

24 October 2013

Mr. Jonathan Robinson
Chair, ICANN GNSO Council

Dear Mr. Robinson,

On behalf of ICANN's New gTLD Program, I thank you for the letter from the GNSO Council (GNSO) of 18 September 2013, regarding policy concerns relating to string similarity in new gTLD applications. We acknowledge the GNSO concerns about the determinations of the expert panels evaluating String Confusion Objections and how those decisions relate to the GNSO policy recommendations in the 2007 Final Report on the Introduction of New Generic Top-Level Domains.

As members of the GNSO may be aware, the ICANN Board New gTLD Program Committee (NGPC) has taken note of concerns raised in the community about the string similarity review process. At its 10 September 2013 meeting, the NGPC engaged in a discussion about community comments on the determinations of the expert panels evaluating String Confusion Objections <<http://www.icann.org/en/groups/board/documents/minutes-new-gtld-10sep13-en.htm#2.a>>. The NGPC discussed this topic further at its meeting on 28 September 2013 <[http://www.icann.org/en/groups/board/documents/prelim-report-new-gtld-28sep13-en.htm - 2.c](http://www.icann.org/en/groups/board/documents/prelim-report-new-gtld-28sep13-en.htm-2.c)>.

The NGPC will continue to monitor the determinations of the expert panels evaluating String Confusion Objections as they become available, and will evaluate whether and what actions may be appropriate to take. Should the NGPC determine that advice from the GNSO would be valuable in its consideration of these issues, the NGPC will make such a request of the GNSO at that time.

We acknowledge that the GNSO has continuing concerns on this topic. We encourage the GNSO to continue to monitor the ICANN Board Meetings page (<http://www.icann.org/en/groups/board/meetings>) for details regarding meetings notices, agendas, and actions of the NGPC.

Thank you for your communication.

Best Regards,

Cherine Chalaby

Chair, New gTLD Program Committee

