
ICANN Transcription

IDNs EPDP

Thursday, 06 July 2023 at 12:00 UTC

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DEVAN REED: Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening. Welcome to the IDNs EPDP call taking place on Thursday, 6 July 2023 at 12:00 UTC.

We do have apologies from Satish Babu. All members and participants will be promoted to panelists for today's call. Observers will remain as an attendee and will have view access to chat.

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 say your name before speaking for the transcript. As a reminder, those who take part in the ICANN multistakeholder process are to comply

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with the Expected Standards of Behavior. Thank you. And over to our chair, Donna Austin. Please begin.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Devan. Welcome, everybody, to today's call. I think we have a bit to take it through today. So we're going to start making our way through the comments on the Phase 1 Report, if I remember correctly. All right. So a couple of things by way of updates. So thanks to everybody who filled in, I guess, our midterm survey. We ended up with 18 people, I think it was, that responded. So thank you very much for that. That's great. I think the main idea behind the survey is to provide feedback to the GNSO Council. But Ariel's going to find out whether the results can be shared with the team as well, because I think it would be helpful for us to understand overall what the comments were.

The other thing is that we still have a survey out for preferred dates for the face-to-face meeting, and I think that's open until the end of Friday. So tomorrow. So if you haven't had a chance to have a look at that yet, please do so and identify your preferred date. Because once we have those, we'll make a decision about the timing of the face-to-face meeting. Okay.

With that, so I think that plan, if I remember from what we discussed a couple of days ago, is that we're going to make our way through the Initial Report public comments. What we're going to start with first are the comments that were received related to .quebec. So from a leadership perspective, we don't believe that the comments fall within the scope of our charter. We appreciate that some may feel that they're related to the work that we're

doing. But we're not confident that that's the case. So what we want to ask the team today, if there's any objection to the leadership writing to the GNSO Council, making them aware of the comments that we've received about .quebec and seeking guidance from Council on how they want us or if they want us to consider the issue in any shape or form. So maybe I've got something wrong here because Ariel has her hand up. But that's kind of what our approach will be to .quebec. So, Ariel?

ARIEL LIANG: Yes. Sorry. No, not anything you said was wrong. Donna, I just want to help. Maybe not everybody is familiar with the comments from .quebec. And if you don't mind, I can just quickly summarize what the issue they raised and in case if not everybody is familiar with the comments they raised.

DONNA AUSTIN: Yeah, fair point, Ariel. So go ahead, please.

ARIEL LIANG: Okay, yeah, no problem. So .quebec is already a delegated gTLD. However, the registry operator for .quebec, they wanted to manage the .quebec, the E with the accent as IDN gTLD. And that's basically to serve the French speaking community in the Quebec area of Canada. And then the current dilemma they're facing is that because the Root Zone LGR is being recommended as the sole source for calculating variant labels, and based on the Latin Generation Panel's determination, the E with the accent and the ASCII E, they're not regarded as a variant label. So, that

means the .quebec with the accent E will be regarded as separate, just individual gTLD, and it will not be regarded as a variant gTLD for the existing delegated .quebec.

So, with that background, there's nothing prohibit .quebec the registry to apply for .quebec, the IDN one, in the future around. But the issue they may face is that the String Similarity Review Panel may determine and then apply for IDN .quebec string is too confusingly similar to the existing delegated ASCII .quebec. Then there is no current solution to let them basically go through the application. The chance is too high for the panel to decide they're confusingly similar still. So essentially, what they want is some kind of exception procedure to allow confusingly similar strings to pass the string similarity evaluation as long as the same entity principle can be followed. So that means operates the ASCII .quebec and the IDN .quebec by the same registry operator and with some other additional guardrails, so as if they're variant labels, but of course they're not because RZ-LGR said no. So that's the main problem. I see Dennis also has his hand up and I know Dennis is probably familiar with this issue. So I will stop here and hopefully that helped catch everybody up with the problem at hand.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Ariel. Dennis?

DENNIS TAN TANAKA: Thank you, Donna. Thank you, Ariel. Yeah, I think your representation of the comments and issue at hand is accurate.

Just full disclosure, Nacho Amadeo, the author of the comments we talk about, those issues, this is a long-standing issue that Core has had for years now. And yeah, we would talk about how same entity principle could apply to resolution of potential contentions based on confusing similarity. If you apply the same entity principle then confusion should be minimized, meaning if two gTLDs are found to be confusing similar, but as long as they are managed, operated by the same entity, then that confusion should be if not removed, minimized to a minimum level. So I just want to provide that context. But yeah, Ariel.

To Donna's point, yes, I agree. This is not in our mandate to deal with. It's just outside. We're not discussing the substance of how string similarity review and conclusions, they are handled. So yeah, I think it's appropriate to raise these to the GNSO Council and see how that can be dealt with. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Dennis. Michael?

MICHAEL BAULAND: Thanks. One small addition to this. Also, I talked to those people for closure and Core is running the TLD but they contracted our company for the technical part. So I'm somehow also involved here. The main reason they think that we should deal with this is that in the CC world, this would have been possible. And there's already example case for that. And due to the fact that we should have similar rules to CC, that reasoning was brought up that

maybe we should indeed work on this. But let's get it back to the Council and see what they think. Thanks.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Michael, and thanks, Dennis. I am aware that there were a number of conversations around this issue with various people during the most recent ICANN meeting in D.C. and also the one before that in Cancún. So I know it's a little bit of a hot topic. But I think from a leadership perspective and I hearing some support from the group here is that there's a number of ways you might be able to perhaps fix the problem, but the problem needs to be articulated and we need to get some guidance from Council, whether it's a problem for us to solve or it's for somebody else to solve. So with that in mind, we'll kick this over to Council. What I mean by that is we will make Council aware of the comments that we've received, bring it to the attention of Council and seek their guidance on whether they want us to deal with this, and if so, how. And if not, then it's then for Council to resolve. Hadia? Then we'll move on from this one.

HADIA EL MINIAWI:

Thank you. I was going to put my hand down. But anyway, I definitely agree with what you just said. I also agree with Dennis and Michael and Ariel that this is not within our mandate or scope. However, it's a true issue that needs a kind of resolution. Maybe, as you mentioned, Donna, Council will assign this to us. If not, so maybe another PDP or another working group can address it. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks very much, Hadia. Okay. So I think we're good to go with the approach that we're recommending. There's a number of comments that were submitted around .quebec that we still may need to consider as part of the public comment process, but for the larger issue at hand, we'll send it off to Council and get some guidance.

Okay. So with that, hopefully folks have had a chance to review the document that Ariel sent out on the mailing list earlier this week. That's going to be the basis for our conversations moving forward over the next week or two or three. We will be interspersing some Phase 2 discussion working through the Phase 1 public comments. We had some good conversation last week around some of our Phase 2 charter questions, and one in particular, which I can't recall right this second but I do know that there was something that we had to tease out about what happens to the source label at the second level if it's deleted. So that is a conversation that we'll come back to because I don't want us to forget it and not be able to have a chance to talk about it for a couple of months. Or maybe that's an exaggeration. A few weeks because we're still working on the Phase 1 public comment. From time to time, we will switch between Phase 1 and Phase 2 work. But the primary task at the moment is trying to get through the Phase 1 public comment and then get that finalized.

