ICANN Transcription

IDNs EPDP

Thursday, 23 February 2023 at 13:00 UTC

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DEVAN REED: Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening. Welcome to the IDNs EPDP call taking place on Thursday, 23 February 2023 at 13:30 UTC.

We do have apologies from Maxim Alzoba, Satish Babu, and Michael Bauland. All members and participants will be promoted to panelist 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 an attendee and will have view only chat access.

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.

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All documentation and information can be found on the IDNs EPDP wiki space. Recording 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 with the Expected Standards of Behavior. Thank you. And back over to our chair, Donna Austin. Please begin.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks very much, Devan, and welcome, everybody, to today's call. We've started a little bit late today because attendance has been very slow. In fact, we only have—I can't do the math—only six people from what is normally, I don't know, I think we normally have about 12 representatives on the team by this point in the call. So we do have a representative from most of our groups. So I'm interested to hear from folks whether there's any value in going ahead with what will be today's call and encourage folks to listen to that and perhaps seek input on the list. I'm a little bit concerned that if we don't go ahead with this call today, we're going to have to find some time to do it, and time is something that we're kind of running out of at the moment. Nigel has just noted that we are starting to wind up to ICANN76 mode, which means that the number of calls that people are starting to go to during this time is probably more than usual. So I'd really like to hear from others what their thoughts are and let's make a call on what we want to do today. Dennis?

DENNIS TAN TANAKA: Hi, there. This is Dennis Tan, Registry Stakeholder Group, for the record. I say we go ahead as scheduled. People have had the meeting scheduled in their calendar for a while now. There was opportunity to prioritize and send regrets. We did have three regrets. So that's not an excuse to not go ahead. We do have a target to deliver the Phase 1 report. So my take on today is just let's go ahead, encourage people to listen to the recording, and engage in the mailing list if they have to. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. I'm in favor of that. I'm interested to hear from others if there's at this point any objection to going ahead, if you're objecting going ahead. We don't have ticks and crosses in this I think. But if you can just put a note in chat if you object to going ahead, or even if you support going ahead, just let us know either way, and then we can decide what to do. Okay. All right, folks, we're going to go ahead and we will encourage folks to listen to the recording. If they have any concerns about where we ended up, then they can make those notes on the list and we can work out what to do next.

So, welcome, everybody, today's call. I know we've had a two-week hiatus because ICANN staff had—I'll say a loving but I don't say that in a derogatory way, but the opportunity to get together as an organization again and renew acquaintances with old friends, which is always good. And last week we had the webinar with the GAC, which, Nigel, I hope was well received and hit the right balance with information that we provided for the GAC. I think as we said at the time, we'd be more than happy to have follow-up conversations with the GAC even during ICANN76 to a smaller

group, if that was requested. So I think we'd be amenable to that. So go ahead, Nigel.

NIGEL HICKSON: No, just to say absolutely to confirm, I think it was really positive. The level of the dialogue, I thought it was just right, setting the scene on IDNs, and then going on to the work we're doing, explaining what variants are, etc. I think that will really help the GAC understand this work. Thank you very much.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks very much, Nigel. Towards the end of the call, Manal asked a question about the dependencies of our work on SubPro, and in particular, Phase 2 that we haven't started yet. Our timeline looks like we're not going to complete it until 2025, which I understand has raised a few red flags with the Board. I guess this team understands that 2025 isn't our target. We're certainly hoping to get Phase 2 done and dusted well before then.

Edmon also noted that there's a smaller Board group that are having conversations about our work as well. So what we're hoping to do as a leadership team in Cancún is actually have an opportunity to meet with Edmon as our liaison from the Board, and also Alan Barrett, who's a newcomer to the ICANN Board but is replacing our former liaison, Akinori. So we're hoping that we can spend some time with them in Cancún and just get a better understanding what the conversation is at the Board level, what the concerns are, and how we can manage expectations in that

regard. So we are proactively trying to have a conversation with Edmon and Alan on that.

So I'll hand it over to Ariel. What we're basically trying to focus on today is wrapping up some loose ends. So we'll go back over some of the conversation we had a few weeks ago about the ICANN Org input. So we had some conversation but we want to close that out because there wasn't any kind of definitive answer on approach. So we'll try to close that out and a second reading of some of the recommendations that received input from the team that we haven't had the opportunity to close out yet. Then also, we've got some recommendations that we think there may be some potential gaps.

So with an eye to getting our initial report drafted and ready for publication in April, we've started to think about where are the potential gaps with our recommendations and also where are some of the maybe contradictions. Dennis, I think you'd called one out earlier. So they're the kind of things we want to try to smooth the path for so that there's nothing contradictory or not addressed in the initial report. Okay. So with that, I'll hand it over to you, Ariel, and we'll get going. Thank you.

ARIEL LIANG: Thanks, Donna. I guess I will just quickly run through the remaining work leading up to Phase 1 initial report, remind folks that the deadline and the time we have left and the work we have on our plate. So the target date for publishing the Phase 1 initial report is 21st of April, and that's eight weeks away from today.

Then we have an ICANN76 in the middle. So potentially, there's some disruption of our work progress, but hopefully not so much.

In general, we summarized there are eight items that's on our list to finish up. The first one is the review of draft text on E3, which is the string similarity review. We sent it out on Tuesday and we hope to hear your feedback by next, next Tuesday. So two weeks for review of the text. Thanks to Dennis. I saw that you already have some comment in putting the Google Doc, and we look forward to hearing others to provide feedback. This is a major doc recommendation from the group and it's the longest in terms of the draft text. So I definitely will appreciate your feedback on the text.

Then the second remaining item is next batch of a draft text. They were tabled because they were related to the string similarity review hybrid model discussion. Since E3 was concluded, we were able to develop draft on the next batch. It's A8 to E7/B5 in item two. We're hoping to send this draft text out next week, if we could. So there may be some overlap with your review of E3 but we want to get to the draft text ASAP, and then we can start a review earlier.

Then the third item is about the draft text we need to firm up today in the call. It's regarding the text I received, ICANN Org's substantive input. We just want to make sure we're going the right direction, and then we can develop drafts for a review shortly. Then there's also some non-substantive ICANN Org inputs that the group gives staff the green lights to start incorporating. So we're working on that as well as part of item three. We are hoping to send this out before ICANN76. You can use the time during

ICANN76 if you have or maybe the week after to finish the review. So basically, that's item three.

Item four is there may be a couple of recommendations that have gaps. It may not be the truth but if there is a gap, then we may need to develop new recommendation. So there's some potential new draft text that may be incoming but it's not a certain thing. So we just put item four here as a placeholder.

Then item five is basically kind of a big picture view of all of the Phase 1 draft recommendations this group has deliberated, and we will put them all together in the full list and you can get the full picture. And also we need to do some renumbering. As you know, the numbers are kind of all over the place based on the sequence how we develop the recommendation but they're not really logical. But for step five, this is the time we can kind of clean up the number and orders of all these recommendations so they flow logically.

