ICANN | GNSO

Generic Names Supporting Organization

New gTLD Subsequent Procedures PDP
March 2018 Newsletter

**Note: all upcoming meetings are subject to change. For current scheduling information, please see the GNSO Master Calendar, Working Group scheduling document, and list of upcoming Work Track topics.

CURRENT STATUS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall Working Group

Current Status:

The Working Group is continuing to refine preliminary outcomes for the overarching subjects in the WG's Charter as it prepares the Working Group's Initial Report. This effort centers around three topics: different TLD types, predictability/community engagement, and application submission periods. In its 6 February meeting, the group discussed predictability/community engagement. The 12 February meeting focused on updates to the working document on application submission periods. On 27 February, the group deliberated on different TLD types.

The Work Tracks are working to develop draft recommendations for changes, if any, to the existing policy or implementation, as well as questions for community input to include in the Initial Report.

Next Steps:

The Working Group will hold two face-to-face sessions at ICANN61 in Puerto Rico. The first session will take place on Saturday 10 March from 12:15 to 15:00 local time. In this session, the group will cover overarching issues and topics under Work Tracks 1, 2, 3, and 4. The second session will take place on Wednesday 14 March from 8:30 to 10:15 local time. This session will focus on Work Track 5, the sub team addressing the treatment of geographic names at the top level.

In the coming weeks, the full Working Group will finalize documentation reflecting deliberations on the overarching issues and the Work Tracks will wrap up their contributions to the Initial Report. The Working Group aims to publish the Initial Report in April 2018.

Work Track 1

Current Status:

In February, the WT focused on RSP Programs and Support for Applicants from Developing Countries.

6 February meeting highlights:
- Reviewed draft recommendations on RSP Programs.
- Work Track members agreed that the Work Track should include in the Initial Report a discussion of items on which the group has not yet reached consensus. For example, there is not yet consensus on whether existing registry service providers should be "grandfathered" into the program rather than undergoing the same testing required for new providers.

20 February meeting highlights:
- Reviewed draft recommendations on Support for Applicants from Developing Countries. The WT invited members of the 2011 Joint SO/AC New gTLD Applicant Support Working Group to attend the 20 February call and provide input on the draft recommendations for this topic.
- Discussed the importance of cultural awareness and understanding of local economic conditions in the implementation of the program.
- Went over revised draft text on RSP Programs for the Initial Report, including questions for input and areas where the group has not yet reached consensus.

Next Steps:

WT1 has a meeting scheduled for 27 March, which will focus on preparing material for the Initial Report. WT1 topics will be discussed during the Saturday face-to-face WG session at ICANN61. Please see the agenda for details.

Work Track 2

Current Status:

In February, the WT focused on Closed Generics and Vertical Integration.

1 February meeting highlights:
- Reviewed status of deliberations on closed generics, including alleged benefits and harms identified by WT members and the community.
- Considered four alternative sets of recommendations that the WT plans to include as options in the Initial Report.
- Gathered feedback from WT members on how to further refine these alternatives for the Initial Report.

22 February meeting highlights:

- Discussed [additional questions](#) sent to ICANN Contractual Compliance on the topic of vertical integration. These questions follow up on [input received](#) from ICANN Contractual Compliance last year.
- Identified additional questions for community input to include in the Initial Report on the topic of vertical integration.

WT2 had a meeting on [1 March](#), which focused on [TLD Rollout](#) and [Contractual Compliance](#). The discussion will be summarized in the following edition of the newsletter.

Next Steps:

WT2 has a meeting scheduled for 29 March. WT2 will either use this call to discuss the Global Public Interest or prepare material for the Initial Report. Further notifications will be sent to the WT. WT2 topics will be discussed during the Saturday [face-to-face WG session at ICANN61](#). Please see the [agenda](#) for details.

Work Track 3

Current Status:

In February, the WT focused on [Applicant Freedom of Expression](#), [Accountability Mechanisms](#), [String Similarity Reviews](#) and [String Confusion Objections](#).

[13 February](#) meeting highlights:
- Reviewed prior discussions on [Applicant Freedom of Expression](#) and takeaways from the last call on this topic. Work Track members provided feedback about the [draft language](#) presented on [Applicant Freedom of Expression](#).
- Considered [open issues and remaining questions](#) on the topic of [Accountability Mechanisms](#), including whether there is a need for a post-decision appeal mechanism specific to New gTLD process and whether panelists and the Independent Objector should be subject to conflict of interest policies handled prior to initiation of the substantive matters.

[27 February](#) meeting highlights:
- Reviewed [areas of agreement](#) on [String Similarity Reviews](#) and [String Confusion Objections](#):
  - Going forward it is not desirable to allow plurals and singulars in the same language to move forward.
  - Terms need to be intended as plurals and singulars for this to apply. For example, the TLDs .new and .news would not be considered a plural or singular of the same string.
  - The SWORD Algorithm should be eliminated.
- Discussed [outstanding questions](#) on these topics to include in the Initial Report for additional feedback.

