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## ICANN Transcription

### IDNs EPDP

**Thursday, 21 July 2022 at 13:00 UTC**

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DEVAN REED:

Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening. Welcome to the IDNs EPDP's call, taking place on Thursday, the 21<sup>st</sup> of July, 2020, at 13:30 UTC.

In the interest of time, there will be no roll call. Attendance will be taken by the Zoom room.

We do have apologizes from Maxim Alzoba. And Nigel Hickson will be joining late today.

All members and participants will be promoted to panelists for today's call. Members and participants, when using the chat, please select Everyone in order for everyone to see the chat and so it's captured in the recording. Observers will remain as attendees and will have View Only chat access.

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*Note: The following is the output resulting from transcribing an audio file into a word/text document. Although the transcription is largely accurate, in some cases may be incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages and grammatical corrections. It is posted as an aid to the original audio file, but should not be treated as an authoritative record.*

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Statements of interest must be kept up to date. If anyone has any updates to share, please raise your hand or speak up now.

If you need assistance updating your statements of interest, please e-mail the GNSO Secretariat. All documentation and information can be found on the IDNs EPDP wiki space. Recordings will be posted shortly after the end of the call.

Please remember to state your name before speaking for the transcript. As a reminder, those who take part in the ICANN multistakeholder process are to comply with the expected standards of behavior.

Thank you. And back over to our Chair, Donna Austin. Please begin.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Devan. And welcome, everybody, to our IDN EPDP call today. We're going to do some preparation for the call that we'll have with the ccPDP 4 next Tuesday and we'll also go through a second reading of some of the text that has been sitting out with the group for comment. And we've only had comments in the Registry Stakeholder Group, so hopefully that won't take us very long to get through.

I'd just like to thank the ALAC and the Registrar Stakeholder Group's members for taking the time to meet with myself and Justine and the leadership team. I think it was earlier this week or last week. I found it really helpful just to have a conversation with the group one-on-one, just to see how you think we're tracking and whether there's things we can do to better/differently and also

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just to get to know people a little bit more in a different setting rather than this meeting setting. Because Justine and I weren't able to travel to The Hague, we didn't have that chance for face-to-face interaction. So I found the conversation helpful. I think we are trying to follow up with a couple of other groups to see if we could do the same thing in the near future, so I look forward to those conversations as well.

The other thing I wanted to mention—I'm just going to put the leadership team on the spot; I can't remember if we've mentioned this or not—is that the KL meeting (ICANN75) is happening towards the end of September.

And, Ariel, can you confirm when we're scheduled to have our IDN EPDP meetings, please? And I'm sorry to put you on the spot.

ARIEL LIANG:

No worries. We will have two working sessions, like last time, and it's going to be the first two sessions on Saturday. What's the date? It's basically the first day of the meeting and the first two sections of the first day of the meeting. So that's the current plan.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Okay. Thanks, Ariel.

So I just wanted to give this group a heads up that we'll be kicking off the meeting more or less. So if people are starting to think about travel plans, we can at least give you that heads up that we're meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> in first sessions of the meeting. So if folks can prepare for that, that would be good. I don't know at this

point what the agenda is going to look like, but it certainly won't be an update session like we had for ICANN74 because Justine and I will be in the room. So we should use that opportunity to have some substantive discussion around perhaps some of our more difficult topics. So we'll keep you in the loop as to what our thinking is on the agenda.

The other thing that I wanted to do as part of this update is I'm going to ask Dennis Tan just to give us an update on some of the work that the CPH or some of the thinking that the CPH has been doing about some of our questions related to second-level IDN variants. So, Dennis, are you in a position to provide us with that update?

DENNIS TAN: Hello, Donna. Yes. Happy to.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks.

DENNIS TAN: So, yeah, Donna is referring to a meeting of me briefing the CPH TechOps. As Justine put it, CPH stands for Contracted Party House Technical Operations group. So this is a group composed of registries and registrars that meet regularly to discuss technical issues or technical topics.

By way of example, a couple things that you might be aware of or familiar with is the RDAP profile, the registration data protocol

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that, at some point, will completely replace WHOIS, I think. The new RDAP protocol came out from joint work of ICANN and registries and registrars from TechOps. Another item that has been on their plate is the also the transfer policy work on [inaudible].

I thought of them also as a good group to bring this issue up: managing second-level IDN variants throughout their lifecycle because of two reasons. The first one is the shift of the existing operational framework, if you will. So as you know, as we have discussed—and you probably have heard me say this in the past as well—today IDN variants at the second level may be activated. And this is via the registry agreements upon delegation or through the new service request that registry operators go through. They can request activation of variants. If they do so, they have to do it in a certain way. Specifically, the IDNs at the second level may be activated when requested by the sponsoring registrar of the canonical name. So you could think of it the same-entity principle, being the registrars. So, again, the registry can only activate if the IDN is requested by the same sponsoring registrar.

And as far as registrar obligations, there are none, but I'm happy to be corrected if that's not the case. But I think the registrars don't have any other obligations as far as downstream to the registrant.

Now, fast-forward to SubPro issues and recommendations, which are compromising 25.6 through 25.8. IDN second-level variants need to be allocated to the same entity, which is the registrant. So there is a shift from registrar to a registrant.

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And naturally, the question becomes, how do you do that? How do you set up a mechanism by which you verify/confirm that IDN variants are allocated to the same registrant? And as we know from the staff paper on recommendations for the IDN variant TLD management framework, there are a couple of options there. So one is using the contact object as a way to “glue” domain names, but in reality, we know that not all registrars reuse the contact object to identify a registrant. So it’s potentially a good solution, but it’s not used widespread.