For item six, it's the Phase 1 initial report review. I think based on practices in other PDPs, it's not a requirement that the group has to review every single section of the initial report, at least not an in-depth review because a lot of the sections are standard and ordered templates. They really don't require discussion by the group. But we may forward you some sections for review just to get some input, such as the executive summary or maybe some section talking about our work methodology. Those may be worth your review. So that's what item number six is about.

Item number seven is basically before we publish the initial report, the group definitely needs to see the full report and approve the

publishing of that. We expect we will have at least one or two quiet weeks for you to conduct that full initial report review and then give you the opportunity to voice any concerns or questions so that we can address them before we publish the Phase 1 initial report for public comment.

Then lastly, it's about confirming the public comment approach. It's something it's in the mind of the staff but may not be something necessary. Because, of course, some PDP, they used Google Form to facilitate the public comment process, and then specifically ask commenters to provide comments or specific recommendations or questions. Then in that way, the review of the public comment will be more structured. But also a lot of PDPs just have a free form kind of public comment process that didn't require commenters using any kind of form to fill out their responses. They can submit whichever format best suits them. So that's something maybe we can discuss and decide on approach. Hopefully, if we do need to develop some kind of input form, then we have to spend some time working on that from staff side.

So that's the items on our list and quite a lot, but hopefully we can get all these down within eight weeks. I see a Donna has her hand up.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Ariel. One of the things that would be helpful for folks to give some thought to is the approach to the public comment form or whatever it is we're going to use, some of the things that we've kind of touched a little bit on in leadership calls is are there any specific recommendations that we'd like or particularly input from

people? So that kind of thing. From your groups, are there, I guess, any of the recommendations that you think might be contentious and we can expect comments that aren't necessarily supportive of the approach that we're taking? That kind of intel would be helpful as well. So folks just want to give some thought to that. This is going out for public comment. If you've got any ideas of what would be a good way to go about it, we'd be happy to hear those. So it's not just us suggesting things. We'd be happy to receive input on potentially how we could get the best outcome from that. Sorry. Ariel?

ARIEL LIANG: Thanks, Donna. No more comment from me. I just note that Emily just told me the public comment set on ICANN Org has a revamp, and now we will have some kind of input form that can develop through that site. So we don't need to go through Google Form format, but I will do some investigation and get back to the group on this.

So I guess with that, Donna, I can start the review of the loose end recommendations. You probably recall we discussed them in late January and early February. Those are the recommendations that received Org input that are substantive, and we just want to get back to the group our suggested path forward, and that's from leadership and staff some suggestion. The path forward is in the form of some kind of preliminary language for a draft recommendation. Please keep in mind this is not final wording in text. We still need to refine them based on the input received today, but we want to present you that to get a sense whether

we're heading the right direction. So that's why we're doing this right now.

So the first one is about Recommendation 2.6. To refresh your memory, this recommendation is asking applicant to explain the reasons why it needs to activate applied-for variant labels, and also demonstrate their ability to manage the primary gTLD and variant labels from a technical and operational perspective.

So ICANN Org's input has several points. One is the suggestion to differentiate or break the recommendation into two parts, one part talking about the need, the other part talking about the ability to manage the variant gTLDs. So that said, the first point of input. The second point is basically a kind of example ICANN Org provided, that an applicant considering demonstrating the need, it's using the "issiz" TLD string in Turkish and also in Latin. So that may be an example applicant can reference for demonstrating the need.

And also there's another input is regarding the ability the applicant can demonstrate, their ability to manage the variant TLDs. Because this is sort of vague and also it's probably difficult for the applicant to demonstrate their ability as for now, because variant gTLDs haven't been delegated in the root zone ever, so how do you ask them to demonstrate that? So these are the input and questions from ICANN Org. We did receive feedback from the group and we tried to capture this feedback by proposing revisions to the recommendation as follows. That's why we want the group to let us know whether we got it right.

So our original Recommendation 2.6 is on the top. I'm not going to repeat that. The revision to 2.6 is "The applicant will be required, as part of the application process, to explain why it needs to activate one more allocatable variant labels after applied-for primary gTLD string." So we singled out the need as Recommendation 2.6 now.

Then we proposed developing a new Recommendation 2.19. The numbers are all over the place but be rest assured we're going to clean this up when we have all the recommendations in one place. So this recommendation is to ask the applicant to demonstrate their ability to manage the applied-for primary IDN gTLD string and the requested allocatable variant labels from technical and operational perspective. So this is to reflect the second part of capability of management. So, separate out these two aspects into recommendations.

Following this, we have a new Implementation Guidance 2.20. This says, "The evaluation of the applicant's capability to manage the variant label set should be closely tied to the overall evaluation of the applicant's technical capability. The evaluation should be based on measurable criteria including, but not limited to, how the applicant performs the critical functions with respect to second level registrations under the applied-for primary gTLD string and the requested allocatable variant labels."

We captured this based on the feedback from this group is the evaluation of their capability shouldn't deviate from the overall evaluation of the applicant's technical capability and should be based on measurable criteria. That's what we understood. That's why we have this as the Implementation Guidance.

Additional Implementation Guidance we have here is 2.21. “ICANN Org may conduct research that helps identify additional standards or tests that should be used to evaluate an applicant’s technical and operational capability to manage the variant label set.” So this is to reflect the input from ICANN Org is that if the group doesn’t have a very clear idea what needs to be evaluated, there can be some research done during the implementation phase and to identify additional things that need to be evaluated to assist the future evaluation. So these are basically the revision to the Recommendation 2.6.

Then lastly, I want you draw folks’ attention to the ALAC input because we tabled this discussion due to ICANN Org’s inputs. ALAC has proposed another Implementation Guidance 2.xx, we didn’t give the number here. It says, “The submission process by applicants of supporting information must follow for a consistent and meaningful evaluation by evaluators with the requisite expertise.” So we are wondering whether this input is still relevant, whether we still need to keep this, or whether if we do keep this, do we need to revise it. What were your take is in terms of the ALAC input? Of course, we want to hear your feedback regarding the proposed revision to Recommendation 2.6. I see Dennis has his hand up.

DENNIS TAN TANAKA: Thank you, Ariel. I think that breakup of it makes the reading of the recommendations and to the point and more concise and clear. Overall, I think I like the way it’s break up, Recommendations 2.6, 2.19. And just the need, maybe it should

be 2.7 but I see the practical implications of renumbering of the recommendations. So I leave that up to you.

As far as the Implementation Guidance, I think that's the right level without going much deep into what could be the test. On Phase 2, we are going to be talking about second level and how the same entity principle does affect the behavior from an operational standpoint. And that's where the 2.21 kind of gives a permission to look at that, to create those standards a new test in order to manage the technical capabilities of the registry operators or service providers, that is to manage a set with the same entity principle in place. So I think this is the right level to be thinking about now. So yeah, I like it.