Next Steps:

WT3 topics will be discussed during the Saturday [face-to-face WG session at ICANN61](#). Please see the [agenda](#) for details.

Work Track 4

Current Status:

In February, the WT focused on financial evaluation models and review of feedback from the ICANN Organization, RSSAC, and SSAC in response to data/input requests from WT4.

5 February meeting highlights:
- Reviewed input from ICANN Technical Services on potential additional criteria for technical evaluation of New gTLD Program applicants and agreed on a path forward for additional information requests.
- Went over input from the ICANN Organization received in response to a WT request regarding Clarifying Questions for the 2012 New gTLD round.
- Considered feedback from the SSAC, the RSSAC, and the ICANN Organization on the maximum annual TLD delegation rate.

12 February meeting highlights:
- Reviewed previously introduced proposals for models to evaluate applications from a financial perspective.
- Introduced a new proposed "Middle Earth" model to include in the Initial Report:
  - The applicant identifies if the proposed financials apply to all its applications, a subset of them or a single one
  - ICANN does not provide any kind of financial models or tools, just defines goals and publishes lists of RSPs and consultants
  - Goals are for the applicant to demonstrate financial wherewithal and assure long-term survivability of registry considering stress conditions, such as not achieving revenue goals, exceeding expenses, funding shortfalls or spreading thin with too many TLDs
  - If an officer of the company is bound by professional duties in applicant jurisdiction to represent financials correctly, applicant is a publicly-listed company in a large stock exchange, or is a current Registry Operatory that has not defaulted and hasn't triggered the Continued Operations Instrument, applicant can self-certify that planning was made toward those goals
  - Applicant is required to provide credible third-party certification of those goals if self-certification above is not used or achievable

WT4 had a meeting on 1 March, which focused on Registry System Testing. The discussion will be summarized in the following edition of the newsletter.

Next Steps:

WT4 will discuss Registry Services Evaluation and draft Initial Report during the Saturday face-to-face WG session at ICANN61. Please see the agenda for details.

Work Track 5

Current Status:

In February, the WT focused on discussing different types of geographic names that were addressed in the 2007 policy and/or the 2012 Applicant Guidebook.

In addition, the WT held a webinar on 8 February providing background on the history of geographic names at the top level at ICANN. A recording and transcript are available for those who were unable to attend.

7 February meeting highlights:
- Began to discuss and compare the definitions and treatment of geographic terms included in the 2007 GNSO policy and the final Applicant Guidebook issued in 2012. For each type of string, the group considered the following questions:
    - Is it a valid geographic term for the purposes of new gTLDs?
    - What were the positive impact/merits based on the treatment applied to the term in the AGB?
    - What were the negative impact/opportunities lost based on the treatment applied to the term in the AGB?

21 February meeting highlights:
- Continued to discuss and compare the definitions and treatment of geographic terms included in the 2007 GNSO policy and the final Applicant Guidebook issued in 2012. The input received during these discussions has been captured in a working document. WT members are encouraged to provide additional input by commenting in this document or submitting feedback using the WT mailing list.

Next Steps:

WT5 has a meeting scheduled for 28 March. Work Track 5 topics will be discussed during the Wednesday face-to-face WG session at ICANN61. Please see the agenda for details.

WHAT IS THIS ABOUT?

In June 2014, the GNSO Council established a Discussion Group that was intended to evaluate the experiences of the 2012 round gTLD Program and to identify possible areas for future GNSO policy development. The Discussion Group's deliverables served as the basis for the GNSO Council's request for a Preliminary Issue Report in June of 2015.

Following the publication of the Final Issue Report, the GNSO Council adopted the charter for the PDP Working Group, which began its work in February 2016. The Working Group initially concentrated on a set of overarching issues, and has since established five separate Work Tracks to consider specific topic areas: Work Track 1 - Overall Process/Support/Outreach, Work Track 2 - Legal/Regulatory, Work Track 3: String Contention/Objections & Disputes, Work Track 4: Internationalized Domain Names/Technical & Operations, Work Track 5: Geographic Names at the Top Level.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The Discussion Group identified a number of subjects that may require further analysis and possible formulation of policy language. There are existing policy recommendations adopted by the GNSO Council and ICANN Board, which will remain in place unless the PDP WG determines that changes are needed.

To join this effort, please email the GNSO Secretariat: gnso-secs@icann.org
All are welcome!

MORE INFORMATION
- PDP Working Group Workspace Wiki: https://community.icann.org/x/RgV1Aw
- PDP Working Group Charter: https://community.icann.org/x/KAp1Aw
- PDP Working Group Active Project Page: https://gnso.icann.org/en/group-activities/active/new-gtld-subsequent-procedures