In lieu of that, the other option that the staff paper discusses is using a subset of registration data, but that also has several issues. All the fields in the registration data are freeform text, and then you get into matching text fields. It’s hard to implement. There’s friction because new software will need to be coded, etc.

So think of it in that context. That’s what we know.

So at the end of the day, the policy that we need to be implementable in a way that is interoperable. We need to think about it in terms of interoperability because we need to think about the lifecycle of the domain name. Domain names are created, updated, and renewed, transferred from one registrar to another. Registry TLDs are transitioned from one service provider to another service provider. And ultimately, domain names are deleted as well. So, accounting for the lifecycle, and recognizing the ecosystem of registries and registrars, and finding an interoperable solution that really helps or supports the groups of IDNs and variants as well is very important.

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And so that's the reason I wanted to bring this conversation to TechOps and have a really practical conversation of the nuts and bolts of what can be done in order to achieve what, at the end of the day, we want while, on the other hand, recognizing what our limitations are as well. And you have heard me saying this. As far as user experience, the expectations of two domain names behaving consistently—not necessarily identically but consistently—are out of the hands of registries and registrars. At the end of the day, when those domain names fall under the management of a registrant, it's really up to the registry to set up and build these services, websites, e-mail, or whatnot so that, somehow, they [look consistent].

So I brought this topic to them. They are interested. They welcome the introduction of this topic. And they're willing to work on that and continue the conversation. Of course, there is a question about timing. I did advise that we have a set time in order to complete our work, so will need to find a way how to manage a deliverable, understanding the expectation of timing. So I think there are ways to work through that and try to come up with something here.

Let me stop there. I just wanted to give you a little bit of context on how I positioned this to the TechOps group. Again, as a recap, they are interested, and they are happy to contribute to this work. And hopefully this group, as a full group, wants to support that initiative and will be working with them in order to get their input. And on the timing aspect of this will, I think this group needs to think about how we can manage that. So let me stop there,

Donna. If there are any other follow-up questions, I'm happy to answer. But back to you for now.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks very much, Dennis. And thanks for taking that to the CPH TechOps group. So, obviously, one of the challenges with the work that we're doing here is to develop policy that's implementable. And I think what Dennis has identified here and the question he really took to the CPH TechOps group was around C3. So it's, how do you maintain that same-entity principle if registries and registrars are doing things differently, for starters, and have different ways of looking at things? So how do we, as Dennis said, try to strip that back and understand how it works?

So I think it's an important piece of work to be done, and I think some of us understand the challenges of IRTs taking on policy recommendations and trying to work out whether they're implementable after the fact. This is an opportunity for us to do that work upfront with those that have the technical expertise on the question.

So to Dennis' concern about the timing—and it is a bit of a concern because, obviously, there's an expectation that we will furnish at least a draft initial report in December. Ariel and I had a conversation yesterday—and the full leadership team hasn't discussed this—but I think there might be some value in seeing if there's a way to reorganize our work so that we can deliver perhaps a draft initial report, Part 1, that deals with top level and then perhaps release a Part 2 on second-level issues at a later time. And that later time will depend on how much the CPH can

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accomplish and what their timeframe looks like. So that's the unknown at the moment.

And, also, I think, if the CPH TechOps group are willing to take this on, which is great, we need to assist, I guess, to some extent, in the scoping of that work to ensure that whatever we get back is going to help us in addressing the question that we have before us. And it might actually help with some other questions associated with the second level.

So that's, with my Chair hat on without having the opportunity to discuss fully with the leadership team, my idea. Ariel said that she had been thinking about perhaps way that we could chunk the work so that we could perhaps deliver not a complete report but parse it in some way. And that's not unusual in recent PDPs. It has been done before.

So I just want to sow that seed with folks now. What it might mean is that we set aside the second-level questions and focus on getting the top-level questions resolved. And that will be the focus of our Part 1 report, and then we'll do a Part 2 report at a later date once we have better understanding from the CPH on the timing.

So I don't know if folks have any initial thoughts on that. I'd certainly be interested to hear any comments or initial reactions from folks. And I know it has come out a little bit out of left field, but I think this is worth doing. And it's worth considering chunking our work so that we don't lose too much. And I'd hate to think that we delayed putting out the report because we're waiting on the TechOps group to do some work that we don't know how long it's

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going to take. So I think we've done some good, solid work on top-level, and I think we can potentially bundle that up so we've got a Part 1 report that we could put out for comment perhaps in December.

So I see we've got some support in chat. So thanks for that. And obviously, the leadership team would have to have a think about this, and we'll provide you with a more detailed explanation of how this would work in practice and how we would chunk the work. So thanks to Anil and Satish for their support.

And if others have any initial thoughts, that would be great.

If not, I guess we can move forward. And we'll do some work, either this week or next week, and work with Dennis and get a better understanding of what that second-level work would look like and how we would potentially wrap a Part 1 report with the aim of getting that out in December. And then also we'd need to report that to council because it is a substantive change in the project plan that we've put to council. So we'd have to inform them of what we're doing and why we're doing it and what impact we think it's going to have in the longer term for this group.

All right. So thank you for that. That took a little bit longer than I thought, but I think it's important to get it out there so people can think about it. And I'm really pleased that we've got some positive support initially. So we'll sort through the nuts and bolts and come back with a plan.

All right. With that, we will get to the second reading of the proposed amendments that we've had out on the list for comment

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for a couple of weeks now. I think we've had some input from Sarmad, and we've had some comments from the Registry Stakeholder Group, but absent seeing anything from any of our other members, it seems that we're in pretty good shape with this language.

So, Ariel, if I can turn over to you, you can take us through it. Thank you.