With respect to the last box, the green box, that language just strikes me as redundant. Taking two steps back, we would expect that the entire evaluation process is consistent and meaningful. So I'm not sure what is special about this pertaining to demonstrating need and technical capabilities. I know Hadia is in here. I don't want to put you on the spot. I'm sure there's more substance and meaning behind it. But again, it strikes me as redundant because we expect that the entire evaluation process that is consistent and predictable for every single applicant. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Dennis. Hadia?

HADIA EL MINIAWI: Hi. I won't be speaking about this input from our side now because we as a group need to consult together. However, I raised my

hand in order to ask Ariel. If we can go back to the Turkish example, the two names. It was, yes, this slide. I was wondering if this has anything to do also with—we were talking at some point about Quebec in English and Quebec in French, which has an E with a grave accent. So E with a grave accent, I understand that this label is an IDN label because it does contain one non-ASCII character so it does qualify as an IDN label. However, my understanding is that the existence of both labels is not possible.

ARIEL LIANG: If I may, Hadia, I can quickly answer this. This is specified in the Latin LGR. It basically provides exception for only two characters. So it's the dotless I and the double S in German. The dotless I has allocatable variant label which is the regular I. And then the double S in German has allocatable variant, that's the SS in the ASCII characters. So that's the only exceptions, and then all the others won't be allocatable. So the Quebec example you said, they are not allowed, they're blocked. So that's the only exception.

HADIA EL MINIAWI: Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Dennis?

DENNIS TAN TANAKA: Thank you, Donna. Just to provide a little bit more context as to people might be thinking about why the Turkish or the German

have special rules, but it has little to do with the languages or the linguistics. It does have a component, but the major driver for these two characters, the dotless I and the sharp S that have this allocatable variant relationship is because of the treatment when IDN in 2008 deprecated IDN in 2003. So in that transition from protocol 2003 to 2008, four characters called the deviations behave differently. So one is sharp S, the Greek sigma, zero with joiner, and zero with non-joiner. The dotless I, I'll speak to that in a minute. So because of that behavior change and the coexistence of both protocols, IDN in 2003 and 2008, in the application layer and the way, for example, Google Chrome still to this day treats the sharp S as it was in IDN in 2003, and that's a different behavior from IDN in 2008. So we needed to create a variant relationship in order to minimize some of the security concerns.

With the Turkish I, it's kind of different. It's because of a locale treatment in Unicode. I think the Turkish I, the dotless I, which is used in Turkish and one other language, I don't have it in my mind, the treatment of the dotless I depends on the locale settings of the computer. So if you have a locale settings for Turkish, that dotless I, when you capitalize it, you get the capital letter dotless I. Our usual I that we use as a capital letter. And when you do small case, you get the dotless I. But when you are not in a locale set as Turkish, that dotless I, if you capitalize it, you get the capital letter dotless I, the one that we have in our usual keyboards. But when you lowercase that capital I, you get a dotted I. You don't get full circle when you start in different locale setting. So because of that mapping of uppercase and we don't know what's going to happen in the application layer, so we want to minimize those security concerns and create a variant relationship because of those. So,

there is a language component but the major driver is the technical issues because of, one, the transition to IDN in 2008, and the other one, in the case of the Turkish I, is because of the treatment is depending upon locale settings in the computer.

I'm sorry it took so long but I think it was important to not go into the issues why is that, for example, some people might find sensible that some languages are not—or certain conventions, let me put it that way—certain conventions using some language are not included in the Root Zone LGR, and because the Root Zone LGR was trying to create rules that are widely used at the script level, not language level but script, but also taking into consideration these technical issues pertaining to the transition to IDN in 2008 and locale settings issues when dealing with Unicode characters. A little bit of color there. I thought it was useful to understand the context and where are these rules coming from. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Dennis. Justine?

JUSTINE CHEW: Okay, two points. First point is regarding the revision for Recommendation 2.6. As I understand it, we're trying to relook at the answer for the Charter Question D1b, which deals both with existing registry operator getting the variants, as well as a new applicant getting a new TLD and allocatable variants. So, the two scenarios. So in that context, if I'm not wrong on that context, then I would suggest that we use the term here, instead of to explain

why it needs to activate one or more allocatable variants, just to say to explain why it seeks one or more allocatable variants. Because in the situation where the applicant is applying for both the primary string and the variant, then it wouldn't be a question of activating, just activating. Unless I have misunderstood the context, in which case, it has to be corrected.

The second point is regarding the ALAC input. Obviously, the ALAC team hasn't had a chance to D1b. So I would ask for a little bit of time to consult my colleagues to see whether we think the ALAC input into Implementation Guidance 2.xx is sufficiently met or the intent of it sufficiently met with the new set of recommendations and Implementation Guidance. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Justine. So on your first point I guess we just need to make sure that the new recommendations and the revised 2.6 actually are workable for an existing IDN registry operator just seeking the variants, a completely new applicant that's looking for the primary and the variants. So I guess that's just something that we'll need to flag, Ariel. Unless anybody has views now as to whether they think the current language is okay for existing and new applicants, but I certainly haven't looked at this new language through that lens. Okay. Let's just note that that's something we need to review. We'll keep moving on.

ARIEL LIANG: Sounds good, Donna. I think we took note on all that. Thanks, Justine, for the suggestions as well. In the interest of time, I will

move on to the next one, which is Rec 1.5 under A5. So the original recommendation is “The best practice guidelines to 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.”

This recommendation was developed because the group decided not to set a ceiling value for allocatable variants that can be delegated. So there’s no limit how many allocatable variants can be delegated but to balance that there’s a recommendation to develop a best practice guideline for the management of variant labels by registries and registrars to make sure it’s workable for them.

Then this recommendation has quite a bit of a discussion. Then the Org input also has several aspects. The first input is about to clarify which entity’s responsibility is for developing the best practice guidelines. So, there are some feedback regarding IRT’s row and ICANN Org’s row. So, we need to clarify that in our recommendation and rationale. Another part of the input is ICANN Org wants to understand how the best practice guidelines should be updated and whether periodic checks need to be conducted to manage the updates.

Then the second point is regarding the phrase “consistent user experience,” it’s not very clear to the Org what it means and maybe nobody knows what exactly that entails. So the suggestion is a consideration for some kind of research or study in order to understand better what consistent user experience entails. If the EPDP team thinks that’s the right approach, then we can develop

some kind of Implementation Guidance to scope out this additional research or study.

Point three is kind of related point two is to understand how large a scope this potential study could be. Does that incorporate Universal Acceptance, that kind of work?

Also point four, it's suggestion to change Recommendation 1.5 being to Implementation Guidance. But we understand that's not the intent of the group because Implementation Guidance is more like an optional thing, not really mandatory, and Recommendation. 1.5 is something the group feels strongly about. So we definitely need to have a recommendation but it may have Implementation Guidance underneath.

So that's the Org input as a quick refresher. We have proposed a few revisions. So the 1.5 is the original recommendation, which is about the best practice guidelines. I'm not going to repeat the wording here.