One other thing I just want to mention as well is that the leadership team is reviewing our timeline. You'll remember that at ICANN77, we were a little bit of a hot topic because folks were concerned about our work being on the critical path to a next

round. And I gave a commitment to Council that we would review our timeline for our project plan, but more particularly when we think we'll finish that Phase 2 work. So that's something that leadership is also having a look at and we'll revise accordingly. So we'll come back to the group before we send anything to Council, but just to know that that's something that we're working on in the background as well.

Okay. So with that, I'm going to hand it over to Ariel who's going to take us through the comments. We'll see where we get to. I don't think we have a line that we've drawn here on how much we want to get through on this call. But we're just going to do the best we can. So, over to you, Ariel.

ARIEL LIANG:

Okay. Thanks, Donna. I also put the link to the Public Comment Review Tool spreadsheet in the chat. I'm probably going to try to make this a little bigger. I hope this is more legible for everybody. But please let me know if you want me to remain further. So I recognize it's going to be—

DONNA AUSTIN:

Ariel, just before you start—sorry. So if you happen to have the document open, please be mindful that Ariel is driving. So try not to muck around with the display. Ariel's trying to work through it. Thanks.

ARIEL LIANG:

Thank you, Donna. I appreciate that. So I do realize him maybe slower at the beginning when we go through the document and the format, but our pace may pick up, the more practice we do was this tool. So if we don't go through as many as we hoped, it's okay. It's our first call going through these comments. Then I just want to quickly point out the Snapshots sheets. All this recommendations are linked to their separate spreadsheet that includes all the comments. Sorry, I'm hearing some background noise. If you're not speaking, please go on mute. Thank you. Thank you.

So you can quickly just click and then go to the relevant Recommendation sheet. And then the B and C column here basically shows which recommendations have received public comment. Then for Column C, it's a staff designation, which recommendation we think that significant concerns or objections were raised, and those ones that we probably want you to focus more on colored in red. The reason being a staff designation is because some of the commenters they didn't explicitly select whether they support a recommendation as written or they have other revisions in mind and whether they actually do not like the recommendation. So that's why we did a preliminary assessment and that's up to the group to also determine whether that's correct. But roughly one-third of the recommendations are having some kind of concerns or objections raised. So that's why we think those may need some further review by the group.

Now, quickly, we're probably going to go to the first recommendation, that's 1.1. It says RZ-LGR must be the sole source to calculate the variant labels and disposition values for

existing delegated gTLDs from the 2012 round. So we are going to park the .quebec-related comments here. They actually did select they do not support this recommendation. I don't know whether they truly understand what this option means but they've inserted their comments there. But we're not going to touch on that. I'm just going to look at the other comments, and mostly they're either support as written or support recommendation intent was wording change. And then for the support as written was there from RySG, BC, GAC, and Julius Kirimi. I think it's individual, although I don't know who he is exactly, but basically, they just support the recommendation with no change.

Then we did receive some wording change for some non-substantive comments. One is from the ALAC. They suggest we revise the wording to "The RZ-LGR must be the sole source to calculate the variant labels and disposition values for all existing delegated gTLDs." So basically, get rid of the term "from the 2012 round". There are some additional comments here. But in summary, they believe this change will help remove the limitation just to the delegated gTLD from 2012 rounds. It will apply to all existing delegated gTLDs. Then that's what the charter question was asking. So that's the ALAC comment.

Then for the ICANN Org comment. ICANN Org comment also had a big issue with the phrase "existing delegated gTLDs from the 2012 round". Then we also had a clarification on a phrase to indicate this recommendation only applies to existing gTLDs. This little star sign, and then we've added this phrase to highlight that. So basically, ICANN Org believed the way the text is worded in conjunction with this sentence by the star is kind of conflicting.

Then we basically should just clarify this recommendation impacts all existing gTLD operators from 2012 round, then limiting them to only IDN gTLDs to prevent any opportunities for misinterpretation. So it's basically both ALAC and ICANN Org believe measuring the 2012 round may be a little bit limiting, and also the IDN gTLD seems also limiting in a way. So we just need to make sure it's worded in a consistent manner and not too constraining. I think that's the summary of these two comments from ALAC and ICANN Org. We do have ALAC folks. And also Michael is on the call with us. So I'll stop here and see what comment from the group is.

Then in the tool, you're seeing column D, we should document the responses from the EPDP team to these comments and potential actions. An action could be a revision to the recommendation or additional recommendation or a complete reconsider of the recommendation. So if the EPP team deem that these actions are appropriate, then we should document these actions here as a record and then that's also for transparency reason. So I will stop here for now and see whether there's any comments from the group.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Ariel. So I have Dennis and Michael. There's something else that struck me when I was reading through these is that we're talking about existing delegated gTLDs. I'm pretty sure there are existing gTLDs that are contracted that hadn't been delegated yet from the 2012 round. A question for the group is whether there's a problem with using delegated here as well because it doesn't

actually capture those that have been the contracted but aren't yet delegated. So Dennis and then Michael.

DENNIS TAN TANAKA: Thank you, Donna. Dennis Tan, Registries. So the Registry Stakeholder Group agrees with these comments. I believe we did not specifically edit specific ones, Recommendations or Implementation Guidance, but we noted a global or overall comment where the intent is to apply the RZ-LGR to all delegated or contracted gTLD labels. As of today, the recommendation should not just carve out the 2012 round, because really, the intent is to protect all existing TLDs to this moment, to this date. So, in that sense, I think we are supportive of that change. I appreciate, Donna, what you just said. This nuance between already delegated but are still in the process even from the previous round. But I just want to voice that the intent is to protect or the Root Zone LGR applies to all existing TLDs. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Dennis. Michael?

MICHAEL BAULAND: Thanks. I agree with what has been said by you, Donna. We shouldn't restrict this to the 2012 round. There are gTLDs like .cat, .hotel. They've been around before that round and which should also be included by the new policy. Thanks.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Michael. So I think we have some agreement here to rephrase at the Phase 1. Yeah. Rephrase the recommendation. Justine is wondering whether it would also make sense to drop the word “existing”. Ariel, perhaps if we can go back to the recommendation language.

First of all, let’s have a look at the suggestion from ALAC. So, the Root Zone LGR must be the sole source to calculate the variant labels and disposition values of all existing—if we just had gTLDs and took out delegated. Justine is suggesting take out existing. So the Root Zone LGR must be the sole source to calculate the variant labels disposition values of all gTLDs. I kind of think we might need existing in there to differentiate from future and now, but maybe that’s just a nuance. So what do we think, folks? I think we’re in agreement that we can change the recommendation and [inaudible] agreement on the language now. Or maybe we can bring the language back. Justine?

JUSTINE CHEW: If we drop the word “existing” but retain the word “delegated,” then so long as a string that has been approved but yet to be delegated, and when it’s delegated, the policy kicks in. So that’s the way I look at it anyway. So I think if we want to try and capture strings that are still in the process of being delegated, then removing the word existing might work. That was essentially what I was asking. Sorry.