ARIEL LIANG:

Thanks very much, Donna. So I'm going to also put the Google Doc in the chat. So let's just take a look at the Topic B draft outcome language revision. So, in general, most of the suggested edits are not terribly substantive. A lot of them are editorial. But then, for the substantive ones, I have included the comments and rationale provided by the commentors. And then the ones you don't see are just redlines. They're mostly from Sarmad. I believe a lot of them are for editorial edits. So hopefully this will be quick: going through the redline.

For the first one, Recommendation 2.1, the only changing is changing "all" to "any." So it reads as, "Any allocatable variant labels [inaudible] existing gTLD as calculated by the RZ-LGR can only be allocated to the registry operator of the existing gTLD were withheld for a possible allocation only into that registry operator." So this is a suggested edit from Sarmad. And I believe what we intended to say was that the word "all" would imply there would be a lot of allocatable labels. It's not really true for most of the scripts. The allocatable ones are limited. Maybe for Arabic that's an exception. So just changing "all" to "any" will help

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indicate there's a limited number of allocatable variant labels and not create some false impression that there's going to be a lot of them. So that's, I guess, an editorial change.

And I will pause here for a moment and see whether anybody has questions or objections to this editorial change for Recommendation 2.1.

DONNA AUSTIN:

So just as we're working through this, if you have concerns or questions about proposed changes, now is the time to air those because essentially what we're doing here is, if we accept these changes, then this is where we're of the opinion that we've got general agreement on these things. And this is essentially the text that's going to form the basis of the draft initial report. So, please, if you have concerns or questions or you're not sure about the meaning of anything here, now is the time to raise any of those.

Thanks, Ariel.

ARIEL LIANG:

Thanks, Donna. And I saw Dennis. "That looks good." Actually, I just noted there's a grammatical correction I need to make: to cross out "s" from the labels. So it's, "Any allocatable variant label."

So in the absence of objections, we are supposed to just accept it by the group, and we will adopt this redline edit.

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And then the next edit is from Dennis. It's in the rationale for Recommendation 2.1. He suggested adding the phrase "but not guarantee" in the sentence here. So I'll just read it. It's, "The EPDP team agreed that abiding by the same-entity principle and having the same registry operator for all allocatable variant labels of existing gTLDs will help minimize but not guarantee the security risk associated with the failure modes, including denial of service and misconnection, when dealing with variant labels." So [what the] RySG stakeholder group commented is that having the same-entity principle at the top level could help minimize the security risks, but it's not going to guarantee the complete avoidance or complete elimination of security risks because, essentially, it's really up to, I guess, the registrant and how those domains are managed.

I also see Dennis his hand up. He can probably explain this much better than me. So, Dennis, over to you.

DENNIS TAN:

Thank you, Ariel. No, you were doing a beautiful job. I just wanted to add another layer of observation, if you will, as I was thinking through these items. In this work thus far, we are aware and we have understood that there are different principles that are competing with each other. We are trying to find a balance.

So with this concept of failure modes of denial of service, for example, we need to balance ... Just to keep it simple, let's take denial of service and the conservatism principle. If we were to fall for denial of service, which is the phenomena of a variant domain name that ought to be available but is not, then you are denying

the service of that domain name. And so if you want to solve for purely denial of service, then all of the allocatable variants—and potentially the [blog] ones—should be activated. And then you really address denial of service because every single combination will be available for resolution. But we know we don't want to do that because we have, on the other end, the conservatism principle, which calls for minimizing the number of activated variants.

So I'm thinking about that we need to find this balance here. And so, again, while making these TLD labels and second-level labels, thinking about that the same-entity principle helps, in some way, in minimizing going in that direction does not guarantee you will not [inaudible] the denial of service or even misconnection because we were just talking about the TLD, not domain names, per se.

So I just wanted to add that clarification. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Are you with us, Ariel.

ARIEL LIANG: Yeah. I was waiting for my cue.

DONNA AUSTIN: Here's your cue.

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ARIEL LIANG: Okay, thank you. Apologies. I was jumping the gun a bit as I was trying to do some edits on the screen. And when Dennis was providing additional input, we just noticed that Satish saw something critical, actually. It's not like we're trying to guarantee risks. We're trying not to guarantee elimination of security risks. So instead of "but not guarantee," maybe we should say "but not eliminate," because that's the correct wording for expressing the intent of this edit.

And I see Dennis agreeing with Satish's suggestion as well, so I will reflect this in the Google Doc. So that's what we added in the rationale here.

And if there's no objection to this additional phrase, staff will take that the group agrees with this edit, and then we will accept this redline.

And I'm not seeing comments or hands raised, so we take that the group supports this edit—oh, Hadia said, "not fully eliminate."

DONNA AUSTIN: Hadia, I think we might be splitting hairs here, so I think "but not eliminate" is probably adequate, unless you feel really strongly about "fully."

ARIEL LIANG: Thanks, Hadia. And I think "minimize" is conveying the same meaning as "not fully eliminate." Or it's "partially eliminate" because "minimizing" is "partially eliminate." So it may be duplicative." "Eliminate" is more like a "100% getting rid of

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something” kind of meaning, so adding the “fully” may be not necessary. That’s from staff’s view.

And I think Justine, also, is on the same page. “Minimize” conveys “not fully eliminate.”

DONNA AUSTIN:

Can you live with “but not eliminate,” Hadia, given that there’s pretext?

I don’t know if you’re trying to speak, Hadia, but if you are, we can’t hear you.

I’m not understanding your last comment, but I think we’re ... If you could speak, it would be helpful.

I mean, there’s going to be a risk. We’re just trying to minimize that. And we’re noting that we can’t eliminate the risk.

Okay. I’ll ask this another way. Is anyone supportive of the addition of “fully eliminate,” or we happy with just “eliminate”?

Dennis, do you have a preference?

