

\*\* Sending on behalf of the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures PDP WG co-chairs

Dear James,

On behalf of the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures PDP WG, we write to you in your capacity as chair of GNSO. This email is in regards to the topic of geographic names at the top-level, recently discussed during the cross community sessions at ICANN59. In addition, we want to state our agreement with the GAC which in its Communique for ICANN59 stated that “any further process of policy review and development should: (a) continue to allow all stakeholder groups to participate equally; (b) take into account the history and rationale of the arrangements currently in place; and (c) apply an evidence-based policy approach to any proposals for future arrangements” in dealing with Geographic Names as Top-Level Domains.

Pursuant to those discussions and the recommendations provided by the GAC, we are establishing a new Work Track 5 (WT5) within the GNSO’s New gTLD Subsequent Procedures PDP Working Group. This new WT5 will focus exclusively on geographic names at the top-level. In order to promote broad participation from across the community, we are seeking to establish a shared leadership model in WT5. We are requesting that one representative from each of the ALAC, ccNSO, GAC and GNSO be nominated (through whatever mechanism is deemed appropriate by each group) to serve as a co-leader of WT5 by **August 18, 2017**.

We are aware that some members of the community are concerned about this topic being addressed under the auspices of a GNSO PDP WG. That said, we are also aware of recommendations from the recently concluded CCWG on the Use of Country and Territory Names that the work should be consolidated into a single community-wide initiative moving forward as opposed to having each SO and AC working on recommendations independently.

As such, we are strongly recommending that the leaders of WT5 operate WT5 similarly to a cross community working group, ensuring that each SO and AC participate equally to achieve consensus on any recommendations proposed by the Work Track. While we believe that ultimately, it will be up to WT5 itself to draft the terms of reference for WT5 and determine its structure and operating procedures, we recommend that the co-leaders discuss these issues with the PDP co-chairs and staff first in order to frame the issues and structure for the group. Setting up this arrangement within the GNSO PDP seems to strike a balance between establishing an inclusive and collaborative structure while maintaining the ability to develop policy as determined by ICANN’s Bylaws. After the co-leaders are appointed and have had a chance to discuss plans, we will issue a call to each of the SOs and ACs seeking volunteers from the community to participate in WT5.

We hope that you support our proposed multi-stakeholder approach to work with the community in addressing a topic that is clearly of great importance to many. We hope to be able to organize an introductory meeting the first week of September 2017, in order to allow the co-leaders to come to agreement on WT5’s draft terms of reference. Finally, while we as co-chairs of the overall PDP WG support WT5’s independence, we nevertheless remain available to facilitate and provide assistance to the co-leaders as the need or desire arises.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Best regards,

Avri Doria and Jeff Neuman