DONNA AUSTIN: Yeah. Any thoughts on that from anyone? Sarmad and then Ariel.

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Thank you. If we have actually strings which have already been contracted but not delegated, I think, for example, variant labels should be blocked as well or for others to apply even if they're not delegated. In that sense, we should address those which are in the process but not completed the delegation process. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Sarmad. Ariel?

ARIEL LIANG: I don't have a specific suggestion yet. But I just want to remind folks the reason we have existing delegated and 2012 round in this recommendation. So these three things are basically to emphasize this recommendation intends to fill the gap that SubPro recommendation hasn't been addressing existing ones, and they're talking about future ones. So this is to differentiate from the SubPro recommendation. But I do recognize existing and delegated. They may be duplicative. But then also, we do have the phrase allocated and delegated in some other recommendations. So I wonder whether we can just say for allocated and delegated gTLDs and then cross out "from 2012 round" and "existing". I wonder whether that will work.

DONNA AUSTIN: So I think the problem from my perspective with that, Ariel, is that contracting is different to allocated. So this is where our terminology gets a bit challenging. So for now, can we just put a

team response here that notes that there is an agreement to reword the recommendation to account for the fact that or to address that it may not just be for 2012 round. And it would also relate to parties that are contracted but yet delegated. So we just need to find some language that would work. So we can just take that down as an agreement, but let's not get too hung up on the language right now. We're in agreement we just need to refine this language. And the other—if we can just scroll up a little bit, Ariel, I want to make sure that we've captured the concern from that ICANN Org comment. Ariel, I see your hand is up.

ARIEL LIANG:

Yes. The reason I raised my hand is about the ICANN Org comment. That's regarding this phrase "Preliminary Recommendation 1.1 only impacts the existing IDN gTLDs from the 2012 round." So it's not really part of the recommendation language, it's basically a kind of like a footnote for the recommendation. The intent to highlight this recommendation only impact existing gTLDs. And I believe there are eight recommendations total that only impacts existing gTLDs. So we basically highlight those with this phrase.

But ICANN Org's comment is that this seems a little conflicting because now it's kind of only refers to existing IDN gTLDs. But then the recommendation will only talk about existing gTLDs. The reason is because based on the current RZ-LGR calculation, that existing IDN gTLDs, only the Chinese and Arabic ones, they have allocatable variant labels. So only those they could potentially have variant gTLDs to be applied for in the future. But also we know RZ-LGR may be updated, and then that could change the

calculating in the future. So if we do put this limitation here, it may make it difficult for future updates. So I'm wondering whether we believe this phrase is still essential or if it could potentially cause conflicting interpretation of the recommendation. Maybe removing it will be a better choice. So I just want to highlight this one.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Ariel. So interested on thoughts from folks on that one. So we have Justine, Sarmad, and Hadia.

JUSTINE CHEW: Thanks. I would recommend that we get rid of that sentence with the star in front for all the eight recommendations that it appears. We understand the fact that the recommendation currently only impacts existing IDN gTLDs from the 2012 round. And if we want to mention that, we can mention that in the rationale somewhere. But I think it doesn't need to be connected to the recommendation text per se in this way. Thanks.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Justine. Sarmad?

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Yeah. So the intention was that this asterisk, if there is anything which needs to be interpreted, it should be part of the recommendation itself. And having add-on language to a recommendation as asterisk, it's not clear whether it modifies the recommendations or not modify the recommendation. It's clear

here that what's in the recommendation is just gTLDs, and in the asterisk is IDN gTLDs, and those are not the same sets. So it wasn't really clear how to interpret this additional information. That was, I think, one of the motivations behind that comment. But also, I guess, following up, I think this Root Zone LGR is not only calculating allocatable variants, it's also calculating blocked variants, which means it could actually be applicable to all scripts, including Latin and others, and not just the languages which are scripts which are creating allocatable variants. So IDN gTLDs in that case is very significantly limiting in that context as well. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Sarmad. Hadia?

HADIA EL MINIAWI: Thank you. So I do agree with Ariel and Sarmad that the asterisk part is limiting the recommendation. However, I was thinking, what was the rationale behind putting it in the first place? Because I don't remember the rationale now. And as Sarmad just mentioned, the recommendation does not limit itself. It does not limit the recommendation to IDNs. However, the preliminary recommendation does limit it to IDNs. So what was the rationale behind putting this asterisk? Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Hadia. Somebody else's memory might be better than mine. But it could have been just a shorthand from when we were considering the charter question, and we just kind of kept it nicely

wrapped around IDN gTLDs. But I think it was probably just that. It was just a bit of shorthand or a reminder for the group, and not necessarily something that was required in the report. But I'm happy for someone to say otherwise. Ariel?

ARIEL LIANG:

Yes, Donna. You said it right. Just to complement that, as I mentioned earlier, when we consider differentiation from SubPro, this is one of the recommendations that kind of fills the gap that SubPro didn't address about existing gTLDs. And then when we highlight those recommendations, we have that in mind is calculating the allocatable variant labels for the existing gTLDs. Then that only applies to Chinese and Arabic gTLDs based on the current RZ-LGR Version 5. So, that's why when we say existing gTLDs with existing IDN gTLDs. But then again, as what Sarmad pointed out, the calculation also impact blocked variant labels, so that basically applied to all existing gTLDs, not just IDNs, because we're not only considering allocatable but also blocked. So that's why we have that but it's really not part of the recommendation. It's just to highlight as a shorthand.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Ariel. Hadia?

HADIA EL MINIAWI:

Thank you. The recommendation as written, it avoided addressing blocked variants. So it was only addressing delegated variants and that's a blocked, were not within the equation. And thus, non-IDN gTLDs were not also in the rationale when we actually

developed this recommendation, I assume. However, if we are going to change the delegated part, remove the delegated part, then this changes the recommendation, and it would apply also on blocked variants. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Hadia. Look, I think we know what we have to do here. We're in agreement that we need to adjust the recommendation similar to what has been suggested by ALAC for the reasons identified by ALAC, and also to address comments from the Registry Stakeholder Group that perhaps remove the reference to the 2012 round. So, rather than try to belabor it here and come up with a language, let's just note that there's agreement to revise it, taking into account the suggestions we've received, and then we'll come back to the language later.

Okay. So let's move on to the next one, please, Ariel.

ARIEL LIANG: All right. Sounds good. Thanks, everybody, for the comments. I see Michael has his hand up.

DONNA AUSTIN: Michael?

MICHAEL BAULAND: Thanks. Just a very quick question of administrative nature. All those comments showed the Registrar Stakeholder Group as having no opinion. But did they do something wrong when writing

the comments? Because in the comments, they said they support all recommendations. But maybe they should have done that for each recommendation separately. It's always shown as no opinion. But when you look at the last tip of the Excel sheet, the comment that we support all three recommendations.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Michael. So let Ariel respond to this because she put this spreadsheet together. Ariel, how did you account for the Registrar comment?

ARIEL LIANG: Thanks, Michael. That's the part I welcome feedback from the group because that's the staff designation. I did record the overall comment from RrSG that supports the recommendation. So maybe I did the designation incorrectly, I should just put it as a support recommendation as written. If, Michael, you think that's appropriate, I can update the spreadsheet after the call and put the RrSG [inaudible] under the first category, if that's the correct way of categorizing it.