DENNIS TAN:

Hi, Donna. As it is is fine.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Okay. I think we’ll just leave this as is because I don’t see any other support for “fully.”

So let's keep going, Ariel.

ARIEL LIANG:

Okay, sounds good. And also Jerry agreed that "eliminate" is fine. So we'll move on to the next one. It's Recommendation 2.2. And, again, it is an editorial edit, and that's suggested by Sarmad. So instead of "all delegated variant labels of the gTLD," it should be changed to "any additional variant labels of the gTLD." So the recommendation reads, "The registry operator of an existing IDN gTLD must use the same backend registry service provider [of] the organization providing one or more registry services, such as DNS, DNSSEC, RDDS, or EPP for operating any additional delegated variant labels of that gTLD." And I believe it's probably more precise because there's at least one gTLD that is already delegated, and that's the existing one of that registry operator. So if there's any additional variant gTLD delegated in the future, then they need to use the same backend registry service provider. So this is just to make the sentence more accurate, I believe, and it's an editorial change.

And if there's no objection, we will take that as that folks support this edit.

And I'm not seeing comments or hands raised. And I guess folks are okay with it.

So I will move on to Recommendation 2.3. And there a couple of edits here. One is from Sarmad, and the other is from Dennis and RySG. So now the new updated language is—I think Justine had a question about 2.2. "Why "additional"?" So I think it's just ...

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Maybe if Sarmad is on the call, I would appreciate if he jumps in and provides that comment and explanation, but I don't think he's on the call right now. And I'm trying to remember exactly why he proposed it. I don't think he provided a lot of reasons for that, but we can take this back to Sarmad and just ask why we proposed to use "any additional" instead of "all," because my understanding is there's one existing gTLD, and "any additional" will be more accurately capturing what is needed in this recommendation.

But, Justine, please go ahead.

JUSTINE CHEW:

I don't really want to be pedantic. I think, whether it's just "any delegated" or "any additional delegated," it could be read to be the same thing. But when I read it, I just thought, "Well, variant labels aren't delegated yet, so they aren't additional, really, per se." But just drop it. It's fine.

ARIEL LIANG:

Okay. Now I understand what you mean.

DONNA AUSTIN:

I guess it could account for a situation if we decide that you can apply for variant labels during different rounds or in between rounds or something. So while you're correct about the current situation, Justine, I think it might account for—

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JUSTINE CHEW: That's true, yeah. We're not saying that all the variants have to be applied to be activated at the same time. That's true. That's fine. So just drop it.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. Thank you.

ARIEL LIANG: Okay. Thank you, Justine. So we will accept the redline for 2.2.

And, back to 2.3, the updated language reads, "If the registry operator operating a variant gTLD label changes its backend registry service provider, all the variant gTLD labels in the set must also simultaneously transition to the same new backend registry service provider." So the first edit is to include "simultaneously," because we actually have the same, I guess, point in the rationale part if you look at the last sentence in the rationale part. It's this transition to the same backend registry service provider at the same time. So we already mentioned this in the rationale. So just to be consistent, we add "simultaneously" in the recommendation itself so that conveys the importance of that it cannot happen over time. It has to happen at the same time as when switching or transitioning to the same backend registry service provider happens. That's not going to be a gradual approach. So that's the first suggested edit.

And then the second one is from Dennis and RySG. It's to change "switch" to "transition" because this is the same terminology in the document, harmonizing language with the MSA change process. So Dennis also included the link to the actual documentation. So

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the official term is “transition,” not “switch.” And then we just want to make sure it reads better and also is consistent with other materials.

And also, at the same time, we added the rationale part for 2.3 and also changed “switch” to “transition,” just to be consistent with the recommendation that [inaudible] and be more precise.

So that’s the edits for 2.3. Any comments, questions, or objections?

And I’m not seeing [inaudible]. I saw that folks, in general, agree with it.

“Doesn’t a transition include the primary gTLD?” It’s from Zhang Zuan. So my understanding is that, if one of the variant labels in the set transitions the ICANN registry service provider to another one, then every delegated and allocated variant label—and very possibly including the primary label itself—will transition to the same new backend registry service provider. So that will include it if it happens. So the entire set will transition together. So does it really matter which one? That’s my understanding.

DONNA AUSTIN:

I think Zhang’s comment is a good one in the sense that the terminology we’ve been using to describe a set today has been a primary gTLD and the variants. So I think it’s a good point.

Anyways, Zhang has his up, so go ahead.

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ZHANG ZUAN:

Hi. Thanks, Donna. If I read the language—all the variant gTLD labels in the set must also simultaneously transition to a new backend registry service provider—I think there's some problem because the language, if I read it, only mentions that the variant gTLD labels will transition, but it doesn't include the primary gTLD.

So may I suggest that the language "will be" or "may need to"? "All the gTLD labels, including the primary gTLD and the variant gTLD labels, must also simultaneously transition." Is that okay? Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Zhang. I think it's an important point. And we will need to find a way to capture it. Justine has said, "How about "all the variant gTLD labels in the set," and "the primary gTLD must also""? But I think what this is here is that the registry operator operating an IDN gTLD changes its backend registry service provider. Then it's all the labels in the set or something. So rather than try to wordsmith this now, I'd like to take it offline to give us a little bit of time to think about this. But, Zhang, that's a really good point. And I think we should be clear about this. And I think it also goes to some of the terminology that we ... We're not always consistent in our terminology, but it's right that, if we're going to identify the set as the primary and the variants, then we need to include that here. So we'll pick that up.

ARIEL LIANG:

[inaudible], Donna.

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DONNA AUSTIN: Sorry, Ariel. I was just going to say we've got two options here in chat. So we'll look at that offline. And I think this is something we'll just send back to the group in e-mail and see if we can sort that out there. I'm conscious of time. We've got a little bit more to get through, but thanks for raising that.