Our revised language is "A framework for developing best practice guidelines in the management of gTLDs and their variant labels by registries and registrars must be formulated with a view to encourage a"—there are several options here. We don't know which one would be appropriate—"predictable, optimal, consistent user experience." We can pick one or none. It depends on the group's feedback. Here I want to emphasize the word "framework," because based on the discussion by the group, we understand there may not be time sufficient to actually develop them guidelines during implementation. If we want to have a timely launch of the next round, there's probably no sufficient time

to do that. Also, in terms of practicability, it's probably not practical because gTLD variant labels have not been delegated before, and it will be hard to know what is the best practice until they're delegated. But what can be done during implementation is perhaps develop a framework to provide scope and structure and some other details. So a future best practice guideline can be developed after the delegation of variant gTLD labels. So, basically to set the expectation lower than before. So that's the gist of the revised Recommendation 1.5.

Then we also have Implementation Guidance 1.6 already in the original language. It says, "The development of best practice guidelines should involve relevant stakeholders such as registries, registrars, and registrants who have experienced or interest in IDNs in the scripts with allocatable variant labels."

So this expectation of who should be involved in the development of best practice guidelines. We're proposing to revise this Implementation Guidance as follows. "The framework should outline the scope and the steps involved in developing future best practice guidelines, which at a minimum should involve relevant stakeholders, such as registries, registrars, and registrants who have experience with the IDNs and variant labels."

So this is to clarify what the development of the framework may look like. So the expectation to have the scope and steps clarified. So that's what we are proposing in terms of the revision. I'm happy to hear input from the team.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Ariel. Justine?

JUSTINE CHEW: Thank you. I just had a question regarding, I guess, the recommendation and the Implementation Guidance. Oh, no. So it's more to the Implementation Guidance. I kind of recall the mention of resellers in that group of stakeholders that were meant to help develop the best practice guidelines. I don't know whether that's still the case or not. So I'm just asking regarding the insertion or omission of resellers in that group under Implementation Guidance 1.6. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Justine. Just on that on the reseller thing, I know that we did have conversations where I think it was Maxim proposed that the resellers be involved. But I think Registrars, being the contractor party, is probably appropriate. So I'm not sure whether it makes sense to put reseller in there.

The other thing that I have a bit of uncomfortableness with here is adding in people who have experience or an interest in IDNs. I think for something like best practice guidelines, I think if we're just setting Implementation Guidance, I'd prefer to just have who have experience in scripts with allocatable variant labels rather than an interest in. Because if we have "an interest in" then it becomes a larger, more difficult group to deal with. So maybe if we can narrow that down a little bit, knowing that it's only Implementation Guidance, that would sit better with me.

The other thing that I'd really like some feedback on, because we did have a lot of conversation about how can we provide a consistent user experience, it's too hard to do that. So we tried to come up with some other words that might be more appropriate. So we've had suggested predictable, optimal, consistent, even reliable. But if folks have thoughts on any of those words, then now would be a good time to weigh in on that so we can try to set that aside. Nigel?

NIGEL HICKSON: I'm just putting something in the chat. Yeah, I think we should delete it entirely. What relevance? How do we know if they have experience or interest in IDNs? We might know if they do, but we don't know if they don't, and we don't know if they do. So you can't put this sort of thing in a consultation. In government, we will be taken to the cleaners. It has to come out. Yeah.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. So I was only suggesting we get rid of other part that says "an interest in IDNs" because that's a little bit fuzzy. I think experience is probably okay. Because I think within the community, we've got a fair idea of who has experience in these things. But it's a pretty good point, Nigel, that you made in a public sector approach. It's the kind of thing that would trip you up. Justine?

JUSTINE CHEW: I have kind of a different opinion to Nigel. I hope you don't mind. I am actually in support of what Donna has said, to just maintain the

phrase “experience with IDNs and variant labels”. To Nigel’s point, I appreciate what you’re saying, but I think in the context of ICANN PDPs, I can probably recall lots of examples of people not having certain experiences but still be able to contribute to the development of something. So I think the balance is there to say that we want people with experience with IDNs and variant labels. But obviously, we can’t compel that 100%. Thanks.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Justine. So I think what I’m going to recommend is that we take out all “interest in” and just “the experience”. But I’d really like to get some thoughts on what’s the appropriate word in Recommendation 1.5 or what sits most comfortably with folks, whether it’s predictable, optimal, consistent user experience, or we still have an issue with trying to provide anything regarding the user experience. So, any initial thoughts on which would be the better term, phrase to use? Hadia?

HADIA EL MINIAWI: Hi. I didn’t really raise my hand to answer your question. But I was wondering, I think what we’re looking for is registrants that have IDNs or variant labels registered. As for the experience, I don’t know. I don’t know if any registrant needs to have specific experience. But I guess what we’re looking for is registrants with variant labels or IDN labels. That’s how I think about it. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Hadia. I think that’s the only way you can really think about it. Although, with the current status of WHOIS, I don’t know

that you could confirm whether somebody was a registrant or not because you wouldn't be able to look it up on WHOIS. But look, anyway, I think we understand the gist of this and note that it is Implementation Guidance. So it's not a recommendation but I think it's Implementation Guidance. So we've changed the Implementation Guidance from the original to the revision, which is still okay. Okay. All right. Sorry, I was focusing on the wrong box there. So I apologize for that. Sorry, Ariel, and sorry, everyone. Okay. So I think the revised language is okay. Nobody has any thoughts on whether predictable, optimal, consistent user experience works for them? Okay, all right. We'll put that to the list and see if we can get some consensus around the best term on it. So, Ariel, I think we can move on.

ARIEL LIANG: Sounds good. The next one is Rec 1.12. It's about the label states for variant labels. As a reminder, it's the delegated, allocatable, withheld-same-entity, blocked, or rejected. That's from the staff paper and the group agreed on. The ICANN Org's input is about whether ICANN Org should maintain the label states, and if so, there needs to be a practical mechanism to report it. That's the input.

So the proposed revision we have is to keep the original Recommendation 1.12 but includes Implementation Guidance 1.15. It says, "The label state"—actually, I think I should remove the word status—"The label state where each variant label of the primary gTLD should be recorded and tracked by ICANN Org so long as the primary gTLD remains delegated. Such records, including historical ones, should be maintained in a practical

manner and made publicly accessible." And then in terms of the parts, as long as the primary gTLDs remain delegated, we have a separate discussion about that, but this is just that expectation that as long as the primary gTLD is delegated, then the label states of the variant labels should be tracked and then the record needs to be public. So that's what we gathered from the group discussion that we just want to confirm, this drop-down, which is in the right direction.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Ariel. I know that Dennis had to step away. But any discussion or thoughts on this? Do you think we're okay to go with the new language here? So, Ariel, this is Implementation Guidance associated with the recommendation above or is it the intent of that?