MICHAEL BAULAND: Yes, that's the best way. But you don't have to do it now. Just for completeness sake. Thanks.

ARIEL LIANG: Okay, sounds good. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Michael. So, let's move on, Ariel.

ARIEL LIANG: Okay, sounds good. Second Recommendation 2.1. Any allocatable variant labels of an existing IDN gTLDs from the 2012 round as calculated by the RZ-LGR can only be allocated to the registry operator of the existing IDN gTLD withheld for possible allocation only to that registry operator. So basically, this recommendation received either support or support with some wording change. So Julius Kirimi, BC, and RySG, they all kind of just support a recommendation as written with no specific wording change suggestion. But we did receive some suggested wording change from RySG, ALAC, and ICANN Org.

So RySG is basically suggesting delete IDN. And then also delete from the 2012 round. I believe it's kind of in line with similar suggestion we discussed in Recommendation 1.1. Because using IDN in 2012 round may be limiting. And then also delete of the existing IDN gTLD in the phrase regarding allocated to the registry operator of the existing IDN gTLD. So it's just basically allocated to the registry operator. So make the recommendation less limiting with this revision.

ALAC has this specific revised wording suggestion is to say any allocatable variant labels of an existing gTLD as calculated by the RZ-LGR can only be allocated to the registry operator of the existing gTLD or withheld for possible allocation only to that registry operator. So, I think it's very much in line with RySG's suggestion.

Then for ICANN Org, there were two parts of the comment. The second part is basically still there's the issue with this asterisk sign and then the phrase following that, kind of highlighting where as a shorthand, just talk about existing gTLDs. So if the group is in agreement deleting this, we can apply a global change, basically deleting all these shorthand from the eight recommendations we highlighted. So that's the second part of the suggestion from ICANN Org. Then the first part suggests the group determine whether language used should be applicable to existing IDN gTLDs or just applicable to all existing gTLDs. That's very much in line with RySG and ALAC because RZ-LGR could change over time, and maybe in the future, even for Latin script, the allocatable variant labels may be expanded. We don't know, but it could happen. So make this so much limiting to IDN could be a problem in the future.

So I think these three recommendations are basically aligned and have similar suggestions. I will stop here and see what the group thinks.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Ariel. Any comments, thoughts on this one? Anyone think that Ariel's assessment of the comments is off the mark? Now would be a good time to say so, but if it folks think it's on the mark then one option here is do we agree with ALAC wording? Can we adopt that? And also on the second issue just similar to 1.1, we get rid of the preliminary recommendation and the impacts existing IDN gTLDs. Okay. So looks like Ariel's on point.

So would folks be okay with any allocatable variant label of an existing gTLD as calculated by the Root Zone LGR can only be allocated to the registry operator of the existing gTLD or withheld for possible allocation only to that registry operator. So that's the language suggested by ALAC. Justine?

JUSTINE CHEW:

Thanks. I think the one suggested by the Registry Stakeholder Group probably would work the same or even better in the sense that they have the word "same" inserted. So I think that bring more clarity. So insofar as the ALAC comment is aligned with that except for the word "same" so I would counsel adopting word "same" as well.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Okay. Thanks, Justine. Are folks okay with that? We adopt the registry language which has the word same and is consistent with the intent of what ALAC was trying to get to, that same provides more clarity.

Okay. All right. So folks are agreeing in chat with Justine's suggestion. So I think we adopt the language suggested by the Registry Stakeholder Group. Sorry, because I was reading "delete IDN," delete something else. I hadn't realized that that was revised language. Okay. So I think we can note here that the recommendation language will be changed to that suggested by the Registry Stakeholder Group.

Does that address the ICANN Org comment? The other thing I just wanted to clarify here, so when ICANN Org submitted their

comments, they didn't do it on the form that was provided for folks to submit their comments. It was submitted in a PDF form. So, Ariel, what I assume you've done here is pulled out where you thought the comment was relevant and inserted it in your table, so that's why. That's what staff's analysis. ICANN Org did not explicitly select this option. I think that's what that means.

ARIEL LIANG: Yeah. That's correct. The ICANN Org comment did specify which comment applies to which recommendation. The part they didn't select is whether they support recommendation as written or with wording change or have significant change required. Of course, from worksite, I think they don't feel this is appropriate for the Org to say they support a recommendation or not support a recommendation, but they could provide comments. Then I tried to fit the comment in the categories that the group has laid out. So that's why I included that phrase at the top.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. Thanks, Ariel.

ARIEL LIANG: No problem. Donna, is that a cue for me to move on?

DONNA AUSTIN: Yeah. I think it is, Ariel. I was figuring ICANN Org input, but I think with the change, that's addressing the ICANN Org comment. So I think we can move on.

ARIEL LIANG: Okay. Just quickly confirm that we will remove the phrase with the star at the beginning.

DONNA AUSTIN: Yeah.

ARIEL LIANG: Okay.

DONNA AUSTIN: I meant to do that as well.

ARIEL LIANG: Okay. Thank you. Next one is Recommendation 3.1. Application for an allocatable variant label cannot proceed an application for that variant label's primary IDN gTLD string. So we basically got either support as written or some wording change. Basically, RySG, RrSG, ALAC, and Julius, they don't have any suggested wording change, they just support recommendation as written. Then for ICANN Org, basically suggest the readers get familiar with the glossary before reading the actual recommendation, because we do have the key term primary here. And I don't think we have to say, "Please read the glossary before you read this recommendation," in the actual recommendation language, but maybe we can perhaps incorporate that in the rationale just to remind people. Or we can, for example, include a footnote for the recommendation, and then just in the footnote explain what

primary means that we can copy-paste from the glossary. So there are a few ways to do it. I'm just wondering how the group thinks in terms of the ICANN Org's comment.

DONNA AUSTIN:

So my sense is we can—thank you, ICANN Org, for the comment. What would seem appropriate to me is that the—I can't remember how this was formatted. But just that within the introduction or whatever we have with the report, we just encourage people to read the glossary before reading the recommendations because that's important to understanding the terms in the recommendation. So I think we can take it on board. But I don't see any reason for having something in every recommendation that says, "Don't forget to read the glossary because that will help you understand the terms." That seems to be overkill to me. So I think we can highlight at once in the introduction or somewhere that's appropriate. But I don't think we need it for every recommendation as a reminder. That would be my sense anyway.

Okay. So any objection to that approach? So Nitin is okay with that. And Dennis is okay with that, Justine. Okay. All right. So let's go with that approach. So keep rolling, Ariel.

ARIEL LIANG:

Okay. Sounds good. So nothing for 3.2. It's basically support recommendation as written from RySG, RrSG, ALAC, Julius. And then the other commenters, they didn't really express any opinion or response. So very easy one.

Recommendation 3.3. It says as applications for allocatable variant labels of existing IDN gTLDs from the 2012 round can be submitted during the immediate next application round of the new gTLD program and any subsequent rounds. And then we also have the star sign, it was the highlighting phrase.