Great. Thanks, Ariel.

ARIEL LIANG: Thanks, Donna. Thanks, Zhang and Justine. We will go back to the group on a suggested edit.

And I just want to quickly note that, at some point, we may need to develop a recommendation to define what is a primary gTLD because we did use this term quite a lot throughout the deliberation. And there is a potential place to develop a recommendation to clearly define what it means. And then it will perhaps help to clarify the rest of the recommendation that mention that term. Okay, sounds good.

And I guess we will move on to 2.8. This is a recommendation regarding a primary gTLD that has restrictions, such as a brand TLD or geo-TLD. And then, for the variant label of that gTLD, it should be bound by the same restrictions. So there's no suggested edits to this recommendation, but Dennis did inform us that he shared this draft recommendation to the Brand Registry Group and Geo-TLD Group to get their inputs on this. In case they have any concerns or questions about it, they can relay these to our group, I guess, through Dennis. So it's just a heads up that some relevant groups are looking at this recommendation.

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And I think that's it for this document, Topic B.

And I guess we will move on to Topic D. We have a few recommendations to go through here. So on Recommendation 2.4, this is also an editorial edit, and that's suggested by Sarmad. So the updated language reads, "Any existing or future IDN gTLD, along with its variant labels, if any, will be subject to one registry agreement with the same registry operator." So that's the suggested edit. And it's not really substantive. It's more editorial. And I think he's trying to be more precise with what we say. And I was trying to check whether Sarmad provided a specific rationale for this suggested edit. He didn't. But I don't really have a lot of questions about this one.

And I wonder whether there's any questions or objections from the group for this suggested edit.

And Satish said, "If it's one registry agreement, then "same" is redundant." Okay. So basically get rid of "same." I guess that's Satish's suggestion.

And Anil says it's okay (the current wording with the edits).

So I'm just going to try to reflect some of that right here.

I'm not seeing any other comments, so basically the new suggested edits by Satish are to remove "same" in front of "registry operator." So I'm wondering if anyone has an objection to this edit or if this is okay—the newly updated language for 2.4.

Dennis, please go ahead.

DENNIS TAN: Thank you, Ariel. I think it's okay to remove the "same." And I would go even further in removing the whole one, two, three, four, five—exactly those—because there is no instance where a registry agreement is split among different registry operators. So with "one registry operator," it's implicit that it's one party besides ICANN. So maybe just get rid of the five words after "agreement." And I think the intent remains there.

ARIEL LIANG: Thanks very much, Dennis. That's indeed a good point. And I will reflect this in the document. So that's what it reads now. "Any existing or future IDN gTLD, along with its variant labels, if any, will be subject to one registry agreement." So that's what the updated language reads now.

Any objections or further input for this one?

And Zhang Zuan said, "Agreed." So I guess we're all okay. And I will double-check the rationale, just to make sure we reflect similar or same edits to be consistent.

And Jerry also has a +1.

So I think we're good with Recommendation 2.4.

And we can move on to Recommendation 2.5. So the edit was proposed by Sarmad. It was to add "during the same round" at the end of the sentence. So now it reads, "Future IDN gTLD applicants will be required to submit one application covering the

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primary IDN gTLD and corresponding allocatable variant labels the applicant seeks to activate during the same round.” So basically, I think this is trying to be more precise. And so in the event that we use the ... It’s probably taken as a given that the new gTLD applications will happen in the rounds. And, during the same rounds, some or all of the allocatable variant labels may be applied for. And then the applicant may seek to activate some or all of them. So this is just to be precise that, during the same rounds, that application needs to cover the primary label plus the allocatable variant label that the applicant seeks to activate during the same round or during the same time. And in the event in the future that the applicants wants to activate more, then it will happen later. So that particular application wouldn’t be able to cover the ones that are not activated in the same round. So I think that’s what Sarmad was suggested.

And I see Dennis has his hand up.

DENNIS TAN:

Thank you, Ariel. Just a quick follow-up or clarifying question. I thought I was following you and then I lost track a bit. So you were saying that ... And the question pertains to the “round” term, right? So is it settled that future applications are going to be on a round basis? Or on a rolling basis? I think that would be my concern: if we put this here in a way where we’re not yet sure how that’s going to work and whether that has any implications down the road.

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ARIEL LIANG:

Thanks, Dennis. I think that's indeed a good question. And I believe this is still pending deliberation. We don't know whether there's a possibility of allowing variant activation between rounds or on a rolling basis where it must happen during rounds. So, yeah, that's indeed an open question for now. And, actually, I think I should have clarified this with Sarmad when he provided this comment. And I think that's also one of the reasons why, when we drafted this language, we didn't really include the round-related information in the initial version because it's still pending deliberation by the group.

And then Jerry said, "Maybe you should change "round" to another word." I think the other suggestion was "at the time" or something, like, "The applicant seeks to activate at the time." But I forgot whether that was "at the same time." So instead of saying "round," we change it to "at the same time." So that's another suggestion.

Donna, please go ahead.

DONNA AUSTIN:

So I'm just wondering, if we put "at the same time," if that disallows the possibility of seeking additional variants at a later time, which I don't think we intend to do.

ARIEL LIANG:

Right.

And I see that Dennis has additional comments, too. And Justine has her hand up. Okay. Justine, please go ahead.

JUSTINE CHEW: It refers to primary IDNs and the allocatable variants. And the point is that they want to get the variants at the same time as the primary IDN. Isn't that the point here? We know that allocatable variants can be ... Well, okay, it hasn't been decided yet, but there's a potential that allocatable variants could be requested to be activated at a later time, but that's if they have the primary IDN already. In this situation, we are talking about if somebody wants to get both the primary and possibly one or more allocatable variants at the same time. And maybe we want to have a closer look at this at the leadership level.

