Dear Cherine,

This letter requests guidance from the ICANN Board concerning its views related to dependencies, if any, between the Name Collision Analysis Project (NCAP) and the ongoing policy work of the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures PDP.

In performing its role of process manager for GNSO policy work, the GNSO Council has been asked by the leadership of the Subsequent Procedures PDP Working Group to inquire and investigate what these dependencies, if any, might be, to better understand the ICANN Board's view, and if necessary, any further views from the Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC).

As you are aware, the ICANN Board passed a resolution on 2 November 2017 requesting that the SSAC conduct a study to provide advice to the Board regarding the risks posed to users and end systems if .CORP, .HOME, .MAIL strings were to be delegated in the root, as well as possible courses of action that might mitigate the identified risks. Further, at that time, the Board sought advice on questions that include, but are not limited to, the following:

(1) a proper definition for name collision and the underlying reasons why strings that manifest name collisions are so heavily used;

(2) the role that negative answers currently returned from queries to the root for these strings play in the experience of the end user, including in the operation of existing end systems;

(3) the harm to existing users that may occur if Collision Strings were to be delegated, including harm due to end systems no longer receiving a negative response and additional potential harm if the delegated registry accidentally or purposely exploited subsequent queries from these end systems, and any other types of harm;

(4) possible courses of action that might mitigate harm;

(5) factors that affect potential success of the courses of actions to mitigate harm;

(6) potential residual risks of delegating Collision Strings even after taking actions to mitigate harm;

(7) suggested criteria for determining whether an undelegated string should be considered a string that manifest name collisions, (i.e.) placed in the category of a Collision String;

(8) suggested criteria for determining whether a Collision String should not be delegated, and suggested criteria for determining how remove an undelegated string from the list of Collision Strings; and

(9) measures to protect against intentional or unintentional creation of situations, such as queries for undelegated strings, which might cause such strings to be placed in a Collision String category, and research into risk of possible negative effects, if any, of creation of such a collision string list.

Following that 02 November 2017 resolution, the SSAC delivered a proposed plan to the ICANN Board in September 2018 that detailed three sequential studies.  The ICANN Board's technical committee then engaged with ICANN Org's Office of Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) to review next steps.  OCTO presented the Board Technical Committee (BTC) with an assessment that a survey and summary of previous research on name collisions would be valuable and refined the scope of the SSAC's proposed Study 1 on Understanding the Current State of Name Collisions. As defined at that time, the revised Study 1 has three goals:

> 1) examine all prior work on the issue of name collisions and produce a summary report that brings forward important knowledge from prior work into this study, and which can act as a primer for those new to the subject;

> 2) create a list of results of the data used in past studies, identify gaps, if any, and list additional data that would be required to successfully two additional identified studies; and

> 3) provide information necessary to decide if the NCAP should proceed to further studies based on the results of the survey of prior work and the availability of data.

The GNSO Council notes in particular the following language in the Board's 14 March 2019 resolution approving the initiation of the NCAP Study 1:

> The Board is taking this action today for two reasons. First, OCTO's work on the NCAP has proceeded to a point where a study has been sufficiently scoped to be carried out. Second, **there is potential interdependency between the outcomes of the name collision studies on the next round of New gTLDs**, particularly in gaining more information on the ability to delegate strings that overlap in the public and private namespaces.

The GNSO Council also notes that ICANN Org has yet to announce the selection of a vendor/supplier to conduct NCAP Study 1, which could have an impact on the timing of the work of the Subsequent Procedures PDP WG if dependencies exist.

In light of the above, and the fact the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Working Group is currently and actively addressing the subject of Name Collisions, the GNSO Council formally requests the ICANN Board's further views on: (1) the subject of dependencies between the NCAP and the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures policy work (if any); and (2) by when must those dependencies be addressed?  The GNSO Council notes that there are a number of milestones to complete prior to the delegation of additional new gTLDs.  Major milestones include:

a) Completion of the Policy Development Process and approval by the Board;
b) Policy implementation including the development of the next Application Guidebook and approval by the Board;
c) Notice of the commencement of the next round of new gTLDs, including outreach and communication to the global Internet Community;

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d) The Opening of the actual application window where applications for new gTLDs will be accepted; and
e) The delegation of new gTLDs into the root.

Although there are a large number of steps that would occur in between each of these milestones, the GNSO Council would like to understand the Board's understanding as to which of these milestones, if any, are dependent on the completion of the NCAP work.

Sincerely,

GNSO Council Leadership Team