

## Cross Community Working Groups on the Use of Country and Territory Names as TLDs

### What is this about?

Following in the footsteps of the Study Group on the Use of Names for Countries and Territories as TLDs, the purpose of this CWG is to further review the issues pertaining to the use of country and territory names under different policies (new gTLD, IDN ccTLD, RFC 1591). If feasible the CWG will develop a definitional framework that could then be used across these. Furthermore, this CWG will 1) review the current status of representations of country and territory names, as they exist under current ICANN policies, guidelines and procedures; 2) provide advice regarding the feasibility of developing a consistent and uniform definitional framework that could be applicable across the respective SOs and ACs; and 3) should such a framework be deemed feasible, provide detailed advice as to its content.

### Why is this important?

The treatment of country and territory names as Top Level Domains is a topic that has been discussed by the ccNSO, GAC, GNSO, ALAC and the ICANN Board for a number of years. Issues regarding the treatment of representations of country and territory names have arisen in a wide range of ICANN policy processes, including the IDN fast track, IDN ccPDP, and the development of the new gTLD Applicant guidebook. References to country and territory names and their use are also present in guidelines such as the GAC's 'Principles and Guidelines for the Delegation and Administration of Country Code Top Level Domains' and 'Principles regarding new gTLDs'. Similarly, references are made in foundation documents, such as RFC1591 and administrative procedures such as those followed by IANA in the delegation and redelegation of ccTLDs (in accordance with ISO3166--1).

### What is the current status of this project?

The CWG held regular meetings since its inauguration on 10 June 2014 and met face to face during ICANN 50 and ICANN51. In December 2014, the Cross Community Working Group submitted a letter to the GAC's Subgroup on the Protection of Geographic Names in the new gTLD space, encouraging cooperating and proposing coordination of the two Groups' respective efforts. In addition, the Group members have started to discuss the issues that arose from the Study Group on the Use of Names for Countries and Territories as TLDs.

### Expected next steps

Staff is preparing a straw man paper that will present options with regard to the issues brought forward by the Study Group on the Use of Names for Countries and Territories as TLDs. This will then form the base for discussions during the forthcoming CWG meetings. To advance its work, the Group will meet face to face in Singapore and also join a session held there by the GAC's subgroup on the protection of geographic names in the new gTLD process.

### Background

The ccNSO Council established a Study Group on the use of Country and Territory Names on 8 December 2010. The Study Group was tasked with developing an overview of:

- How names of countries and territories are currently used within ICANN, be it in the form of policies, guidelines and/or procedures.
- The types of strings, relating to the names of countries and territories that currently used, or proposed to be used, as TLDs.
- The issues that arise (or may arise) when current policies, guidelines and procedures are applied to these representations of country and territory names.

The Study Group was comprised of representatives from across the ICANN stakeholder community and conducted its work between May 2011 and June 2013. The Study Group advised the ccNSO Council to set up a cross community working group, with participants from ALAC, ccNSO, GAC and GNSO to further review the current status of representations of country and territory names, and provide detailed advice on the feasibility and content of a consistent and uniform definitional framework that could be applied across the respective SO's and AC's. The ccNSO Council was also advised to request the ICANN Board to extend the current rule in the new gTLD Applicant Guidebook regarding the exclusion of all country and territory names in all languages, for consecutive rounds of new gTLD applications, until such a time that the ccWG developed the framework.

### How can I get involved?

If you are interested in joining the WG as a GNSO participant, please email the GNSO Secretariat at [gns.secretariat@icann.org](mailto:gns.secretariat@icann.org) to be added to the mailing list.

### Where can I find more information?

- More information on the ccWG, including its charter can be found at: <http://ccnso.icann.org/workinggroups/ccwg-unct.htm> and <https://community.icann.org/x/X7XhAg>
- The Working Group builds on the work of its predecessor, the Study Group on the Use of Names for Countries and Territories as TLDs; its Final Report is available at <http://ccnso.icann.org/workinggroups/unct-final-08sep12-en.pdf> [PDF, 717 KB]
- CWG F2F meeting on Monday 9 February from 12.15 – 13.45 local time - <http://singapore52.icann.org/en/schedule/mon-ccwg-ctn>
- GAC discussion on Wednesday 11 February 10.30 - 11.30 local time - <http://singapore52.icann.org/en/schedule/wed-0930-gac>

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