DONNA AUSTIN: Yeah, I think so, Justine. I think we note the conversation and see how we can resolve this. I think we know what the intent is, but we just need to make sure that that's clear for those that are reading it and then have to implement it. So this is another one that we'll take offline and see if we can resolve and then come back to the group with the language to see if it's agreeable.

ARIEL LIANG: Okay, sounds good. Someone will get back to the group after the leadership discussion of this one.

Okay. And then of course the rationale for 2.5 needs to be added in a consistent manner after we figure out what to propose for the recommendation language itself. So we'll reflect that in the rationale, too.

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And then, finally, there is one more suggested edit. And this is substantive, actually. It's for the rationale for Recommendation 2.6. And maybe we can take a look at 2.6 first. So the recommendation reads, "The applicant will be required as part of the application process to explain the reasons why it needs to activate the applied-for variant labels. In addition, the applicant will be required to demonstrate their ability to manage the primary IDN gTLD and applied-for variant labels as a set from both a technical and operational perspective." So that's the recommendation itself. And there's no added suggestion to the recommendation itself.

But for the rationale part, what Dennis and the RySG suggested is to remove the sentence as well as how it plans to manage the set operationally with a view to ensuring a secure, stable, and consistent user experience. So with the rationale, basically, it seems to the RySG that a registry operator should not be expected to ensure consistent user experience because it does not host or manage content such as website e-mail addresses. So this sentence seems to be requiring them to do something they may not be able to do.

But I can defer to Dennis for providing additional details for this suggested edit.

And one thing I do want to raise is that, if you recall, we have another recommendation in Topic A which is Recommendation 1.5: that best practice guidelines be developed for the management of a gTLD and its variant labels by registries and registrars with a view to ensuring a consistent user experience. So we do have some other recommendation that includes the

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expectation of ensuring a consistent user experience, but that's in the context of developing best-practice guidelines.

So I'm wondering. If this recommendation is okay by the group, then is there any way we could change the rationale of 2.6 to be not providing unrealistic expectations to registry operators but also tie it to the existing recommendation that's related to ensuring a consistent user experience? So that's my rough thoughts at the moment. And I'm happy to defer to the group for discussion.

And I see Dennis has his hand up.

DENNIS TAN:

Thank you, Ariel. Yeah, good catch. I think we might revisit the language on the previous one. But I think, when reviewing that at the time when we did ... Because it talks about development best practices or guidelines, it doesn't read like a contract requirement, whereas 2.6 really speaks to the application process. And potentially ... We don't know yet, but in the past, certain expectations were ingrained in what we called public interest commitments. And those are really wired into the registr[ar] agreement in obligations.

So I just want to be careful as to what we might ask and expect from registry operators to do as far as user experience. Again, a gTLD does not have any users in my mind. The users are really the ones that use domain names. That's host names and services and whatnot. So I just want us to be aware of that, mindful of that: even if somebody in good faith wants to answer this question, really, as a registry, again, we can't police and monitor how user

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experience is going to be effectuated. Even if we, for example, set a requirement—I'm not saying we should do this—as a registry operator and enforce same-name servers for the domain names, that does not guarantee that the registrant can[t] point to different website content and completely differently user experience for variant domain names. [Setting] nameservers along does not guarantee the same consistent user experience. And that's the reason for removing that: not to set the wrong expectations and then those are using a different way. So I'll stop there. Thank you.

ARIEL LIANG:

Thanks, Dennis, for the additional explanation.

And, Satish, please go ahead.

SATISH BABU:

Thanks, Ariel. So the ALAC team actually discussed this in some detail, and we actually prepared a written submission. Had this item not been in the agenda for this week's meeting, we will send it out as a written statement. So I'll just read it out and then I'll comment on Dennis' previous intervention about the user experience.

So, "One, the EPDP team had identified, as an important consideration, the ability of registries and registrars to be able to successfully handle the complexities of IDN variables or IDN variants—i.e., manageability—in order to ensure the stability, security, and consistency of the user IDN variant labels. The ALAC team therefore considers the [struck-out bits] as necessary to convey this message. Two, as such to the condition of 2.6 for

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[inaudible] Part 2 has no implementation guidance and therefore there is little possibility of misconstruing the text as implementation guidance. Three, further, the text in question is part of the rationale rather than the recommendation itself and is meant to provide context to the recommendation. On account of these points, the ALAC team is in favor of retaining the text.”

Now, regarding the user experience, we are just talking about, in at least this intervention, consistency. And on the user experience itself, I agree that it is not easy to have a consistent user experience for the end user. So we are open to talking about how to change this face: consistent user experience.

But overall, I think the manageability [inaudible] is actually something very important. And we cannot write it out of the text. Thank you.

ARIEL LIANG:

Thanks very much, Satish, and also the ALAC team for preparing such a detailed statement with the rationale. And I think the leadership team is discussing in the background. And I think, with the information provided, we probably have to get back to the team after digesting the explanations provided by both the RySG and ALAC. Yes, we will appreciate if Satish can drop the language in the chat or send to the leadership team in any other way so we can read that in detail offline.

And we probably have to move on to the prep of the joint session with ccPDP4, but ... Okay, Donna, please go ahead.

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DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Ariel. Just to note, if I understand Dennis correctly, the challenge for a registry operator and a registrar is providing a consistent user experience because there is really no control over the registrant and what it does to develop content for a website. So the policy that we're developing here is really about the top level and, to some extent, the second level, but I think there's very little or nothing that a registry or registrar can do in terms of controlling what a registrant actually uses the domain name for and puts on a website. But I also understand the concern from the ALAC perspective of trying to find a way that there is consistent user experience or that there's even some kind of guardrails that can be developed to put in place to hold that.

