ICANN | GNSO
Generic Names Supporting Organization

21 January 2022

GNSO Council Response to ICANN Board Letter Regarding the Request for Continued Deferral of IDN Implementation Guidelines v4.0

Maarten Botterman
Chair, ICANN Board of Directors

Dear Maarten,

Thank you for your letter dated 20 October 2021 proposing the way forward for IDN Implementation Guidelines v4.0. The GNSO Council appreciates the ICANN Board's concern with regard to the delay in implementing the latest update to the Guidelines. Previously, the GNSO Council communicated to the ICANN Board that the delay has not introduced "potential security issues" for IDN registrations at the second level, as explained in our writings to the Board on this issue and the presentation by the Registries Stakeholder Group (RySG) representatives during the ICANN Board and GNSO Council meeting on 24 June 2021.

Nonetheless, the GNSO Council supports the Board's suggested approach to defer a subset of the 19 guidelines that overlap with topics included in the IDNs Expedited Policy Development Process (EPDP) charter, while allowing the remaining guidelines to move forward for Board consideration as the updated version 4.0 for implementation.

To that end and in response to the Board request to review and organize the 19 guidelines into two subsets, the GNSO Council conducted the assessment in consultation with the representatives from the Registries Stakeholder Group (RySG), who previously performed analysis of the security and stability implications of the Guidelines.

Taking into account the RySG Councilors' presentation during the GNSO Council meeting on 16 December 2021, the GNSO Council identified that the following guidelines overlap with topics included in the IDN EPDP charter and they should continue being deferred: **6a, 11, 12, 13,** and **18**. For ease of reference, the details of the guidelines and their corresponding IDNs EPDP charter questions are included in the annex.

The GNSO Council confirmed that the remaining guidelines are part of the currently applicable IDN Implementation Guidelines 3.0 and/or additional guidelines which do not overlap with the IDNs EPDP. As the additional guidelines are non-mandatory according to the RySG analysis, the GNSO Council does not see harm in allowing those, as well as the ones already included in version 3.0 to move forward for Board adoption.

The GNSO Council appreciates the Board's consideration of the deferral and the constructive approach to develop a modified version of IDN Guidelines version 4.0 which does not overlap with the work of the IDNs EPDP. Please let us know if there are any further questions.

Best Regards,

On behalf of the GNSO Council,

Philippe Fouquart, GNSO Chair
Sebastien Ducos, GNSO Council Vice Chair
Tomslin Samme-Nlar, GNSO Council Vice Chair

Annex: Overlap Between IDN Implementation Guidelines v4.0 and IDNs EPDP Charter

IDN Implementation Guideline v4.0	IDNs EPDP Charter Question
6a: IDN Tables must be placed in the IANA Repository for IDN Practices. Further: (a) Except as applicable in 6(b) below, registries must use RFC 7940: Label Generation Ruleset (LGR) Using XML format to represent an IDN Table.	**c6**: To facilitate the harmonization of IDN tables, the Staff Paper recommends that IDN tables for the second-level be formatted in the machine readable LGR format specified in RFC 7940, Representing Label Generation Rulesets Using XML. However, each Registry Operator can harmonize the IDN tables today via software development solutions or are already in process of doing so. The WG and the SubPro IRT to coordinate and consider the following question in order to develop a consistent solution: should Registry Operators be required to use the machine readable LGR format as specified in RFC 7940 for their second-level IDN tables? Or should Registry Operators have the flexibility to resolve the harmonization issue so long as it can predictably and consistently produce the same variant labels, albeit with different disposition values, across the same-script IDN tables? Consider this question by taking into account the data to be collected in the "Data and Metric Requirements" section of this charter.
11: IDN Variant Labels generated by an IDN Table must be either (a) allocatable only to the same registrant as the primary IDN label, or (b) blocked from registration. Also see 18(b).	**c1**: Both the SubPro PDP and the Staff Paper recommend that: 1) a given second-level label beneath each allocated variant TLD must have the "same entity"; and 2) all allocatable second level IDN variant labels that arise from a registration based on a second-level IDN table must have the "same entity". Should this recommendation be extended to existing second-level labels? **c2**: Currently Registry Operators may activate the IDN variant labels at the second-level when requested by the sponsoring Registrar of the canonical name as described in the IDN Tables and IDN Registration Rules. Both the SubPro PDP and the Staff Paper recommend that at the second-level, the same entity definition can be achieved by ensuring that the registrant is the same. Should this recommendation be extended to the already activated IDN variant labels at the second-level? How does the "same entity" requirement impact the current rules for Registry Operators for activating IDN variant labels?
12: TLD Registries may activate an IDN Variant Label, provided that i) such IDN Variant Label is	**c2**: Currently Registry Operators may activate the IDN variant labels at the second-level when

