

Expedited Policy Development Process: Internationalized Domain Names

WHAT CAN I EXPECT AT ICANN78 RELATED TO THIS TOPIC?

The EPDP Team will conduct three working sessions: 1) Saturday, 21 October from 09:00–10:00 CEST; Saturday, 21 October from 10:30–12:00 CEST; and 3) Monday, 23 October from 16:30–17:30 CEST. Please check the ICANN78 meeting schedule for the confirmed time. During the sessions, the EPDP Team will work toward finalizing its Phase 1 Final Report and may discuss topics within Phase 2 of its charter, covering issues pertaining to second level IDN variant management.

WHAT IS THIS ABOUT?

On 20 May 2021, the GNSO Council approved the [initiation request](#) for the EPDP on Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) and adopted its [charter](#). The EPDP Team is expected to:

- Determine the approach for a consistent definition of all gTLDs; and
- Develop policy recommendations that will eventually allow for the introduction of variant gTLDs at the top level.

The charter includes 48 questions under seven broader topics, ranging from the “same entity” requirement at the top and second levels, to adjustments to ICANN policies and procedures as they relate to IDNs. The EPDP Team has been conducting its deliberations by building on the existing body of policy work, research, and analysis on the IDNs, specifically the Outputs produced by the GNSO New gTLD Subsequent Procedures PDP. ([Learn More](#))

WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATUS OF THIS PROJECT?

The EPDP Team began meeting in August 2021. During its deliberations, the EPDP Team considered the [early written input](#) on topics in its charter from the Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO), GNSO’s Registries Stakeholder Group (RySG), and the Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC).

In November 2022, the GNSO Council approved the [project change request](#) from the EPDP Team. It will complete its work in two phases. Phase 1 focuses on topics related to top-level IDN gTLD definition and variant management. Phase 2 focuses on topics related to second level IDN variant management. The EPDP Team believes that this two-phased approach will help prioritize the current implementation planning for the



New gTLD Subsequent Procedures (SubPro) PDP Outputs that are focused primarily on the top level.

To ensure a consistent solution for variant TLDs is being developed, the EPDP Team monitors the activities in the ccNSO's ccPDP4 on the (de-)selection of IDN ccTLD Strings. The EPDP Team and the ccPDP4 periodically hold joint sessions to discuss their preliminary recommendations, compare similarities, and understand the differences. A section in the Phase 1 Initial Report includes the EPDP Team's analysis of preliminary recommendations under four topics covered by both groups where differences existed.

On 24 April 2023, the EPDP Team published its Phase 1 Initial Report for [Public Comment](#). The Public Comment period was closed on 19 June 2023. The Initial Report includes 68 preliminary recommendations. Most strive to operationalize SubPro PDP Outputs to allow for future applications of gTLD variant labels through the New gTLD Program. By the Public Comment closure, the EPDP Team received input from [twelve \(12\) submissions](#), which did not raise any significant concerns or new issues that the EPDP Team had not previously considered.¹ By the end of September 2023, the EPDP Team completed the review of all public comments and the finalization of Phase 1 recommendations.

On 16 March 2023, the ICANN Board requested the EPDP Team to deliver an updated project plan by the end of ICANN77 that identifies all charter questions that will impact the next Applicant Guidebook (AGB), as well as a timeline for the EPDP Team's delivery of relevant recommendations to the GNSO Council. While the Public Comment proceeding was ongoing, the EPDP Team conducted a thorough analysis of its charter questions in accordance with the Board request. It also started discussing its Phase 2 work. On 25 May, the EPDP Team reported to the GNSO Council that nearly all of its charter questions may have an impact on the next AGB, and as such, it determined to continue its two-phased approach and the estimated timeline for project completion remained unchanged. During ICANN77, the GNSO Council submitted the [deliverable](#), including the EPDP Team's project plan, to the ICANN Board. On 25 July, the GNSO Council submitted a [revised timeline](#) from the EPDP Team after it considered several factors, including the progress made on Phase 2 deliberations ahead of schedule as well as the approval of its request to hold a dedicated face-to-face workshop in December 2023. While there was no change to the timeline for delivering the Phase 1 Final Report, the EPDP Team shortened the Phase 2 timeline by 13 months, with the estimated delivery date of the Phase 2 Final Report in October 2024.

¹The EPDP Team sought guidance from the GNSO Council with regard to four submissions related to the “québec” string. The GNSO Council [agreed](#) with the EPDP Team's assessment that those comments were outside the scope for the EPDP to address.

WHAT ARE THE EXPECTED NEXT STEPS?

The EPDP Team is expected to conduct a formal consensus call on all its Phase 1 final recommendations and review the draft Phase 1 Final Report. The goal is to submit the Final Report to the GNSO Council no later than November 2023.

In addition, the EPDP Team is expected to resume its Phase 2 deliberation, including the planning for its face-to-face workshop, from 6–8 December 2023 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

Parties interested in the EPDP on IDNs should coordinate with the members assigned by the respective Stakeholder Group, Constituency, Supporting Organization, or Advisory Committee and communicate any input they believe may be useful to the EPDP’s deliberations. The EPDP’s “representative + open” membership model allows interested parties to join as a participant and take part in substantive EPDP deliberations, except when an official position is needed from the relevant organization or for a consensus call. Interested parties are also able to follow the working group’s progress by signing up as observers.

MORE INFORMATION

- [EPDP Phase 1 Initial Report Public Comment](#)
- [EPDP webpage](#)
- [EPDP workspace](#)

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