

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

### WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATUS OF THIS PROJECT?

The PDP Working Group convened at the end of January 2016. Following the completion of the work of 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 PDP Working Group finalized its [work plan](#) for tackling the fundamental questions outlined in its [charter](#) (Work Plan task #6). Furthermore, the PDP WG sent out a [request for early input](#) from GNSO Stakeholder Groups and Constituencies, as well as other ICANN Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees, to help inform its discussions. Input received to date can be found [here](#). The Working Group is now in the process of compiling a list of possible 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 directory services, and is a new policy framework and next-generation RDS needed to address these requirements?

### WHAT ARE THE EXPECTED NEXT STEPS?

After the WG confirms that this list of possible requirements is sufficiently complete to serve as the foundation for WG deliberation, the WG plans to continue through its work plan to Task 12 where it will systematically consider each possible requirement individually with the goal of trying to reach as strong a consensus as possible as to whether the WG supports the possible requirement, including how it is worded. Due to interdependencies, WG deliberation will likely be iterative, especially on fundamental questions pertaining to purpose, data, and privacy. As part of this process, the WG is expected to review the input received from GNSO SG/Cs as well as ICANN SO/ACs – a second outreach message is being sent to ask for input on the list of possible requirements.

Noting that the first six Work Plan tasks are completed, the table below shows the status of the next six Work Plan tasks as of the end of May 2016:

| #  | Task  | Status  |
|----|---|---|
| 7  | Formal Early Outreach to ICANN SOs/ACs/SGs/Cs                         | Input is due by 16 June (1 response received from the SSAC) |
| 8  | Develop initial possible requirements list                            | Ongoing   |
| 9  | Informal outreach on possible requirements                            | To be done in early June                                    |
| 10 | Finalize possible requirements list                                   | Targeted for Helsinki meeting                               |
| 11 | Decide how to reach consensus when deliberating possible requirements | Targeted for June   |
| 12 | Deliberate on possible fundamental requirements                       | Targeted to start in late June                              |

### ICANN Meeting in Helsinki

In addition to a [face-to-face Working Group meeting](#), there is also a [cross-community discussion](#) planned on this topic. During this session, WG members will draw from their own experiences to share examples and invite attendees to join in a lively conversation about possible requirements which they believe should be supported by gTLD registration data and directory services. Inputs gathered during this cross-community session are essential to inform this PDP WG's phase 1 recommendations on whether a next-generation RDS is needed to replace WHOIS and why.

## 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.

### HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

Anyone interested can join this effort at any time. Please complete the registration form at [goo.gl/forms/bb65ilznLv](http://goo.gl/forms/bb65ilznLv) or contact the GNSO Secretariat [gnso-secs@icann.org](mailto:gnso-secs@icann.org).

### MORE INFORMATION

-  PDP Working Group Workspace, including Charter, relevant motions, and background documents and information: [community.icann.org/x/rjJ-Ag](http://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](http://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%202-4-15.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1428939851000&api=v2](http://community.icann.org/download/attachments/49359634/EWG-Process%20Group%20Final%20Framework%202-4-15.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.