So first off, before we talk about the ICANN Org comment, I think we may have to do global change as to what's basically both Org and RySG has pointed out. So one is about the existing IDN gTLDs from 2012 round. I think this part, maybe we have to just change to existing gTLDs to be less limiting. But please let me know if that's not the correct assessment after this one global change. Second global change is to remove the phrase with the star sign at the beginning to be consistent with our approach for the previous recommendations.

Then finally, I will talk about the ICANN Org comment because RySG, RrSG, ALAC, and Julius says support recommendation as written, and then the other parties, they didn't really have comment. But one does have some comment here. So I asked the group to consider providing clarification regarding the submission of applications, emphasizing that applications can be submitted not only during the immediate next round but also in any future rounds. So the current wording may seem to put an emphasis on the next round. And indeed, that's not the group's interpretation, but it could be interpreted that way. So maybe we can consider whether any potential clarification is needed to prevent misinterpretation. So that's the Org's comment for this one.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Ariel. So my reaction to this is that I don't really agree with ICANN Org's comments because I think it is clear that you can immediate next round or subsequent rounds, so that seems to cover all the possibilities. But Michael is on the call so, Michael, if there's something we're missing here, it would be good to help us out because my reading of the recommendation that we have seems to be okay but maybe we've missed something. Anyone else think that we need to change the recommendation in light of ICANN Org's comment? Okay. So I don't see any hands. Michael has said that subsequent rounds cover it with a question mark. So I think the team response here is that we acknowledge ICANN Org's comments, but we think it's sufficiently worded to cover off the intent and perhaps is a misinterpretation by ICANN.

Ariel, if we can just come back to your comment about a global replace, about taking out the existing IDN gTLDs in 2012 round and replacing that with existing gTLDs, we probably do need to be a little bit cautious when we do that, make sure that by taking out existing IDN gTLD from 2012 round, we're not changing the intent of the recommendation. So I'm pretty sure that when we had this conversation, we were thinking specifically about those IDN gTLDs are applied for in 2012 and their ability to apply for allocatable variant labels in future rounds. So, I wouldn't recommend that we go and do a global replace at this point. We need to make sure that on a case by case basis what language is more appropriate. My recollection of this is that the way that we have it written is probably the best way to reflect it because that's the intent that was for IDN gTLD applicants in the 2012 round. But if anyone disagrees with that, that's fine. Jennifer is saying in chat she's agreed that there are some recs that make sense to retain it.

Okay. So I think we move on. Just on that, Dennis or Jennifer can answer this, but with the Registry comments and the recommendation to change the language, have you identified those recommendations where you're recommending a change? Or were you suggesting a global? Dennis, go ahead.

DENNIS TAN TANAKA: Thank you, Donna. A little bit of background. Jennifer, Maxim, and I, we are so intimately involved in the IDN EPDP when we did the recommendations. It makes sense, right? From a practical standpoint, we know that the allocatable variants for the gTLDs existing ones are Han and Arabic. But when an outsider reads these recommendations, they trigger in their mind, "Is my gTLD going to be protected in the sense that whatever variant set is calculated, I'm going to be the only registry operator that will be able to apply to any variant on that set or nobody else will be able to do it." So all those questions, concerns come up. So while we spend some time educating our colleagues in the stakeholder group, still there is this uneasiness not seeing in the language the intent of the recommendation, not just focusing on the practical aspect of it. So I agree with Jennifer. There are places where they intent, for example, the calculation of the variant set, that applies to all gTLDs, not just the one for the 2012 round. In here, possibly, the 2012 round is correct to use and to be specific about it, but in other cases, not. So looking where we use certain specific language to carve out the 2012 round and where it's applicable is fine. But in others where the intent is to apply that logic or recommendation to all existing gTLDs then let's not just carve out the 2012 round because it potentially creates confusion and

unintended outcomes or unwarranted concerns, if you will. Again, people reading outside this working group. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Okay. Thanks, Dennis. So, I think with the recommendation that we have here, from what I'm seeing from you and Jennifer, is that the language is okay. So existing IDN gTLDs in 2012 round is applicable to this recommendation and should stay.

Sarmad and Ariel?

SARMAD HUSSAIN:

Thank you. Generally, I think the recommendation, the way it's written, is correct at this time. Perhaps one reason we could consider removing IDN gTLDs is that if in the future Latin Generation Panel defines an allocatable variant from an ASCII letter to some other IDN, a non-ASCII character, then allocatable variants generated through that process will result in cases where ASCII gTLDs, which are not tidy and gTLDs, I guess, non-overlapping, may actually have allocatable variants and the existing gTLDs as well, which are ASCII. So, in some ways this is okay because the way Latin LGR is currently designed. What I'm suggesting is theoretical possibility is not really—I'm not sure how practically that is likely. But I just wanted to raise that as an extremely corner case. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Sarmad. Ariel?

ARIEL LIANG: Thanks, Sarmad and everybody. The reason I raised my hand is because I think for reading every recommendation, we do need to track the rationale to understand exactly why we highlighted IDN in 2012 round. And indeed, this recommendation has a pretty long rationale because the group had a pretty extensive discussion about whether discrete rounds should be considered for the existing gTLD registry operators, especially the Chinese and Arabic ones. And if you remember, we did the survey to gauge their interest. So we had a pretty extensive discussion of that. And then eventually, the group has converged on the idea that they still have to apply the variant labels to an application round, not in a discrete round or any other manner. So with that background, it does seem that we do have to somewhat limit this recommendation and put a little bit more limit than the other relevant ones. What Sarmad said also raise a good point about whether we mention IDN could potentially close doors on ASCII gTLD registry operators that maybe have a chance to apply for allocatable variant labels if the Latin Generation Panel decides to expand allocatable variant labels for that script. So that's a good point to consider.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. Thanks, everyone. So the other thing that we need to keep in mind here is what was the charter question? There is a little bit of a risk here that if we play too much with a recommendation, we may be—Ariel's right about looking at the rationale but also the charter questions. So we need to remember what's the context for the recommendation as well. So what we can do is put existing

IDN gTLDs in 2012 round in parentheses and identify as something to come back to and just double-check whether it's okay with the charter. The other thing—and maybe it's because it's so long ago when we had these conversations—but it seems that we're now introducing new stuff. So obviously, when we develop these recommendations, it was a long time ago when it was potentially early in our conversation. So it is important that we get this right. So for now, let's just put this in parenthesis. And the EPDP team responsible, check for consistency and make sure whether it's language we take out or keep in. Because I'm hearing kind of different things here.

Okay. Let's keep moving.

ARIEL LIANG: Okay. Thanks, everybody. Just to confirm, our understanding is we will probably change the recommendation language.

DONNA AUSTIN: We may.

ARIEL LIANG: Okay. We may. Okay. Sounds good. But we will remove this highlighting shorthand phrase.

DONNA AUSTIN: Here's the irony for me. If we remove the existing IDN gTLDs in 2012 round, if that was our shorthand preliminary recommendation only impacts existing IDN gTLDs from 2012

round, then were we wrong with that assumption? Because if we were wrong in that assumption, then change the language. Sorry, this is getting pretty confusing. But it's pretty hard to recall the conversation that we had way back when, but let's just put that IDN gTLDs 2012 round in parentheses and we'll come back to that. So let's just work our way through the rest, and then we we'll get a sense of what needs to change and what doesn't.

