



GNSO Council - IGO/INGO Recommendations

Council Interpretation of Intent

09 October 2025

Background - 2012 Round of New gTLDs

Similarity to Existing TLDs or Reserved Names in 2012 AGB

The String Similarity Panel's task is to identify visual string similarities that would create a probability of user confusion.

Reserved Names (e.g., ICANN, CCNSO, GNSO, IETF, etc.) were included within the scope of the String Similarity Review.

Note: Red Cross and IOC Names were not Reserved Names in 2012 and could not be delegated.

Strings Ineligible for Delegation (e.g., RCRC, IOC) were not included in the scope of the String Similarity Review.

The following names are prohibited from delegation as gTLDs in the initial application round. Future application rounds may differ according to consideration of further policy advice.

These names are not being placed on the Top-Level Reserved Names List, and thus are not part of the string similarity review conducted for names on that list. Refer to subsection 2.2.1.1: where applied-for gTLD strings are reviewed for similarity to existing TLDs and reserved names, the strings listed in this section are not reserved names and accordingly are not incorporated into this review.

Background - IGO/INGO Recommendations

Note: Language refers to Red Cross Red Crescent, but similar recs available for IOC, IGOs, and INGOs.

Recommendation 3.1.1: *Top-Level protections of Exact Match, Full Name Scope 1 identifiers of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement are placed in the Applicant Guidebook section 2.2.1.2.3, Strings “Ineligible for Delegation”.*

Recommendation 3.1.2: *For Red Cross Red Crescent Movement identifiers, if placed in the Applicant Guidebook as ineligible for delegation at the Top-Level, an exception procedure should be created for cases where a protected organization wishes to apply for their protected string at the Top-Level.*

Background - SubPro

Affirmation 24.1 - *The Working Group affirms Recommendation 2 from the 2007 policy, which states “Strings must not be confusingly similar to an existing top-level domain or a Reserved Name.”*

(Note that IGO/INGO names were ineligible for delegation in 2012 but for 2026 are now Reserved Names.)

At the end of section 22.1, SubPro notes:

Adopted policy recommendations from a separate Working Group regarding the top-level protections of International Governmental Organizations (IGOs), International Olympic Committee (IOC), and International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), and RCRC Movement (Red Cross) will be integrated into the Applicant Guidebook.

Question for Council

Question of Intent

What does it mean to

- 1) ensure that the relevant identifiers are unavailable to any party other than the relevant organization AND
- 2) to create an exception procedure for the relevant organization should it wish to apply for its protected identifier at the Top-Level?

Interpretation

In respect of clause 1, there is alignment between the staff implementation team and the IRT that the relevant identifiers (i.e., no acronyms), *“may be applied for through an exception process only by the relevant entity, provided it submits appropriate documentation as detailed below.”*

Question for Council, cont.

For clause 2 on the previous slide,
there is not alignment

IRT majority view

The recommendations only require that the relevant identifiers are reserved for the relevant entity, but it is acceptable for an unrelated third party to apply for and secure a confusingly similar gTLD, which would thereby prevent the relevant organization from securing its identifier as a gTLD in the future.

String Similarity Review does not apply as against third party applications based on the 2012 AGB provisions.

(Option 1)

Implementation Staff View

AGREED BY SOME IRT MEMBERS

The ability for a protected organization to secure its relevant identifier as a gTLD must be preserved. Allowing for a confusingly similar gTLD to be delegated would disrupt that protection since the protected string could be barred in a later round.

The relevant identifiers must be included in the String Similarity Evaluation as against third party applications.

(Option 2)

Resolved Clause Options

[The GNSO Council confirms that the intent of the relevant recommendations is only to ensure that no organization other than the relevant organization can apply for the exact match of the specific, protected identifier associated with that organization, and that as such, Reserved Name strings are now placed in the category formerly-termed “ineligible for delegation” under paragraph 2.2.1.2.3 of the 2012 Round AGB. Accordingly, the relevant identifiers shall not be included in the String Similarity Evaluation in the New gTLD Program and such a relevant identifier shall not operate as a bar to an application for a confusingly similar string by another applicant, during evaluation. Objection proceedings and GAC Advice could still be brought against such a third-party application, where applicable, in the usual manner. Pursuant to existing policy, any application submitted by a protected organization for its protected string would remain subject to existing policy barring delegation if such string is found to be visually-confusingly similar to a string previously delegated. Option 1 would align with this interpretation.]

[The GNSO Council confirms that the intent of the relevant recommendations is to ensure not only that no organization other than the relevant organization can apply for the exact match of the specific, protected identifier associated with that organization, but also that any visually-confusingly similar string applied for by an applicant other than the protected organization would not be delegated. String Similarity Review should be conducted against the relevant identifiers. An applicant whose string is determined to be confusingly similar to a protected identifier in the String Similarity evaluation could challenge that determination, where applicable, in the usual manner. Objection proceedings and GAC Advice are still possible. Option 2 would align with this interpretation.]

Resolved Clause Options

[The GNSO Council confirms that both Options 1 and 2 offered by ICANN Staff are consistent with policy. While the Council reserves its right to instruct an IRT on the proper implementation of Council and Board-adopted PDP

Recommendations, the Council has determined, based on correspondence from the Board and in light of pressing time deadlines, that the IRT should refer adoption of Option 1 or Option 2 to a determination to be made by the ICANN Board in the exercise of its fiduciary duty. By this action, the Council does not waive its procedures relating to resolution of issues in implementation at the Council level when raised by the IRT, the Council liaison(s), or ICANN Implementation Staff.]