
ICANN82 | CF – GDS: SubPro IRT IDN Sub-Track Work Session
Tuesday, March 11, 2025 – 09:00 to 10:00 PST

ELISA BUSETTO

Hi everyone, and welcome to meeting number 15 of the SubPro IRT IDN Sub-track on 11 March, 2025 at 16:00 UTC, 9 a.m. local time. My name is Elisa Busetto, I'm the Remote Participation Manager for this session. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior and the ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy. If you would like to speak during this session, please raise your hand in Zoom, state your name for the record and speak at a reasonable pace. And over to Michael.

MICHAEL KARAKASH

Thank you, Elisa. Thanks everyone for coming. I'm hearing an echo, sorry. So, hopefully some people might trickle in as well as we're talking, but thanks everyone for coming to the session this morning. Let me see. It's a good session today because we can close out almost all of the remaining Next Round Applicant Guidebook specific recommendations from the IDN EPDB Phase 1. With these four topics, we can show you how they've been incorporated into the Applicant Guidebook. And then you'll see agenda number four are the ones that are policy recommendations that we've determined that don't belong in the Applicant Guidebook, but they will be Consensus Policy recommendations.

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So, we'll show you those and see if you agree with our assessment of those. And we'll incorporate those in another document. And please stop me if you have any questions.

So, first we'll look at this spreadsheet that shows you, again, as a reminder from the last time, the green are the ones that have been incorporated in just that section. The blue means that they've been incorporated in another section, but they have not been incorporated into that specific section yet. And you'll see CPE contention sets and limited challenge appeals mechanism. Those ones have been incorporated in another section of the AGP already.

Application fees and the applications assessed in rounds, those RECs 314 and 33 have not been in any other section yet, so you haven't seen that. But 311 and 312 within the fees were already shown earlier in a previous section. So, the ones that are the most important today that they haven't been yet seen are the 314 and 33. And then I'll mention 3.24 once we get to that section, but it's applicable. And down below in the gray are the ones that we've determined are Consensus Policy recommendations that don't belong in the Applicant Guidebook. Perfect.

And to start today, we're going to go with application fees. And none of this language is new because you've seen it in other IRT sessions. It's just the same language here, just annotated with the relevant ID and EPDP REC to show you how that has been incorporated into this section. Perfect. So, for this one, I have the slides here, but I'm going to go to the actual document when we

want to look at that specifically. So, as a quick reminder for those ones here, we have, let me actually go to the document specifically.

So, we have recommendation 3.11. It's covered here in section 1.1.1 for new applicants. I'm going to read the recommendation. It's a future applicant applying for a primary gTLD string and up to four of that string's allocatable variant labels during an application round must incur the same base application fee as any other gTLD applicant who does not apply for variant labels in that round. So, in this section we have here, the gTLD evaluation fee covers one application for a primary gTLD and up to four variant string gTLDs. If an applicant wants to apply for more than four variant strings under one primary gTLD, the applicant must pay the 227,000-evaluation fee for each additional allocatable variant beyond the fourth variant. So, that's where that one is covered. Any questions? Okay, perfect.

And the second part of this one is REC 3.12. Any applicant applying for more than four allocatable variant labels of a primary gTLD string in any application round may incur additional fees that ICANN Org considers to be proportionate to any additional costs associated with evaluating the application and consistent with the cost recovery principle. And so additional fees for conditional valuations may apply and down below there's more specificity on those here.

Okay, over here we have 3.14. If a registry operator from the 2012 round applies for up to four allocatable variant labels of its existing IDN gTLD, specifically 3.14.1 applies here. In the immediate next

application round, the base application fee will be waived for that application as a one-time exception. And we have that here listed almost verbatim. So, in this next round, a gTLD registry operator from the 2012 round may apply for up to four variant gTLDs of its existing IDN gTLD with the application fee waived as a one-time exception explicitly. And then here, Sarmad, yes.

SARMAD HUSSAIN

Yeah, sorry, just a small editorial thing. When we say allocatable variant, I think consistently we should probably put gTLD in front of it. So, the second part, which is highlighted and also in the previous section. So, we're using variant gTLD in the first sentence but not in the second one. Just to clarify.