ARIEL LIANG: Associated. We're keeping 1.4 but adding 1.15.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. Thank you. Okay, Nigel's good. Okay. I think we'll take this as okay because I don't see any hands up, Ariel.

ARIEL LIANG: Okay. Let's move on. Yes. Rec 1.13 under A10, that's about the label state transition. I think most of you already remember this so I'm not going to repeat all these transition paths in the recommendation language. The main input from ICANN Org is

regarding if a label is revoked, especially if the primary gTLD is revoked, will the variants still need to be tracked and whether their label states still need to be maintained, or they will be removed along with the primary gTLD? So that's the question from ICANN Org. And that's why you saw in the revised language under A9, we have the phrase "so long as the primary gTLD remains delegated". So this is intended to address this point, but we do believe there's a necessity to provide a clear recommendation to address the situation where the primary gTLD is un-delegated or the variant label is un-delegated, what next?

I want you to note that the draft recommendation we're proposing, we put them under Charter Question D8, which is a catch-all question about what additional updates that need to be made to Registry Agreement to ensure the same entity rule is followed. I believe the intent of the question is as a catch-all. So that's why we felt about the issue of un-delegation, this is the appropriate place to put the new recommendation language.

Then the third point I want to mention here is we're expecting ICANN Org team to provide clarification on the term "revoked" because there's some confusion regarding the term and we'll appreciate some input on that. I know Michael is working with his colleagues from GDS to provide input on that, and then we can clarify that terminology and if that's the right word to use in the recommendation we're proposing here, though, we should use that. But in the meantime, we're using un-delegated instead because that's what the group understood what revoke means. So I just want to provide that critical disclaimer.

So the first new recommendation we're proposing is 2.16. "A primary gTLD cannot be subject to un-delegation, either voluntary or involuntary, without affecting its variant labels. If a primary gTLD is un-delegated, its delegated variant labels must also be un-delegated." That's what we understood from the team's discussion a few weeks ago is if the primary gTLD goes, the variant labels go as well. They cannot exist without a primary. That's why we have 2.6 thing here.

Recommendation 2.17 is "A delegated variant label of a primary gTLD can be subject to voluntary un-delegation without having an effect on the primary gTLD and the other delegated variant labels." So this clarifies the expectation that a variant label can be un-delegated by the registry, and it won't break the sanctity of the unit or sanctity of the set because the primary label is still there. So this is what 2.17 is about.

Then 2.18 says "In the event that a delegated variant label is removed from the root zone because the registry operator has been found in breach of the Registry Agreement, its delegated primary gTLD will also be un-delegated." So I think 2.18 is intended to address the involuntary un-delegation due to the breach of contract. So if that applies to a variant label, it got un-delegated because it's in breach of contract, then the primary gTLD has to go as well. But I understood this language may still need some refinement. We are still discussing that until last night. So we would definitely want to hear input from the group, whether you think we need to differentiate voluntary and involuntary un-delegation for variant label, and split them in two separate recommendations. Will you think we can somehow capture that

within just one recommendation? We definitely want to hear feedback from the group. I saw Justine already has some input in the chat. I will stop here.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Ariel. Just to Justine's point of view, it should be voluntarily or involuntarily rather than voluntary and involuntary. Just something that Google didn't pick up.

So notwithstanding the fact that we have some issues with the word un-delegation, I think in principle, the recommendations are okay. I think it also makes sense to separate the recommendations out into these three categories. I think there's better ways that we can draft the language on recommendations, but we need to get clarity on that term un-delegation first, which was originally revoked. The term un-delegated was revoked, but on originally ICANN had used the word revoked and now it's un-delegated. But I still think there's a cleaner way that we can say this, but I think in principle, the way that we've done this is a good way to capture it.

So any comments or concerns about this, or are we good to move forward? I don't know whether un-delegation is a word, Nigel. I certainly don't want to introduce new words into ICANN's already difficult lexicon. Nigel, go ahead.

NIGEL HICKSON: Thanks very much. I'm not sure it is a word, but I'm sure another phrase would do. But just on the substance thing, so the primary gTLD is un-delegated, this would affect the variant labels. So

we've got the same person here, we've got the same operator of the primary and the variants because that's one of the requirements. So what's the technical reason? Perhaps I should understand this why. If the primary is un-delegated, why the variants had to be on delegated? It's just not quite—

DONNA AUSTIN: Yeah. It's to do with the same entity rule that we've agreed to. So the primary is linked to the variant, and the primary is the source label. So without the source label, you don't have the variants. So that's why we're saying that if the primary gTLD that was delegated but now it's no longer delegated in the root zone, perhaps because of a breach of contract or because it's fallen over or something, and it's voluntarily decided to go to ICANN and say, "We don't want to operate this anymore," so there's a decision to take it out of the root, which is the un-delegation, then it makes sense that the variants would also be in the same situation. But if it's a delegated variant label and not the primary, then perhaps there is some discretion there. If it's a voluntary decision by the registry operator to take the variant label out of the root because they no longer see the value in it as a result of operations, they don't need it anymore, that it's okay, that won't affect the primary. But if the variant is no longer delegated or removed from the root zone because the registry operator was in breach of the Registry Agreement, then the variants would become un-delegated as well because of the same entity rule, but we've also got the one Registry Agreement. So I think it's a little bit hard to break that as well. Does that make sense, Nigel?

NIGEL HICKSON: I think it does. Certainly, the latter example makes absolute sense. I can see the absolute sense that just because a variant is no longer needed, perhaps circumstances change or the terminology changes or the understanding of the cultural, whatever. That it shouldn't affect the primary, so to speak. But I can see it the other way around. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Nigel. Dennis?

DENNIS TAN TANAKA: Thank you, Donna. First off, the substance of what we're discussing is important, but I just want to take attention to the question. Is this a paraphrasing of the question? Because the first time I read it, I was confused with the way it's phrased "labels under variant TLDs". I wonder if it should say "labels in a variant TLD set". Again, labels on the variant TLDs might brain trigger second level domain names. I'm just wondering if this question pertains to second level instead of top-level domain names. But regardless of topic we're discussing today, it's important, but be mindful of how the question is phrased.

DONNA AUSTIN: Ariel, do you recall whether this is—

ARIEL LIANG: Yeah. Actually, I think, Dennis, you made a good point. And I think D8 is the catch-all question because it's in the section where

same entity principle may affect both top level and the second level. There are some examples under D8. I didn't put in the yellow box. It talks about top level variant management issues as well as second level so it's like a mix. We don't need to necessarily put these new recommendations under D8 if we—I lost the slide. We don't need to put it under D8. We can put it in another place, if that's easier. I just haven't thought of a better place to put it. But I think when the Charter Question was developed, we were not super precise in terms of the wording, but I understand the question is serving as a catch-all. So that's why.

