case, then to me, that's a little bit cleaner. And as an overall schema, it maps better to the to the root zone LGR concept of blocked and allocatable. And I think—although Hadia is saying something different, I note the difference, but I think it actually would clarify the issue for her better because then it maps perfectly with blocked and allocatable. But inside allocatable, there could be rejected, allocated, and then it transitions into a status of delegated once it's in the DNS.. So that's sort of my suggestion, but again, my brain thinks of it that way. But I'm quite open to representing it in other forms as well.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Edmon. Does anyone else have any thoughts about Edmon's proposition? Sarmad.

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Thank you. So, in essence, I think what Edmon is saying and what is on the screen here, I potentially see that as identical. It's just that we still have these five boxes, we're just giving them different labels. So at the end of the day, it's still five boxes. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay, thanks, Sarmad. I think there's a principle here to try to keep this reasonably simple and an easy for people to understand. I think back to Ariel's first slide about the reasons for having consistent label states is it's not just for one purpose, it's for a number of different users. So to keep this as clean and clear as possible is important.

We've only got four minutes left to this call and I just wanted to come back if I could do that delegated back to allocatable state. What I'm struggling with here is I'd like to understand what that rare situation was. Because in my mind, regardless of whether the TLD is a variant or not, if it's been delegated and it's actively in use, and there are registrations, it's not an easy thing to take away. So I just want to try to understand where that rare case is and how that was managed, because I think this is tied up in potentially a bigger policy question, but maybe I'm overthinking.

So, Ariel, in box five, you've got, "rare in the root zone, but not new." I'd like to understand what that is.

ARIEL LIANG: Actually, I had the same question when I read the staff papers. So I Googled. And what I learned is that there are some ccTLDs that were removed from the root zone before, like .yu, .tp. Is it .tp? I'm not sure. But there's some ccTLDs that were removed. So this happened before, but I'm not sure in the gTLD space, whether there was a removal. Oh, yes. There's a retired TLD situation. So yeah, that's probably what this counting tells.

DONNA AUSTIN: Yeah. So the ccNSO has spent a lot of time working on that retired TLD issue. And it's not simple. And I think there's a bigger policy question here. I don't think it's easy to go from delegated back to allocated. So that's something we need to give some thought to so. So I understand what Dennis was saying about if there's a change from an RSP and the RSP or the entity may not want to have the variants anymore, but it still has to be a process because you can, I guess, decide that you don't want to do that. But to actually take it out of the root, that's quite a bit of work. And I don't think that a process actually exists at the moment for gTLDs. But I could be wrong.

Okay, so we're at time. I think this has been a good conversation and it gives us a start to pull recommendations together based on the discussion. And I don't think it's too inconsistent with what Ariel has laid out for us, just some nuances and perhaps a little bit more work might be required. But I just want to thank everybody for their participation so far this year, to Edmon for kicking this off back in August, I guess. And Dennis, before that, with the work on developing the charter. I think we're off to a little bit of a slow start. But I think we've made some good headway in the last couple of

calls. And sincere thanks to Ariel—and I know Sarmad is doing a lot of work in the background with assisting with the great work that Ariel does in providing this context and background to these discussions, which I think we couldn't have these discussions without it. So thank you, everybody. Stay safe over the holiday season, and our aim is to be back around the 6th of January. So thanks, everybody.

DEVAN REED:

Thank you all for joining. Once again, the meeting has adjourned. I will end the recording and disconnect all remaining lines. Have a wonderful holiday.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]