MICHAEL KARAKASH

Perfect. Thank you. We'll make sure to look through all to see if any other missing gTLDs are in there. Thanks. So, for this section here, 3.14.3 is relevant. In the immediate next application round, the application may incur additional fees as set out in final recommendation 3.12. And here we have, if applying for more than four variant gTLDs, they will pay the full gTLD evaluation fee for each additional allocatable variant gTLD beyond the fourth variant. Additional fees for conditional evaluations may apply. And these are for existing gTLD registry operators from the 2012 round. Perfect.

Just scrolling down to make sure nothing is missed. Yeah, so those are the ones that were relevant for the fees. As you all know, there

are still two pending recommendations. With the Board or that are also related to fees, and we are still working on that internally, 7.4 and 7.5. So, once those are also approved or action is taken on those, we will then incorporate that into the relevant section, the base RA and other fees related. Any questions regarding those? No? Perfect. So, here then we can move on to the next topic. We have CPE, Community Priority Evaluation. So, the one recommendation related to CPE, Sarmad, go ahead.

SARMAD HUSSAIN

Yeah, just one more clarification. So, the language here assumes that these four variants which can be applied for free are only for this upcoming round, right? And not subsequently. Subsequently. Do we need to clarify that or that's just assumed?

MICHAEL KARAKASH

Any thoughts from people?

JUSTINE CHEW

You're talking about community TLDs or?

SARMAD HUSSAIN

No, just variant TLDs. I think the recommendation was that if they want to apply for up to four variants which without fees, that's only in this upcoming round.

JUSTINE CHEW

I thought that was clear.

SARMAD HUSSAIN

Is that, yeah, but in the text is that, is that assumed or is that clear or do we need to? So, this only applies for next round. It doesn't say that you're going to apply for four, maybe after next round in the subsequent round.

MICHAEL KARAKASH

Here we have in this next round. I don't know if that's sufficient?

SARMAD HUSSAIN

That should be.

MICHAEL KARAKASH

Okay, perfect. Thanks. Okay, perfect. For CPE, we have one recommendation that's relevant and that's 3.16 here. And we've covered 3.16, two and three in the relevant sections, Geonames and brand TLD strings for different TLD types. But again, we wanted to incorporate it into the CPE section as well. So, as a reminder, 3.16 is, an applied for allocatable variant label must be subject to the same application requirements and evaluation criteria as the associated primary gTLD string. Specifically, the same documentation requirements apply to both the primary gTLD string and it's applied for allocatable variant labels with respect to the three non-standard application types of gTLDs as identified by the SubPro PDP.

This means that an applicant for a community-based TLD string and its allocatable variant labels is required to submit a written endorsement of its applied for primary gTLD string and applied for allocatable variant labels from established institutions, representing the community that the applicant has named.

So, looking at this document here, the way we incorporated it, what we decided was to include a footnote. It's in multiple places here, so I'll show you. But we added this footnote here, as you can see in the relevant mention above. Here we have applicants for community-based gTLD strings are also required to submit written endorsements of the applied for gTLD string from the community. If an applicant for a community-based gTLD string is also seeking one or more variants, the endorsements must also apply to the requested variants. So, that's the first reference here.

JUSTINE CHEW

Can we be clearer to say that it's, number one, it's allocatable variants again, right? Always put in allocatable variants. Must be allocatable before variant. And I think we may want to say for the same string. Yes, we say, yes, allocatable for the same string, for the same primary string.

MICHAEL KARAKASH

Perfect. Thanks, Justine. And Sarmad, go ahead.

SARMAD HUSSAIN

Thank you, this is Sarmad. So, we also have something like this in the IDN module. I'm just wondering whether we should cross-reference this.

MICHAEL KARAKASH

Sure, I'll make a note. Perfect, thanks, Sarmad. Yes, Justine.

JUSTINE CHEW

I think it's a good idea to make the cross-reference, but not just for community TLDs, but for the Geonames and the brands as well, yeah.