DENNIS TAN TANAKA: Okay. Thank you, Ariel. I think that helps. I can't remember. We developed the charter so long ago. That might be the context is in the charter itself with all the use cases. Again, this is an important discussion that we need to deliberate and come up with recommendations. The question on top just triggered me to thinking about different things and not focusing on top level. But I understand where this is coming from. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Dennis. Any other comments on this? Okay. It looks like we're good. We may need to revise this language because of the use of the term "un-delegation," but I think in principle, we've got agreement to move forward with the recommendations. So let's keep going, Ariel.

ARIEL LIANG: Okay, sounds good. The next one is Recommendation 2.1. It says, “Any allocatable variant label of 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.”

This talks about the same entity principle at the top level as applied to existing gTLDs that can potentially apply for variant labels. The Org input mainly talks about the implementation complication to that. I’m just going to quickly summarize it. It talks about the current base Registry Agreement may not be sufficient to address the variants management issue. Then there’s also a specific process called the global amendment process for registry operators, if they agree to change the Registry Agreement or move from one version of base agreement to another. But this process is complicated to do and needs agreement from the registry operators. Then also, there are some inconsistency regarding the version of Registry Agreement used by existing registry operators. So even we do have a straightforward recommendation, the implementation process may be complicated. I think that’s what the Org input is about.

We discussed this, definitely. Based on the discussion, we thought if we do develop some new recommendation, it may be better to place it under D1a instead of B1. Because under D1a, we have this Recommendation 2.4, it’s “Any existing or future IDN gTLD along with its variant labels, if any, will be subject to one Registry Agreement.” We think this is a place to create some additional language to address the Org input. So we’re proposing the following: first is to revive Recommendation 2.4. It says, “Any

future IDN gTLD along with its variant label, if any, will be subject to one Registry Agreement." What the revision does is basically specify the future IDN gTLD aspect from the existing one because it may be a little bit messy to try to address both, and you will see how it goes next.

The next one is Implementation Guidance 2.15. That's a new one we're proposing. "A new specification or an amendment to the base Registry Agreement may need to be developed to incorporate variant management provisions." This is the EPDP team's inputs regarding how to incorporate the variant management related requirements in the Registry Agreement. If the current base Registry Agreement is not sufficient, then maybe a straightforward way to do that is to create a new specification or amendment. But the specific detail can be worked out during implementation, but we're providing some guidance on that.

Then the next new Recommendation 2.22, it says, "Any existing IDN gTLD registry operator that applies for variant labels in future rounds of the New gTLD Program will be required to enter into a new Registry Agreement for the newly approved variant labels." Basically, we're still saying the primary and the variant labels, they need to be entered in the same Registry Agreement. But because we recognize the existing ROs, they already have older version of Registry Agreement. Once they get the variant label approved, they have to get into a new Registry Agreement to incorporate the additional contractual requirements for the variant labels. That's to clarify the expectation there.

Then for Implementation Guidance 2.23 that's associated with 2.22, it is expected that the new Registry Agreement for the newly

approved variant labels will be linked in some way to the Registry Agreement for the existing IDN gTLD. We recognize this language is still a bit rough, but we're basically trying to say the same thing as 2.15 because we don't know how exactly it will look like with the updated Registry Agreement for existing RO. But we set the expectation that the requirements for the variant labels needs to be reflected in the new version of the Registry Agreement, and then we need to see the variant relationship between these labels reflected in the Registry Agreement. That's kind of a handful of the proposed revision. I'm happy to hear input from this group.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Ariel. Apologies but we've got a little bit of a misunderstanding here. Because this is something that I went back to until we probably need to separate these out into future audience and a different recommendation for existing audience, so my intent with Recommendation 2.22 is that an existing registry operator, so they already have a Registry Agreement with ICANN for the 2012 string, they would maintain that Registry Agreement and then they would have a separate Registry Agreement for the newly approved variant labels. So my thinking was not to propose a single Registry Agreement for those but to leave the current Registry Agreement in place. I have some experience with Registry Agreements in the global amendment process and it could be very difficult to move the existing registry operator into a new agreement just because of the variant labels. So what I was hoping this recommendation would suggest is that they maintain their current Registry Agreement but they would have to enter into

a new one for the newly approved variant labels. So it would be two Registry Agreements.

I think this is the simplest way to do it because of the potential complications of moving the registry operator from an old Registry Agreement to a new one. It may be that the registry operator doesn't want to do that anyway. We need to be careful about making policy but that's what they have to do when really the implementation of doing that might be quite difficult. So, apologies, Ariel, if there's a misunderstanding, but maybe we need to make that language more explicit. Sorry, Dennis. Go ahead.

DENNIS TAN TANAKA: Thank you, Donna. Thank you for that clarification. That was going to be my question. So for existing registry operators, in practical terms, if they decide to apply for a variant, they will end up with two Registry Agreements. I think that's what I'm reading, what you clarified.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. Thanks, Dennis. We'll look at that language to make sure that it's … It's not good if Ariel and I are at different page on this so we need to clean this up so we understand what it is we're trying to do.

DENNIS TAN TANAKA: Okay. Thank you. That has clarity so I can take this back to the Registries. We did have some preliminary conversations on the legal mechanics, but to be frank, in this small group of registries

discussing IDN matters, we don't have legal expertise so we need to bring this up to the wider stakeholder group so that they can have an understanding. But at least what I'm reading is that the existing registry operator will have a choice, whether they want to maintain the existing registry operator and add a new one for the set of variant labels or they decide to move all, a transition to. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Dennis. I think that's the intent. In my mind, the things that might affect that decision is we have a question coming up about fees and how that's managed. That could be a consideration for the registry operator. We'll clean that up and make sure that Ariel and I can get on the same page with the recommendation language so that we don't have this confusion. Any other comments on this one? Ariel, let's keep moving.

ARIEL LIANG: Okay, sounds good. Thanks, Dennis. Thanks, Donna, for the clarification. We'll get this cleaned up.

The next one is under B2, Rec 2.2, 2.3. This is not very complicated. It's talking about the same entity principle in terms of implementation. What that means is the registry operator needs to use the same backend registry service provider. And also, if backend registry service providers changed for any of the label, then the other labels need to be switched to the same new backend registry service provider. Then the ICANN Org input here is about the phrase we use to describe the backend registry

service provider, the organization providing one or more registry services, e.g., DNS, DNSSEC, RDDS, EPP. What was suggested is we use the language all critical functions as defined by the base Registry Agreement for TLD and its variant labels must be provided by the same service providers. It's to be more precise. That's the recommendation.

We have a revision to 2.2. Basically, to use the suggested wording from ICANN Org is to use the phrase "all critical functions". That's the key here. And then we'll have a footnote for this recommendation to link to the resource saying what the critical functions are, DNS service, DNSSEC proper resolution, EPP, RDDS, and data escrow. And that's in the Specification 10 in the base Registry Agreement, and there's a link to that. This is pretty easy, in our opinion. If you have any input or concerns, please raise your hand. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Ariel. Dennis says okay. All right. Let's keep moving, Ariel.

