Expedited Policy Development Process: Internationalized Domain Names

WHAT CAN I EXPECT AT ICANN79 RELATED TO THIS TOPIC?

The EPDP Team tentatively plans to conduct one working session at ICANN79, pending progress on its Phase 2 Initial Report. Please check the **ICANN79 meeting schedule** for the confirmed time. If the session is to be held, the EPDP Team will work toward finalizing its Phase 2 Initial Report for Public Comment, covering preliminary recommendations pertaining to second level variant management. If the Phase 2 Initial Report is ready for Public Comment around the ICANN79 timeframe, the working session may be canceled.
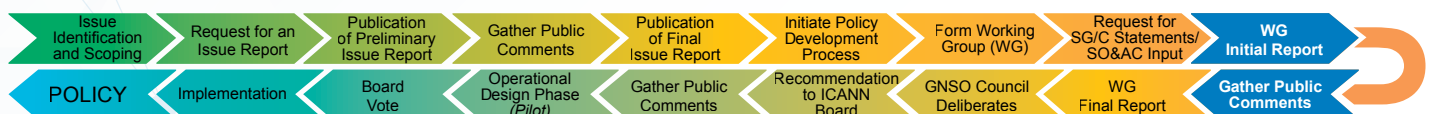
WHAT IS THIS ABOUT?

On 20 May 2021, the GNSO Council approved the **initiation request** for the EPDP on Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) and adopted its **charter**. The EPDP Team is expected to:

- Determine the approach for a consistent definition of all gTLDs; and

- Develop policy recommendations that will eventually allow for the introduction of variant gTLDs at the top level.

The charter includes 48 questions under seven broader topics, ranging from the "same entity" requirement at the top and second levels, to adjustments to ICANN policies and procedures as they relate to IDNs. The EPDP Team has been conducting its deliberations by building on the existing body of policy work, research, and analysis on the IDNs, specifically the Outputs produced by the GNSO New gTLD Subsequent Procedures PDP. (**Learn More**)

WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATUS OF THIS PROJECT?

The EPDP Team began meeting in August 2021. During its deliberations, the EPDP Team considered the **early written input** on topics in its charter from the Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO), GNSO's Registries Stakeholder Group (RySG), and the Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC). To ensure a consistent solution for variant TLDs is being developed, the EPDP Team monitors the activities in the ccNSO's ccPDP4 on the (de-)selection of IDN ccTLD Strings. The EPDP Team and the ccPDP4 periodically hold joint sessions to discuss their preliminary recommendations, compare similarities, and understand the differences.

Issue Identification and Scoping	Request for an Issue Report	Publication of Preliminary Issue Report	Gather Public Comments	Publication of Final Issue Report	Initiate Policy Development Process	Form Working Group (WG)	Request for SG/C Statements/ SO&AC Input	WG Initial Report
POLICY	Implementation	Board Vote	Operational Design Phase *(Pilot)*	Gather Public Comments	Recommendation to ICANN Board	GNSO Council Deliberates	WG Final Report	Gather Public Comments

In November 2022, the GNSO Council approved the **project change request** from the EPDP Team. It will complete its work in two phases. Phase 1 focuses on topics related to top-level IDN gTLD definition and variant management and Phase 2 focuses on topics related to second level IDN variant management. The EPDP Team believes that this two-phased approach will help prioritize the current implementation planning for the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures (SubPro) PDP Outputs that are focused primarily on the top level.

On 16 March 2023, the ICANN Board requested the EPDP Team to deliver an updated project plan by the end of ICANN77 that identified all charter questions that will impact the next Applicant Guidebook (AGB). During ICANN77, the GNSO Council submitted to the ICANN Board the requested **deliverable**, including the EPDP Team's project plan, which stated that nearly all of its charter questions may have an impact on the next AGB and its two-phased approach remained unchanged. On 25 July 2023, the GNSO Council submitted a **revised timeline** from the EPDP Team after it considered several factors. While there was no change to the timeline for delivering the Phase 1 Final Report by November 2023, the EPDP Team shortened the Phase 2 timeline by 13 months, with the estimated delivery date of the Phase 2 Final Report in October 2024.

On 24 April 2023, the EPDP Team published its Phase 1 Initial Report for **Public Comment**, which was closed on 19 June 2023. The EPDP Team received input from **twelve (12) submissions**, which did not raise any significant concerns or new issues that the EPDP Team had not previously considered.[1] On 8 November 2023, the EPDP Team submitted its **Phase 1 Final Report** to the GNSO Council in accordance with its project plan. The Final Report includes 69 recommendations, most of which strive to operationalize SubPro PDP Outputs to allow for future applications of gTLD variant labels through the New gTLD Program. The GNSO Council **approved** the report during its meeting on 21 December 2023 and submitted its **recommendations report** to assist the ICANN Board for its consideration of the Phase 1 Final Report. As mandated by the ICANN Bylaws, a **Public Comment** period was opened on 23 January 2024 for the Phase 1 Final Report to seek input in aiding the Board's consideration of the recommendations.

With respect to the Phase 2 work, from 6–8 December 2023, the EPDP Team held a dedicated face-to-face workshop in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to expedite its deliberations. During the workshop, the EPDP Team completed initial deliberation of all remaining Phase 2 charter questions, as well as additional issues and topics slated for discussion. Since January 2024, the EPDP Team has been finalizing its preliminary recommendations for inclusion in its Phase 2 Initial Report in preparation for Public Comment.

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[1]The EPDP Team sought guidance from the GNSO Council with regard to four submissions related to the ".québec" string. The GNSO Council **agreed** with the EPDP Team's assessment that those comments were outside the scope for the EPDP to address.

WHAT ARE THE EXPECTED NEXT STEPS?

The EPDP Team aims to publish its Phase 2 Initial Report for Public Comment around the ICANN79 timeframe.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

Since the EPDP Team has completed most of its work and passed several significant milestones, those interested in this topic are welcome to contribute input through Public Comment opportunities, including those for the Phase 2 Initial Report and the Phase 1 Final Report. Those interested are also able to follow the EPDP Team's progress by signing up as observers.

MORE INFORMATION

- **EPDP Phase 1 Initial Report Public Comment**

- **EPDP webpage**

- **EPDP workspace**

RESPONSIBLE STAFF: Ariel Liang, Steve Chan, Daniel Gluck, Saewon Lee