

Next Generation Registration Directory Service (RDS) to replace WHOIS Policy Development Process – Monthly Update – April 2016

WHAT IS THIS ABOUT?

In April 2015, the ICANN Board reaffirmed ‘its request for a Board-initiated GNSO policy development process to define the purpose of collecting, maintaining and providing access to gTLD registration data, and consider safeguards for protecting data, using the recommendations in the [Expert Working Group \(EWG\) Final Report](#) as an input to, and, if appropriate, as the foundation for a new gTLD policy’.

Following the publication of the [PDP Final Issue Report](#), the GNSO Council adopted the charter for the PDP Working Group, which commenced its deliberations at the end of January 2016. During the first phase its work, the Working Group has been tasked with providing the GNSO Council with recommendations on the following two questions: What are the fundamental requirements for gTLD registration data and is a new policy framework and next-generation RDS needed to address these requirements?

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Comprehensive ‘WHOIS’ policy reform remains the source of long-running discussions within ICANN. Any discussion of the ‘WHOIS’ system for gTLD domain name registration data – hereafter called gTLD registration directory services (RDS) – typically includes topics such as purpose, accuracy, availability, privacy, data protection, cost, policing, intellectual property protection, security and malicious use and abuse. Although ICANN’s requirements for gTLD domain name registration data collection, maintenance, and provision have undergone some important changes, after almost 15 years of GNSO task forces, working groups, workshops, surveys, and studies, the policy is still in need of comprehensive reforms that address the significant number of contentious issues attached to it.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATUS OF THIS PROJECT?

The PDP Working Group convened at the end of January 2016. The PDP Working Group is developing its phase one work plan for tackling the fundamental questions outlined in its charter. As part of this effort, it has tasked three small teams of volunteers to identify and summarize key input documents that are relevant to the charter questions pertaining to gTLD

registration directory services purpose, privacy and data elements (see <https://community.icann.org/x/p4xlAw>). The goal of this preliminary effort is to the PDP Working Group catalog and absorb the extensive history surrounding this Issue and available input that may usefully inform both its work plan and subsequent deliberations.

WHAT ARE THE EXPECTED NEXT STEPS?

Once the PDP Working Group has completed its identification and summary of relevant input materials, the WG is expected to finalise its work plan for phase one. Shortly following that, the PDP WG is expected to send out a request for early input from GNSO Stakeholder Groups and Constituencies, as well as other ICANN Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees to in help inform its discussions. Once these preliminary tasks have been completed, the Working Group will begin deliberations on fundamental requirements for gTLD registration directory services, providing a foundation upon which to recommend answers to these two questions: What are the fundamental requirements for gTLD registration data and is a new policy framework and next-generation RDS needed to address these requirements?

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

Anyone interested can join this effort at any time. Please complete the registration form at goo.gl/forms/bb65ilznLv or contact the GNSO Secretariat gns0-secs@icann.org.

MORE INFORMATION

-  PDP Working Group Workspace, including Charter, relevant motions, and background documents and information: community.icann.org/x/rjJ-Ag
-  Final Issue Report on Next-Generation gTLD Registration Directory Service (RDS) to replace WHOIS: whois.icann.org/sites/default/files/files/final-issue-report-next-generation-rds-07oct15-en.pdf
-  Board-GNSO Process Framework for this PDP: community.icann.org/download/attachments/49359634/EWG-Process%20Group%20Final%20Framework%20202-4-15.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1428939851000&api=v2

BACKGROUND

Pursuant to its [Resolution](#) on 8 November 2012, the ICANN Board directed the ICANN CEO to launch a new effort to redefine the purpose of collecting, maintaining and providing access to gTLD registration data, and consider safeguards for protecting data, as a foundation for new gTLD policy and contractual negotiations. Moreover, the Board directed the preparation of an Issue Report on the purpose of collecting and maintaining gTLD registration data, and on solutions to improve accuracy and access to gTLD registration data, as part of a Board-initiated GNSO policy development process. The Board

then went on to pass a resolution that led to the creation of the Expert Working Group; the Board referred to this as a ‘two-pronged approach’ that is based on ‘broad and responsive action’ in relation to the reform of gTLD Registration Data.

To enable effective consideration of the many significant and interdependent policy areas that the GNSO must address, the Board approved a Process Framework, collaboratively developed by GNSO Councilors and Board members, to structure this complex and challenging PDP for success. This phased process includes:

- Phase 1: Establishing requirements to determine if and why a next- generation gTLD registration directory service (RDS) is needed to replace today’s WHOIS system;
- Phase 2: If so, designing a new policy framework that details functions that must be provided by a next- generation RDS to support those requirements; and
- Phase 3: Providing guidance for how a next-generation RDS should implement those policies, coexisting with and eventually replacing the legacy WHOIS system.
- Throughout this three-phase process, the many inter-related questions that must (at minimum) be addressed by the PDP include:
 - Users/Purposes: Who should have access to gTLD registration data and why (i.e., for what purposes)?
 - Gated Access: What steps should be taken to control data access for each user/purpose?
 - Data Accuracy: What steps should be taken to improve data accuracy?
 - Data Elements: What data should be collected, stored, and disclosed?
 - Privacy: What steps are needed to protect data and privacy?
 - Coexistence: What steps should be taken to enable next-generation RDS coexistence with and replacement of the legacy WHOIS system?
 - Compliance: What steps are needed to enforce these policies?
 - System Model: What system requirements must be satisfied by any next-generation RDS implementation?
 - Cost: What costs will be incurred and how must they be covered?
 - Benefits: What benefits will be achieved and how will they be measured?
 - Risks: What risks do stakeholders face and how will they be reconciled?
- The framework developed to guide this PDP also includes many opportunities for gathering input to inform this PDP and key decision points at which the GNSO Council will review progress made to determine next steps.