ARIEL LIANG: Okay, sounds good. I think this is the last one. It's Rec 2.8 under B5. Under the recommendation it says, "In future new gTLD application processes, the primary applied-for gTLD and its allocatable variant labels requested by the applicant are to be treated as different versions of the same string and will be bound by the same restrictions."

ICANN Org has a few comments. The first comment is about "bound by the same restriction" phrase. It says that the New gTLD Program binds the applicant but the Registry Agreement binds the registry operator. It will be helpful to note in the recommendation the restriction we mentioned in the language is only valid if it is reflected in the Registry Agreement. That's the first point.

Then the second point is they're proposing to remove the phrase "are to be treated as different versions of the same string" because it's very broad and vague and difficult to interpret. Then they have some suggested alternative wording, and then we considered that in our revision that you will see next.

Then third is to list the restrictions that we're referring to.

Basically, these are all to clarify the language. That's why we have a revised wording for 2.8. It says, "The applied-for primary gTLD string and its allocatable variant labels requested by the applicant will be bound by the same restrictions, which will become contractual requirements upon execution of the Registry Agreement. The allocatable variant labels requested by an existing IDN gTLD registry operator will similarly be bound by the same restrictions as the existing IDN gTLD upon execution of the updated Registry Agreement that includes the newly approved variant labels. The restrictions in this recommendation refer to the differential treatment and requirements apply to non-standard application types of gTLDs, which are community-based TLDs, Brand TLDs and Geo TLDs." In the draft language in a Google Doc, we will include a footnote to specify why we're only limited to these three types of gTLDs because that's what SubPro identified. These are the only three non-standard application types of gTLDs,

and that's what this recommendation is about. Any input, feedback on this revised language?

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. We don't have any hands. I don't see anything in chat. So I think the revised language is okay and we can move forward. Are you good to go, Ariel?

ARIEL LIANG: In the background Justine is chatting with me about some additional clarification we need to include, but maybe I can sort out with Justine offline. I guess we can move on if there's no other input. Thanks, Dennis.

DONNA AUSTIN: Justine, is there anything you wanted to raise, or are you good?

JUSTINE CHEW: Number one, I think you should spell out Geo TLDs. The proper name is Geographic Name TLDs.

Number two is in the earlier version of this revision, there was mention about applicability of the GAC safeguards. I think that still applies here. I just don't know how those requirements are translated into the contracts per se. I think we need to talk about this a little bit more, maybe not today, specifically.

DONNA AUSTIN: I think the GAC safeguards were reflected in Public Interest Commitments in 2012. So they became—

JUSTINE CHEW: Right. So that means that they are translated into contractual requirements, right?

DONNA AUSTIN: Yes.

JUSTINE CHEW: Correct. I think then the mention of those strings being applicable to the safeguards should also be mentioned in this Recommendation 2.8. I think it appeared in Ariel's earlier draft, but I think for some reason it got deleted.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. All right. We'll review this with [you too], ensuring that the GAC safeguards are included as part of this.

ARIEL LIANG: Okay. Now, I understand. Thanks, Justine. Okay. I think we have gone through all of the recommendations that received substantive Org inputs. Now we are going to look at some recommendations that the group already reviewed but provided input that we haven't gotten a chance to discuss, and then some additional ones.

The leadership team spotted potential gaps. The first one is under A7, Rec 1.14. Just to quickly summarize it, it's about the single character TLD recommendation. What we originally proposed is that the application for single character gTLDs will not be accepted until relevant guidelines from the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Generation Panels are developed and implemented in the New gTLD Program.

The ALAC has a question here. They asked, "While we understand the task of developing the guidelines is to be undertaken by the GPs and we support this as EPP team's recommended approach, we wonder if it might be prudent to ask for the GPs to have the guidelines ready for public comment by set time, such that their implementation can be included in time for the next round."

Basically, we didn't ask for a specific deadline for getting the guidelines done. But ALAC is wondering whether we should set a deadline or at least some kind of expectation for the timeline so they won't take forever to do this work. But then my question is if we do set some kind of timeline expectation, would that be enforceable? Because this is outside the remit of the EPDP process, this is taken up by the GPs. So I'm wondering even if we do set a timeline expectation, that cannot be enforced. I think this will be a good topic for discussion by the group. I see Dennis has his hand up, Donna.

DENNIS TAN TANAKA: Thank you, Ariel. That's okay. I thought I lost all of you. The interesting question and scenario—and that's a good point, Ariel.

Coming from that angle, we want them to collaborate with us. But again, any deadline or task is not enforceable. So the worst case scenario, the community doesn't get this input, then what's the end result there? That single character TLDs remain prohibited from application, is that the only path? The guidelines are not defined. Justine says—no, I think she's answering to that.

JUSTINE CHEW: I'm answering to you, Dennis. The yes is in answer to your question.

DENNIS TAN TANAKA: Okay. Thank you, Justine. If that's the case, are we comfortable with that likely outcome? I mean, again, the CJK GPs are not required to do this. They will do these in their own time, they volunteer. It might take time to develop this and potentially beyond to what everybody else is anticipating. Are we comfortable with that likely outcome? I think that's the question that we need to ponder. And if we are, then that's going to be put up for consensus call. But if we are not comfortable with that outcome, because we do want to have single character TLDs available and ready to be applied for, then what should be then our plan B, if you will? I don't know. That's the way. I don't have an answer for that. But at least I think I want us to consider the possibility that if we rely on the guideline and we are putting a market in our recommendation that we have to have these guidelines in order to move forward with a single character TLD, there is a chance that that might not happen. Again, are we comfortable with that or do we need to think of a different path forward?

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Dennis. I think it's a good question. The other thing that strikes me is that we know the Board's having conversations about dependencies on our work in SubPro, and if there's no answer to this question, then what's the impact on that work? So I think what we can do is have another conversation with the CJK chairs and see if they've made any progress on the work and how much longer they will need to undertake the task. And if it falls outside our current timeline for producing the final report, which is probably October/November, then we have to think about what's the consequence of that and how do we address this in our final report. The other thing that strikes me is that, if there isn't a recommendation from this EPDP team and we break up, as we must, at some point, then who confirms is whatever the recommendation is from the CJK group.

So I think let's take an action item for the leadership team to go back to the CJK chairs and just see what progress they're making on this and what they think is a reasonable timeline for completing the work. And then we can certainly express to them that this is a timeline that we're working on for delivery of the initial report and the final report. Then we can make a judgment call on how to address this.

I don't know that we can necessarily just push this to implementation, Edmon, because I think we need a policy recommendation that has to be implemented. So let's do that in the first instance, to see what their timeline is, and maybe it's consistent with ours so we'll be okay. And if it's not, then we'll come back and review this. Is that an okay approach? Okay. All

right, let's do that. We'll report back to the team once we have had an opportunity to contact the CJK team.

