Expedited Policy Development Process: Internationalized Domain Names

WHAT CAN I EXPECT AT ICANN77 RELATED TO THIS TOPIC?
The EPDP Team will conduct four working sessions total (one working session each day): 1) Monday, 12 June from 13:45–15:00 EDT, 2) Tuesday, 13 June from 15:30–17:00 EDT, 3) Wednesday, 14 June from 10:45–12:15 EDT, and 4) Thursday, 15 June from 9:00–10:15 EDT. Please check the ICANN77 meeting schedule for the confirmed time. During the sessions, the working group will 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 IDN subject, 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 the course of its deliberation, the EPDP Team has taken into account 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, with Phase 1 focusing on topics related to top level IDN gTLD definition and variant management, and Phase 2 focusing 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 of the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures (SubPro) PDP Outputs that are focused primarily on the top-level.

On 24 April 2023, the EPDP Team published its Phase 1 Initial Report for Public Comment. The Initial Report includes 68 preliminary recommendations covering issues pertaining to gTLD variant definition and management at the top level. Most of the preliminary recommendations aim to operationalize SubPro PDP Outputs to allow for future applications of gTLD variant labels through the New gTLD Program. On 17 May 2023, the EPDP Team held a webinar to help the community learn more about the key recommendations and facilitate their participation in the Public Comment. In addition, the EPDP Team met with the IDN subject matter experts from the SSAC in May 2023 to discuss selected preliminary recommendations that may be of interest and sought targeted input.

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 EPDP-IDNs and ccPDP4 about differences between them.

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, as well as a timeline for the EPDP Team’s delivery of relevant recommendations to the GNSO Council. While the Public Comment proceeding is ongoing, the EPDP Team started discussion of its Phase 2 work. It focuses on issues pertaining to second level IDN variant management and the review of its project plan in accordance with the Board request. During the 25 May GNSO Council meeting, the EPDP leadership team presented this analysis. Final discussions on the EPDP Team’s project plan are expected during the special working session on Sunday, 11 June, before the start of ICANN77. There, the Council will be finalizing deliverables on the four work items related to the next application round that have been requested by the end of ICANN77.
WHAT ARE THE EXPECTED NEXT STEPS?
The Phase 1 Initial Report Public Comment is scheduled to close on 5 June 2023. The EPDP Team plans to pause its Phase 2 work and conduct analysis of public comments received on this Initial Report. Once the EPDP Team has considered all the public comments received, it will conduct a formal consensus call on all the proposed Phase 1 final recommendations before their inclusion in the Phase 1 Final Report.

Following the submission of the Phase 1 Final Report, the EPDP Team will resume its Phase 2 deliberation.

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

RESPONSIBLE STAFF: Ariel Liang, Steve Chan, Emily Barabas