requested by the same registrant or corresponding registrar as the Primary IDN Label, ii) such IDN Variant Label is registered to the registrant of the Primary IDN Label, and iii) such IDN Variant Label conforms with the registry policy and IDN Tables. In exceptional cases, i) to support a widely acceptable practice within Internet users of a language or script community, or ii) to abide by language or script established conventions, a TLD Registry may opt to activate a limited number of IDN Variant Labels at its discretion, according to its policies. In such cases, the TLD Registry must have mechanism to limit automatic activation of IDN Variant Labels to a minimum. Also see 18(c) and Additional Note I.	requested by the sponsoring Registrar of the canonical name as described in the IDN Tables and IDN Registration Rules. Both the SubPro PDP and the Staff Paper recommend that at the second-level, the same entity definition can be achieved by ensuring that the registrant is the same. Should this recommendation be extended to the already activated IDN variant labels at the second-level? How does the "same entity" requirement impact the current rules for Registry Operators for activating IDN variant labels?
13: TLD registries must ensure that all applicable IDN Tables with an IDN variant policy for a particular TLD have uniform IDN variant code points that properly account for symmetry and transitivity properties of all IDN variant code point sets across these IDN Tables. Exceptions to this guideline vis-à-vis symmetry and transitivity properties should be clearly documented in the TLD registries' public policy. At the same time, TLD registries shall reevaluate potential variant relationships that may require to create new IDN variant code point sets due to the introduction of additional IDN Tables by the TLD registry. Also see Additional Notes II and III.	**c4**: A registry TLD may offer registrations using different IDN tables to support different languages or scripts. In case multiple IDN tables are offered, IDN tables should produce a consistent set of second-level variant labels to help achieve the security and usability goals for managing variant labels in a stable manner, promoting a good user experience. As such, the Staff Paper recommends that IDN tables of variant TLDs be mutually coherent, i.e. any two code points (or sequences) that are variants in TLD 't1' cannot be non-variants in variant TLD 't1v1'. This recommendation also implies that any two code points (or sequences) that are variants in IDN Table A for TLD t2, which does not have any variant TLD, cannot be non-variants in another IDN Table B for the same TLD t2. Should the second-level IDN tables offered under a TLD, including IDN variant TLDs, be required to be mutually coherent? If yes, how should existing registrations which may not meet the "mutually coherent" requirement of second-level IDN tables be addressed? Rationale must be clearly stated. **c4a**: Notwithstanding that IDN tables need to be mutually coherent, the SubPro PDP and the Staff Paper recommend that the set of allocatable or activated second-level variant labels may not be identical across the activated IDN variant TLDs. Meaning, their behavior/disposition can be different. Under the conditions above, may the set of allocatable or activated second-level variant labels not behave identically under an individual TLD, which does not have any variant TLD label?
18: TLD Registries should publish IDN policies or guidance related to registration of IDN labels at	Relates to the deliberation outcome of charter questions **c1, c2, c4,** and **c4a** above

publicly accessible location on the TLD Registry's website. In addition to general policies or guidance on IDN registrations, these should include the following: (a) A timeline related to resolution of transitional matters, if applicable (b) IDN Variant Label allocation policy, if applicable (c) IDN Variant Label automatic activation policy, if applicable (d) Policy for minimizing Whole-Script Confusables and data sources used, if applicable. (e) IDN Table as per Guideline 6 above.	