ARIEL LIANG:

Okay, sounds good. So moving on to 3.4. A future IDN gTLD applicant must be required to submit one application covering the primary IDN gTLD string and corresponding allocatable variant labels sought by the applicant. So mostly the folks who responded, they support the recommendation as written with the exception of ICANN Org that it does have some comments. Actually, second part of the comment may be more substantive that it may require some further consideration by the group.

So the first comment is though the intent is implied, it would be useful if the team clarifies the applicant must submit one application per application round covering the primary and allocatable variant label sought. That's not very substantive but it's for clarification language.

Then the second comment is probably more complicated to deal with. So ICANN Org seeks clarity on the team's stance on allowing applicants to add, remove, or modify variant gTLDs through the application change request process.

So that's something SubPro actually recommended. But that only applies to .brand TLDs. I took a look at the SubPro report, it's Recommendation 20.8. And I'm happy to put that on the screen to make sure everybody knows what that recommendation talks about. So ICANN Org did note that the SubPro recommendation primarily focuses on permitting string change for .brand TLDs but only under specific circumstances.

So that's two comments from ICANN Org. Of course, we may still have to take a look and see whether the IDN gTLD, this phrasing the recommendation, is still correct. We still have to limit to that or we potentially have to broaden this to just gTLD in case, for example, Latin Generation Panel decides to expand allocatable variant labels to not close that door for future. So that's another point I want to add. I will stop here now.

DONNA AUSTIN:

I have a question. When we did the string similarity review, what did we say about the consequence if one of the allocatable variants was knocked out as part of the string similarity review but the primary was still okay? If we said that the primary was okay but the allocatable variant was knocked out, is that is that a change request process? Or is that just a process that's going to kick out the variant label? Ariel?

ARIEL LIANG:

Thanks, Donna. Just to answer your question. There are two types of outcomes for string similarity review. One is if confusing similarity is found between applied-for label against existing, then

the application is ineligible to proceed. And then that's the knocked out situation you're mentioning. Then the second outcome is if a confusing similarity is found between to applied-for strings, then they're placing a contention set. So that's the 2012 round outcomes. Then what the group confirmed is that outcome will still apply to the hybrid model. So if confusing similarities found between, for example, allocatable variant label against an existing string or the allocatable variant label of an existing string, then the application is ineligible to proceed. But if it's found between two applied-for string or their variant label, then they're placing a contention set. And then of course, the hybrid model has excluded the comparison between blocked variant against the blocked variant. So that's, I think, the preliminary recommendation.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Ariel. Justine?

JUSTINE CHEW: I'm trying to digest the impact of it. So my understanding of what the ICANN Org's comment is, it may not necessarily be a consequence of string similarity or that sort of thing, but just a general ability to change the variant that's being applied for. In the SubPro recommendation, there is a possibility for changing the string that's applied for in the event of a contention. But that only applies to .brand strings and nothing else.

DONNA AUSTIN: So the .brand string, I think the example was SAS from the last round. Is it SAS?

JUSTINE CHEW: Yes.

DONNA AUSTIN: Yeah, SAS. So it was a contention set. I can't remember who won the contention set. But the recommendation from SubPro is that if you have a brand that is in a contention set, there's a possibility that the brand could change, revise the string. So they had that opportunity to do that for a new string that would mean that they would no longer be in a contention set. I don't know how folks feel about whether we had ever intended that, but the reason I raised the string similarity review is because the ultimate is that you would end up in a contention set. I wondered if there's a way if you got rid of one of your allocatable variants in favor of another, would that get you out of that contention set? So that's the only place that I could think of that there would be something similar and maybe a change request could apply, but that would take us a little while to unpack that I think to work through whether we had intended to go down that path. So I'm interested in thoughts from others. Justine?

JUSTINE CHEW: Not specifically on your question, but I get the sense that ICANN Org's comment may be in regards to something else. And I wonder if Michael Karakash or even Sarmad could just confirm whether we're on the right track in discussing this. I'm also reading Sarmad's note in chat, and I'm not quite sure whether we're actually addressing the correct issue.

DONNA AUSTIN: There's two comments from ICANN Org here, Justine. Sarmad is talking about the first one, and what we've just discussed is the second one. So it's two separate comments. Sarmad?

SARMAD HUSSAIN: I was going to say the same thing that my comment was more on the first part of it. On this second part, I think what we wanted to just clarify was that whether any of these things could change over time, and if there is a possibility that needs to be pointed out and it is not possible, that should perhaps also be pointed out just for clarification and for implementation purposes. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. Thanks, Sarmad. Obviously, the first comment from ICANN Org applies to this preliminary recommendation, but I think my sense is that the second one really does apply to the string similarity review and the potential to have a change request process to avoid a contention set. So I'm wondering, Sarmad or Michael, whether you have a view about whether we've got the second part of this comment in the right place.

Okay. So we've discussed the second part a little bit, and I don't think we have any... We may need to come back and have a more fulsome discussion on this because people are trying to understand what it means. But the first comment, though the intent is implied, it would be useful if the IDN EPDP team clarifies that the applicant must submit one application per application round covering the primary IDN gTLD and allocatable variant

sought. So if clarity is required to the recommendation, then we probably should look at that.

It's also possible that in a future round, an existing IDN gTLD registry operator could apply for additional variants. That's correct, isn't it? Nigel?

NIGEL HICKSON:

Yes. Thank you very much. Nigel Hickson, GAC. I just don't really understand this. I can understand that the application has to be received in the same application round so I apply for the prime and the variant together. But I don't understand why it needs to be said, why you need that addition per application round because it's in that application round. Of course, you might also submit another application in the same application round for a completely different name. So I can't quite see what it adds to that. Thanks.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Okay. Justine?

JUSTINE CHEW:

I tend to agree with what Nigel has said. As it stands, some of the recommendation, I can't remember the actual number, we have landed on the fact that in future—we're talking about future applicants, right? A future applicant could apply for just a primary in the next round and then they can decide to apply for the variants of that primary in subsequent rounds. So I'm not quite sure why per application round covering the primary and allocatable sought actually is a correct way to see it. Because in

the case that I've described, we're talking about the primary in one round and the allocatable in a separate round. I don't quite follow what ICANN Org is trying to get at, really.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Justine. Sarmad?

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Thank you. I think from an ICANN Org perspective, we're just suggesting that the way it's worded right now, there is a possibility of it being misinterpreted, and just some clarifying language would actually help. Not really saying that the ICANN Org is agreeing and supporting the recommendation. The only point being made is that currently, the way it's worded, one could actually read it as saying that one application covering the primary string and the corresponding allocatable variant labels should be submitted as a single application. Once it's submitted, then one may not be able to submit a subsequent application for additional allocatable variants in next round, for example. It's implied but it's not explicit. I guess that's what the comment is saying. And making it explicit just makes it clearer. At least that's what the intent of the comment from ICANN Org is. But if you all feel that this is clear enough, that's okay as well. Thanks.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Sarmad. I mean, one option available to assist to lead the recommendation as it is but perhaps put some implementation guidance. Or we can review the rationale and try to ensure that it's clear in there. But I understand that most people are just going to

read the recommendation and the implementation guidance, and perhaps not go to the rationale. But maybe one way to cover this off is perhaps some clarity in implementation guidance or something. Ariel?