So I think it's an important discussion and one that we have to have. So to Ariel's point, I think we're going to ... Satish, please post what you were going to to the list. And I'm sorry if this conversation is happening a week early. And we will come back to this next week and we'll finish off. We'll also come back to those two other issues that we've discussed and then we'll continue on with the second reading of this document. But we're very conscious that we've got to get through the prep stuff for the call that's happening, I think, on Tuesday with the ccPDP. So thanks for the contribution. This is an important discussion that we need to have. So we'll come back to this next week.

Sorry, Ariel.

ARIEL LIANG:

No issues. So Donna, I guess you'd like me to take us through the draft slides that staff prepared for the joint session?

DONNA AUSTIN: Yeah. And just to set up for folks, I hope that everybody has the time available to attend the call on Tuesday. It is important for us to have this conversation with the ccPDP group. And I think there's a number of you that cross over between the two groups. So hopefully it won't be too painful, but this is something that we have to do.

So I'll hand it over to you. Thanks, Ariel.

ARIEL LIANG: Okay. Thank you, Donna. So this is a quick overview of the joint session. And just as a reminder, it's Tuesday next week at 14:00 to 15:30 UTC. And I believe folks already received the calendar invite that includes the Zoom room. And it's actually ccPDP4's Zoom room. So just to make it clear, it's different from our usual Zoom room. And of course, the goal for this joint session is to fulfill the Board request for both groups to keep each other informed of the progress of developing policies and procedures so that the IDN variant gTLD- and IDN ccTLD-related solutions will be consistent. So that's the main goal.

And I think, just through my shadowing of the ccPDP4 deliberation, another goal is that the variant recommendations are developed by the Variant Subgroup in ccPDP4. And they're about to complete their work and then need to present the draft recommendations to the full ccPDP4 working group. And they'd like to check with the IDN EPDP to understand whether there's any divergence in the recommendations both groups developed.

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And then, when they report back to the full group, they will have the facts and rationale prepared. But I'm happy to be corrected if my understanding of the goal is wrong. And I think that's why they suggested to meet up with IDN EPDP.

And I see Anil has his hand up. Anil, please go ahead.

ANIL JAIN:

Thank you, Ariel. Thank you very much for streamlining the goals and focus of a joint meeting between the two working groups. Because we are discussing a variety of subjects and topics in both the working groups, is it possible to list out a few areas which are quite similar to each other? And we should focus our discussion on the 26<sup>th</sup> around those areas. That is what I propose in case it is for the consideration of all the members of this working group, especially the leadership, Donna and Justine. Thank you.

ARIEL LIANG:

Thanks, Anil. In fact, we have exactly the same idea. And there are more slides in the deck, so you will see how it's grouped together based on the areas of similarity and differences. And you will be able to see the details next. But thank you for that suggestion. It's great that we have the same idea.

So just before we move on to the details, I want to check whether it's possible to have ... Or I guess I already talked to Donna about this. The speaker for the joint session, I presume, for IDN EPDP, will be Donna as the main speaker. And then, if they have any specific questions about string-similarity-review-related efforts, perhaps Justine could provide some information and chime in to

support Donna. That's my, I guess, presumption. And that's who the speakers are from IDN EPDP. And then I checked with Bart, who supports ccPDP4. He suggested Anil and Dennis to be the speakers for ccPDP4-related recommendations. So I just put it out there to confirm with the folks in the meeting now. And if there is any concerns, please let me know.

Okay. I guess now we can look at some of the details. So before we jump into the detailed recommendations themselves, these slides intent to capture some major differences between the two groups in terms of the topics they deal with, the procedure, the progress in both groups, the scope of policy, and also implementation-related implications. So for ccPDP4, other than just variant management, they also deal with the deselection of IDN ccTLDs [inaudible] basic criteria for selection of IDN ccTLDs. And then they also have this stress-testing-related work. So that's a little different from IDN EPDP. And then, for IDN EPDP, well, we have IDN implementation guidelines. And that's something the ccPDP4 is not specifically focusing on. And then you see the highlighted bullet points. That's the overlapping areas that both groups deal with. And, actually, I believe I forgot to highlight the definition of all gTLDs because that's something the ccPDP4 also worked on with regard to the definition of variant ccTLDs. So there are some overlapping areas, but then there's also differences.

Anil, please go ahead.

ANIL JAIN:

Thank you, Ariel. I just want to highlight that, when, in EPDP, we are discussing in the group, we are in fact discussing the

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confusing similarity also, which we say [is] string similarity. So actually these areas are also common, which the working groups are discussing. Thank you.

ARIEL LIANG:

Thank you, Anil. Actually, maybe I forgot to mention that, but it's on the slides. Confusing similarity is there. And it's also something the IDN EPDP team deals with in the string similarity small group in particular. So thanks for pointing this out.

And then in terms of procedure, I mentioned earlier that variant-related recommendations are developed in the subgroup in ccPDP4. But the full working group hasn't had a chance to discuss them yet. And then, for IDN EPDP, most of the recommendations are developed in the full working group, except for the string-similarity-review-related recommendations and also objection-processes-related topics. So that's some differences in terms of procedure.

And then, for scope of policy, ccPDP4's recommendations are concerning the top level only, but for the IDN EPDP, as we all know, there's second-level-related topics and questions the group needs to deliberate on.

And then, for implementation, there's no contractual obligations for ccTLD managers to follow the policy, but then there is indeed contractual obligations for gTLD registries and registrars to abide by the policies developing the EPDP.

So there are some major differences of the two groups, and that's something as context, I guess, when we go into the details.

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I'm just speeding up a little bit because I know the time is coming up.