ARIEL LIANG: Okay, sounds good. Thanks, Donna. I saw support in the chat and also some additional comments from Dennis as well. We have about eight minutes left. Maybe we could start D1b. The other one probably will take as much time as needed, but we may not be able to wrap up this Rec 2.7.

So this is a question identified by the leadership team. It's about the fee structure recommendation we have. Currently, we don't have a very specific recommendation pertaining to application fees except the fee structure must be consistent with the principle of cost recovery reflected in the Applicant Guidebook and affirmed by the SubPro recommendation. So that's all we have regarding fees associated with IDN gTLD applications that include variants.

Then the leadership team is wondering whether we could or should entertain some discounts in application fees for variants which are applied for together with the primary string, for example. So basically, go a step further and provide some more nuanced expectations for future applicants. That's the question from the EPDP team. I'm happy to hear the group's input on this. I recognize we may not be able to wrap up this discussion within only seven minutes.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Ariel. So can I can I just confirm? So there's the application fee and that's what we're talking about now. Does this

Charter Question also cover ongoing fees by the registry operator, or is that somewhere else in our Charter Questions? So once the registry operator becomes a contracted party, they have an annual fee, and if they hit a threshold, then it becomes an additional fee. So I just want to be clear what we're talking about here.

ARIEL LIANG: Yes. In fact, this charter question does ask about the annual registration fee. To be honest, that don't recall why we didn't have a recommendation to address that. I think the main difficulty is regarding how the registration fee was calculated and that depends a lot on the SubPro implementation. There's a lot of unknowns. So that's why due to the lack of information, I think that's why the group didn't have a recommendation about the annual registration fees and only have a recommendation regarding the application fee. Maybe that's the reason, but I have to go double-check our deliberation notes.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. Thanks, Ariel. So does anyone have any thoughts on the application fee? I think we should give some consideration to the fact that IDNs are our priority for the ICANN Board. It is going to enhance the reach of the Internet, I suppose, globally. So there is benefit. We understand that the absence of variants at the moment is problematic. We've heard from some of our existing registry operators, particularly Chinese ones, that that is an issue.

This is my thinking about it and it's pretty basic and very pragmatic. We have recommendations, a single Registry Agreement and a single application. Yes, it is going to cover primary gTLD and potentially two or three or four variants. We want to go along with the cost recovery model, but we don't really know whether including variants is going to have a significant impact on the evaluation process of the application. I think we probably all agree that the string similarity review is going to be more complex because of the variants. But I wonder if we should consider a recommendation that we support the notion that it is one application, and therefore, it should be considered a single application fee. This could be controversial but now is the time to do that if the working group supports it, because we can put it out for public comment and we can see what response we get.

Then on the ongoing fees, us giving some thought to this as well, so the current structure is that each registry operator has to pay—it basically works out at $25,000 a year. If you go over a threshold of 50,000 registrations within that 12-month period, then there's an additional fee attached to that. So again in the context of the benefit of IDNs globally and it's a priority for the Board, does it make sense to have a recommendation that it is a single … because the variants are tied together and considered a single unit, does it make sense that the annual fee is the same as for a registry operator so that's flat fee. But if the combination of registrations of the IDN, the primary, and the variants reaches that 50,000 registration threshold, then that fee would kick in.

We haven't had a lot of discussion around this because we thought it was difficult to do and it is. But there's an opportunity

here for us as the EPDP team. If we think this is a reasonable approach, we can put recommendations in the initial report, we can flag them, and then see what comment we get once we put it out there. And then we can decide how to address those comments. Dennis?

DENNIS TAN TANAKA: Thank you, Donna. Good question and good scenarios. I think good questions to think about. On the one hand, I think there are two competing objectives, introducing variant TLDs in a secure, conservative manner. And the other one is to encourage adoption, right? What's the right balance, the cost, the benefit, the cost reward? So that's a good question. So I think I'm coming from I just want to get more input as to the previous round. I do not intimately know about all the fees exactly, no. But from an application, let's talk about the application fee. Was there any difference whether a applicant was applying for a TLD that was, for example, not doing IDNs versus one that was offering IDNs, and therefore, the evaluation tests and the processes that either of these applicants went through were slightly different. Was there any change in the application fee?

I just want to have that as a data point because I think it goes back to what Donna was suggesting, right? We want an applicant that is applying for a variant set other than that not. These cost recovery principles, it doesn't seem to be to the dollar amount or to the pennies or to the exact same battery or inventory of tests that an applicant was going to go through, rather a more high level, everybody pays the same regardless of a specific test evaluation that we're going through. From a practical standpoint,

one that has IDNs goes through an additional set of test, if they want to do IDNs. And even in the IDNs, if an applicant goes through or wants to apply for, let's say, one table of IDNs or other than one supply for 10 IDN tables, the amount of time spent by the evaluator is different, right? But if the fee was the same for both applicants, then I think that's a concept that we can apply for the variant set as well. And again, I'm trying to tie what Donna was suggesting in terms of—this is one set is going to be managed under one Registry Agreement. So does that have an effect in terms of both application fees and also the variable fees that a registry operator is obligated to pay to ICANN?

Again, I'm just putting my thoughts out there so you know where I'm coming from. But I think that this needs to, at least from the Registry standpoint, I think we need time to digest the process. Of course, get a sense from a variety of our Registry Stakeholder Group members and to see what do we learn. Preliminary, I like what Donna was suggesting. But I have to take it back to the group and come back.

DONNA AUSTIN: Understood. Thanks, Dennis. Justine, do you want to have the last word and then I think we'll call it—on the understanding that we'll try to come back to this question in particular when we meet next week. And in the meantime, we'll put some language together, some draft recommendations that kind of capture what I was getting at. We'll put that to the list so that folks have it, so that we can have a conversation next week around it. So, Justine, did you want a last word?

JUSTINE CHEW: Sure, yeah. I just want to extend the thought process to maybe the cleaner approach is just to have a flat fee per application regardless of the number of labels that are being applied for in the set. Because I'm thinking that in terms of even the existing ROs, if they want to apply for their variants, it's a separate application. So it's not tied to a primary anymore but it's still an application. So I think they're going to be hit with the same flat fee. So if we're consistent throughout, just so long as there's a application, then it's a flat fee that applies with that application, something along those lines.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. So we'll tease that out. We'll have a leadership call tomorrow and we'll tease this out a little bit and see if we can come up with some draft recommendation language that we can, so that you guys can think about it during the week and then come back, and we can try to have a discussion around this next week. Let's try to keep this as simple as we can and easy to implement, and understand that IDN is a priority for the Board and the value to the next billion users of the Internet is important. So let's not try to make the bar too high to getting IDNs and variants into the room.

All right, with that, thanks, everybody, for your attendance today. I know we're a little bit light on. But I think it was helpful to get through what we had in front of us. We'll post this to the list and hopefully folks can catch up on what they missed out on. So thanks, everybody. We will see you again next week.

DENNIS TAN TANAKA: Thank you.

DEVAN REED: Thank you all for joining. Have a wonderful rest of your day.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]