ARIEL LIANG:

Steve actually has some comment but I think is busy typing the notes and I'm going to speak for him. He thinks maybe the phrase must be required could be misinterpreted and the suggestion for the group to consider is to perhaps change that to "must be allowed to" submit one application covering primary and corresponding variant labels. That basically leave the flexibility to the applicant to decide how they wish to proceed with their application, but they must be allowed to have the opportunity to submit one application covering both primary and allocatable variant labels. Consider change "must be required" to "must be allowed to". Maybe that could help address some of the concerns to some extent.

DONNA AUSTIN:

My recollection of this conversation is that we had the "must be required to submit one application" was to ensure that the applicant doesn't submit two or three applications to cover off for the primary and associated variants in the one round. I think the other reason we said must be required is to ensure that it is allowed. I'm not keen to change the language as it is because then we're changing what we were trying to achieve with the recommendation. Rather than have a situation where an applicant has to submit four applications, we wanted to make it a

requirement that they only submitted the one. I'm a little bit reluctant to change the language as it is. But let's see if we can cover this off in implementation guidance.

Okay. I think the second ICANN point here, I think it might be best if we move that to the string similarity or recommendations associated with the contention set, because I don't think it sits here. But I think with our response here, the team is reasonably comfortable with the language as it is but taking into account ICANN Org's comments for clarity, we'll see what avenue is available to us to cover that off. Okay, Ariel?

ARIEL LIANG:

Thanks. I just wanted to quickly remind folks on the hybrid model part. If the confusing similarity is found between an unrequested allocatable variant label against the primary where request allocatable variant label were unrequested allocatable variant label, then there are still consequences of that. Even that variant label was not applied for. I just want to quickly remind folks on that. I mean, I don't disagree to look at the second comment in the string similarity review context, but my intuition is if a similarity is found between a non-applied-for variant label, it doesn't really change much allowing the applicant to remove or modify variant labeling the application. That's just a quick reminder on the hybrid model part.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Okay. Ariel, let's move on.

ARIEL LIANG:

Okay, sounds good. In 3.5, it says future IDN gTLD applicant must be required as part of the application process to explain why it seeks one or more allocatable variant labels off its applied for primary IDN gTLD string. The same requirement applies to existing registry operators from the 2012 round who wish to apply for allocatable variant labels of their existing IDN gTLD string.

RySG has, I think, a similar comment here. First, the future IDN gTLD applicant must be required, as part of the application process, to explain why it seeks one or more allocatable variant labels of its applied-for primary IDN gTLD string. The same requirement applies to existing registry operators. And then delete from the 2012 round to make it less limiting. I believe that's RySG's comment is to delete the 2012 round phrase. Then also, I guess, as a reminder for staff is to probably check the rationale and try to question of this recommendation to understand whether IDN is so essential here, because it's basically limited to only IDN gTLD applicants. We'll probably have to double-check that.

Then for ICANN Org's comment, it actually has to be looked at together with the comments for Implementation Guidance 3.6. It basically says that this recommendation and then in conjunction with 3.6 seems to have some inconsistency, so the main reason is the recommendation sounds like the criteria is being unscored. But then the implementation guidance seems to go beyond that and seems to have some kind of element that sounds like if the applicant answers a question about the need, why seek variant label, the answer needs to be scored or evaluated. So that's ICANN Org's comment. We can maybe go to 3.6 just to take a

look at it more in detail, if, Donna, you're okay with that. I know Hadia has her hand up as well.

DONNA AUSTIN: Let's go to Hadia first, and then we'll go to 3.6. Hadia?

HADIA ELMINIAMI: Thank you. I just wanted to note that if we decide to keep the phrase existing IDN gTLDs, then it does not matter if we actually remove 2012 round or not. Because before the 2012 round, we did not have any IDN gTLDs. I think we need first to decide if we want to keep existing IDN gTLDs or not and then we can decide on the 2012 round. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Hadia. On that point, Jennifer said in chat, "I think if we're looking to delete from the 2012 round, then we should also delete IDN in this recommendation as well." I think Dennis is agreeing with that. Thanks, Nigel, for joining the call. We'll catch up on the next one. Dennis?

DENNIS TAN TANAKA: Thank you, Donna. I agree with Hadia's comment. After the fact, after the education, we know that from a practical standpoint, only IDN gTLDs produce allocatable variants in the Root Zone LGR Version 5. But again, if we're writing this report for wider public, I think removing these terms that avoid that confusion and trigger concerns about why isolate group of TLD labels to take and not

the others? I think deleting or adopting the changes that the Registry Stakeholder Group is suggesting does not change the meaning or intent but avoid that misinterpretation. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Dennis. I understand you're not advocating for removing the IDN gTLD, just removing from the 2012 round?

DENNIS TAN TANAKA: No. Actually, both, as Jennifer suggested. I think we need that during our review, but dropping IDN does not change the meaning but, again, avoids the misinterpretation and bigger unwarranted concerns.

DONNA AUSTIN: All right. Okay. Ariel, let's go to 3.6 so we can see what the problem is there.

ARIEL LIANG: All right. The only comment is from ICANN Org so I'll just read it here. Notes of inconsistency between 3.5 and 3.6. 3.5 is that the information an applicant provides, typically the explanation for seeking allocatable variant label is considered unscored based on the rationale. However, 3.6 implies that the responses against the criteria submitted by applicants will be evaluated and consistently applied suggests it will be scored by evaluators with the necessary expertise. If that's the case, first of all, the inconsistency issue probably has to be sorted out.

Then there are some additional questions from ICANN Org regarding 3.6. One is what is the fundamental objective or purpose of the criteria? Second, who will be responsible for establishing the criteria? And third, how will the evaluation of the criteria impact the overall process, especially if the criteria will not be scored and is not met? Then another comment is can the team provide specific parameters or a precise definition of what is meant by need in relation to the requirement for variant labels? That's the comment from Org.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Ariel. I think we had a conversation similar to this during our deliberations. I could be wrong, but I think we had a conversation about what the intent here, was that this part of the application will be scored or not. I don't know whether that's really—is that really up to us to decide whether an application is going to be scored or not? Or is that up to the IRT? Having the rationality in front of us, I don't know whether we've covered up these questions or not. So 3.6 is Implementation Guidance and 3.5 was the Recommendation, Ariel?

ARIEL LIANG:

Yes, that's correct.

DONNA AUSTIN:

So there's an inconsistency between 3.5 and 3.6?

ARIEL LIANG: Yes. That's from Org's interpretation of the two parts looking together.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. I'm a bit clueless on how to respond to this. So if anyone has any gut reactions or initial thoughts on this, then please say so now. I know that we did have conversations about this and whether it would be scored or not, but I don't know whether that's our job. Okay. I'm not seeing any hands or comments. Maxim?

MAXIM ALZOBA: Do you hear me?

DONNA AUSTIN: Yes.