So the first set of recommendations on the screen is not really intended for reading out loud for every single word because these recommendations are basically very much consistent between ccPDP4 and IDN EPDP, and they're all related to the RZ-LGR compliance. So basically both groups agreed that compliance with RZ-LGR for the definition of TLDs and calculation of variants is required. And then also, RZ-LGR needs to be incorporated into tools and processes and technical criteria for processing all TLDs. And there's also this backward compatibility expectation for future RZ-LGR updates. And both groups have similar recommendations to that effect. So this slide demonstrates that there's a lot of similarities or consistency among the recommendations developed by both groups.

But for this slide, it's still related to RZ-LGR, but there's some potential differences. And that's why it's highlighted in yellow. So one potential area of difference is limiting the number of delegated variants. So for the ccPDP4, they require that the allocatable variants need to be meaningful representations of the name of the territory in the designated language.

And for IDN EPDP, there's no particular ceiling value for limiting the number of delegated variants. So there is a potential difference here, but I believe, for ccPDP4, this is well-understood. It's consistent with the ccTLD general principle to have meaningful representation. So perhaps that's something to discuss in the joint meeting.

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And then the second major area of difference is in terms of grandfathering existing TLDs after the RZ-LGR update. For ccPDP4, it's not absolute. So it means, if grandfathering would demonstrably threaten the security and stability of the DNS, then it may result in a deselection of such existing ccTLDs to mitigate such a threat. So it's not an absolute situation for grandfathering.

And then, for IDN EPDP, there's really no caveats in terms of grandfathering. So what we recommended is that all existing gTLDs and their delegated or allocated variant labels must be grandfathered. So that's a major difference based on my reading of the policy proposals from ccPDP4.

And this slide captures some additional topics under the RZ-LGR umbrella. So [inaudible] EPDP, we have some other recommendations, such as the challenge mechanism for evaluating TLD applications and then also some implementation guidance related to RZ-LGR updates. And if it's not fully backward-compatible, then the relevant GP must carve such exceptions. And we also have a recommendation related to the single-character gTLDs and the label states and label-state transitions. So these are some additional topics the EPDP has developed.

And then, for ccPDP4, they didn't really have corresponding recommendation under those topics, but they did have another recommendation related: if the script of a designated language has not been incorporated into RZ-LGR, then there's some existing process that applies to basically, I guess, evaluate those ccTLD applications. So they have some additional

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recommendations on that topic. And that's not something EPDP has deliberated because the SubPro already covered that area.

So that's under the RZ-LGR umbrella.

And then the next category is about same-entity at the top level. And this slide showcases the recommendations that are consistent between the two groups. So both groups support allocation of variant TLDs to the same entity and also having the same registry operator and same backend registry service providers for those variant TLDs. So these are the recommendations that are supporting these general principles.

And then, based on my reading, there's really no area of differences under the same entity at the top-level umbrella, but then, for IDN EPDP, there's some additional recommendations for that general topic, such as best-practice guidelines for the management of variant gTLDs and also the new gTLD application process. So one application covers both the primary gTLD and variant labels and also the consideration of cost recovery principles for the associated fees. And there's some other recommendations that are forthcoming—so basically the string similarity review, the objection process, and other policies and areas that may be impacted by variant implementation. So these are some additional topics that the IDN EPDP has addressed in detail.

And then, for ccPDP4, they have a general recommendation that all ccTLD-related policies must apply to variant IDN ccTLDs. That's a general recommendation they have. And then of course they have a Confusing-Similarity Subgroup that's deliberating on

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confusing-similarity-related topics, which is very similar to the string similarity review deliberated by the small group of EPDP. So that's additional topics.

And, finally, this is another category of recommendations. It's the same entity at the second level. So, based on my understanding by talking with Bart, the Variant Subgroup of ccPDP4 has developed some recommendations under this topic, but they need to be discussed with the full working group to understand whether second-level-related questions are within or outside the scope. So there's some additional deliberation or consideration needed by the full ccPDP working group.

And then, for EPDP, of course, we just started the second-level-related deliberations. So we don't have the recommendations ready to present yet.

So this all covers everything, I think, the two groups have worked on so far. So we're one minute to the top of the hour. I will stop here. And we're right at the top of the hour now.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Ariel. You just squeezed that in nicely.

So, look, I think the basis of the conversation will ... I think it's good to some information-sharing about what they're covering, what we're covering, and what we're not covering, but I think the real conversation will be around where we have recommendations that are inconsistent. Maybe it's just the wording that makes them appear inconsistent but they're not necessarily so. I think that's where the main focus of our discussion will be.

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Anil, go ahead.

ANIL JAIN:

Thank you, Donna. First of all, my [hat's off] to Ariel for a wonderful categorization of the presentation. And I think this will generate a very good discussion between the two working groups.

The second thing is that I think there are two more topics, if it is appropriate, that we may include in this. One is the EBERO situation. It's an emergency situation. In case the registry operator ceases to exist because of any reason, then a whole process has to be entered.

And the second, which I personally feel is maybe included in the case time permits, is the process of [appealing] by the applicant in case the variant is either denied or withheld in whatever the situation is.

So this is my suggestion in case it is possible to cover within the permitted time. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Anil.

So, Ariel, is that something you could work with Bart on and see if it's something we can identify for discussion or if there's some way to weave it into the deck that you've already developed?

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ARIEL LIANG: Yeah. I will touch base with Bart and maybe also with Anil just to make sure I get the suggestions correctly. And then we can incorporate that in the deck, yeah.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. Terrific. Thank you, Ariel.

All righty. So we are two minutes over time, and folks are already leaving. So thanks, everybody, for the discussion today. We will come back to the text that we were discussing today with some suggestions for two of the items and also have more substantive discussion around the consistent user experience. Thanks, everybody.

**[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]**