MAXIM ALZOBA: My personal opinion that it's quite hard to file this something which is not going to be scored. So, either we add it or not, most probably applications will contain some nice wording like last time, where almost everybody got scored perfectly for what they wrote. Thanks.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Maxim. I wonder whether the implementation guidance is that we perhaps change it from criteria for evaluating to something different that makes it not seem that the intention is that it would be scored or something like that. Ariel?

ARIEL LIANG: Thanks, Maxim and Donna. I think one part that perhaps Org doesn't feel comfortable with is the subject of this action is unclear. Regarding the second question they asked is who will be responsible for establishing the criteria. The implementation guidance is written in a passive form. So that part is a little unclear. And to make something implementable, that part has to be clarified somehow. So I just want to point that out.

DONNA AUSTIN: Well, the IRT would be responsible for developing it. Hadia?

HADIA ELMINIAWI: Thank you. I do agree with Maxim that if it is not going to be scored, then why do we have it in there? However, I think the reason we were looking for having the applicant determine the need was to limit the existence or applications for variants in general. We did have a big discussion at some point in time saying that we do not have a recommendation to limit the number of variants. But within the recommendations that we have that we already established, we do have, let's say, guardrails that would naturally limit the number of variants. I think this was the intent behind having the applicant explain the need for the variant. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Hadia. I guess an option that's available to us here is we could answer the questions that have been asked by ICANN Org

here. So what is the fundamental objective or purpose of the criteria? And that would be just to show that the applicant understands what's required in operating an IDN gTLD with variants. Who will be responsible for establishing the criteria? That would be left to the IRT. How will the evaluation of the criteria impact the overall process, especially if the criteria will not be scored or is not met? We can come up with an answer to that. We could simply just respond to that ICANN comments or we can find another way to deal with this comment, or we could just ignore the comment. I think that's the options available to us. Let's leave this for now because I don't think anyone has any great ideas at the moment. And then leadership can have a look at this and come back with a suggestion, if that works for folks. Let's move on, Ariel.

ARIEL LIANG: Maxim still has his hand up, Donna.

DONNA AUSTIN: Assuming that's an old hand. Sorry, Maxim. Okay.

ARIEL LIANG: I'll quickly mention the comment about the need, the precise definition and parameters, is that something to be responded to or just be ignored? Or is that something leadership will consider? I just want to quickly make sure we don't miss that part.

DONNA AUSTIN: I think leadership had to think about that, too. Thanks, Ariel.

ARIEL LIANG:

Okay. Sure. Next one, Recommendation 3.7. A future IDN gTLD applicant must be required to demonstrate its ability to manage the applied-for primary IDN gTLD string and applied-for allocatable variant labels from both a technical and operational perspective. The same requirement applies to existing registry operators from the 2012 round who wish to apply for allocatable variant labels of their existing IDN gTLDs. So there are two comments that are more substantive.

The first one from RySG. It's kind of similar to the previous comment, it's to delete from the 2012 round. I think in a similar vein, we'll have to look at whether the phrase IDN, that also needs to be deleted here. We'll also need to look at actually a future IDN gTLD, whether IDN is essential here or whether it should just leave it general. That's something I think we need to look at more closely in conjunction with the rationale and charter question.

The ICANN Org comment actually is not about the recommendation itself, but it's about the rationale for the recommendation. There is a sentence in the rationale and notes the question should not differ significantly from the application questions from the 2012 round. Again, this is about the technical evaluation of the application. Then I think the group, in its deliberation of this recommendation, of course we can't foresee all the application questions. But the presumption is that the technical evaluation section will be in the application still, and then maybe some of the questions from 2012 round will be replicated for future around. But that's a presumption.

Then, basically, ICANN Org is pointing out that in the 2012 round, there were no variant applications, but in the future round, there will be. And consequently, it may feature significantly different questions to address this change. Then also, Org is highlighting the SubPro Final Report. It made recommendations regarding new questions, specifically tailored for variant labels. And that could provide, for example, requirements for second level variant domains among other topics. Basically, it's just this sentence. The question should not differ significantly from the application question from 2012 round. It may not be a correct characterization for future application rounds. But still, this is really just in the rationale. If the group wants to consider removing this, it's probably not a big issue. But I'll basically leave this up to the group to comment and ponder. So I will stop here.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Ariel. Any thoughts on this one from folks? Dennis?

DENNIS TAN TANAKA: Thank you, Donna. I just want to address the Registry Stakeholder Group comment. I'm now realizing now how complicated it's going to be to remove IDN from the IDN gTLD terms moving forward. I think another way to better see it is to state the assumptions. As we started it as a working group, there were certain assumptions. As much as we want to future proof our recommendations, I think there are going to be limits, because otherwise, it gets complicated.

Here, the big assumption that we started working on is that in Version 5 of the Root Zone LGR, only IDN labels produce allocatable variants. Some IDN labels produce an ASCII allocatable variant, right? IDN here is the key. And that's why we adopted using IDN gTLD as label that produces allocatable variants, whether ASCII or IDN. We don't foresee a future of ASCII labels producing allocatable variant, but we don't know. Again, that's an important assumption that we're making here where we're using IDN gTLD applications. Just limiting those type of strings that are produced. I'm okay with that, knowing so that that's the assumption that we're making, this group is making. And in the future, if that assumption changes, then somebody will have to revise the criteria by which one applicant can apply for the allocatable variants.

I just wanted to point that out before we start removing IDN from IDN gTLDs as a blanket. Maybe there are other ways to work around that without editing their recommendations. But again, we stated in some way that these are the assumptions that are working towards making and it's trying to future proof. But not every single case is going to be taken into account. I just wanted to share that. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Dennis. I think it's important that we understand the context in which we did this work, which was primarily about IDNs and making way for variants in the future. And it's hard to future proof and it's hard to ensure that we've conveyed accurately the meaning of what the recommendations are. But perhaps there is another way to phrase this. I mean, we've relied pretty heavily on

language throughout this, but maybe there's a way that we have an overarching principle or an overarching recommendation that really clarifies that when we use the term IDN gTLD, we recognize that in the future, it could be ASCII depending on how the Root Zone LGR plays out. [Inaudible] says not change too much but recognize that looking forward what we currently have may become problematic. So how do we address that for completeness?

Folks, we're two minutes from time for this call. What I'm going to suggest is—we've made some pretty good progress today. And as Ariel said, this will become a little bit more of a pattern as we start to work through these things, but we'll come back to it next week. I just want to encourage everybody to take a look at the spreadsheet that Ariel has put together. I also think it's probably important that we recall the charter questions. Because I think we may lose a little bit of what our intent was without having the charter questions in front of us as well. So keep that in mind as well.

I think we'll call it a day for now. We'll see you again in a week's time. For those that haven't submitted their response to the preferred dates for the face to face at the end of the year, could you please do so? Because that's going to cut off at the end of tomorrow my time, a little bit longer for others. So in about 36 to 48 hours.

Jennifer, once we've completed the poll, we'll do it as soon as we can. Because we know it's important not just for ICANN's planning but for everybody else's planning as well.

Okay. Thanks, everybody. We will see you back here next week.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]