MICHAEL KARAKASH

Perfect, we'll make those suggestion edits in the relevant sections as well. Thanks. So, going down, I think there was one more spot where it was mentioned. Maybe not, maybe we decided to include it just in that. It's gone through many iterations. Oh, here, yeah, there we go. So, again, we include it here, but we do have allocatable variant label here. An applicant for a community-based TLD string and its allocatable variant labels is required to submit a written endorsement of its applied for primary gTLD. But you want for the same, an applicant for a community-based TLD string and its allocatable variant labels for the same primary string. Did you want that included here? It's a very similar reference, but shorter. Okay, perfect. And those were the two spots in CPE where we added that recommendation. So, we can check that one off. Perfect.

Third one we have is for, so resolution of contention sets. So, also string contention resolution. The one recommendation relevant to this one was 3.25. And this one is after submission of an application, the applicant is allowed to withdraw an applied for variant label from that application, but is not allowed to add any other variant label that was not originally applied for in that application.

Only an applicant for a brand TLD string who's applied for primary gTLD string is placed in a contention set is allowed to change its applied for primary string and allocatable variant labels under the condition set out in SubPro PDP recommendation 20.8. And here where that one has been incorporated, sorry for making everyone dizzy, it's down below here. So, here we have in section 3.1.2.3 designating a replacement string. Applicants will be given the option to designate a replacement string, including applicable variants when completing an application in the application system. The eligibility rules for replacement strings are the same that apply to all applied for gTLDs. Allocatable, perfect. Okay, excellent.

So, that one was a quick one. We're going to be going through these pretty quick now. There's one more that's left, but then we'll have the Consensus Policy ones we can look at. So, this one is applications assessed in rounds. The relevant recommendation for this one is 3.3. Applications for allocatable variant labels of existing gTLDs can be submitted during the immediate next application round of the new gTLD program and any subsequent rounds.

This one is pretty straightforward, but we still included it in this section here. It's a short section, but we have it explicitly, almost verbatim, right there. Applications for allocatable variant labels of existing gTLDs may also be submitted during the immediate next round of applications and any subsequent rounds, just to be explicit and have it documented in the AGB. And I'm seeing some discussions in the chat. Let me take a look. Oh, perfect, thanks. Thanks, Lisa. Any questions or comments regarding these ones here? Nope, perfect. So, looking back here for one second, for, yes, sorry.

For the limited challenge appeals mechanism, there was one recommendation that hasn't been in the Applicant Guidebook, but there's, I'll mention that now, it's 3.24. So, 3.24 mentions the DNS stability panel, but the one issue is that we don't have the DNS stability panel as part of the recommend, it doesn't exist anymore as the DNS stability panel. So, that's one thing we can potentially discuss about that specific recommendation that mentions that panel. And I don't know, I wanted to bring it up now, but it doesn't have to be today is the day that we discuss that, but I just wanted to point out it's red there because it's not in the AGB as it wasn't, the wording made it not as relevant to that with the DNS stability panel. Justine?

JUSTINE CHEW

So, what is the mechanism that would be doing the function of the DNS stability panel that we had envisaged?

MICHAEL KARAKASH

Yeah, so that one, Sarmad, go ahead.

SARMAD HUSSAIN

Yeah, so we are automating it at the application time. So, all the checks are being done by the software. Just to give you some examples, there's a check on that all strings must comply with IDN 2008. There's a check that all the strings should align with roots on LGR. There's also checks on lengths of labels and all that. So, there are multiple items which are based on whatever the RFCs say on the requirements of a label. And what we're doing is we're building that into the software rather than having a panel to do this. Thank you.

JUSTINE CHEW

I don't necessarily have a problem with that. I guess what you could do is write the language and then have an explanatory footnote to account for the non-applicability of a DNS stability panel that was mentioned in the recommendation. But I do have a question of, because I remember that this evaluation is subject to a challenge, right? And the challenge was supposed to go to the DNS stability panel. So, how are we handling that aspect of it then?

SARMAD HUSSAIN

So, this is Sarmad again. I think the way it's currently being thought through is that the challenge is only that the string is valid as per roots on LGR, but the software is not calculating that correctly. And

that can be done at the application time through the application system. And that will just come to ICANN, and ICANN will verify that, that whether the string aligns with LGR and there's some software issue. And that's why it's causing the string to be marked as not valid or not a variant or blocked versus allocatable variant. So, we'll manually check it against the roots on LGR to see whether there's a software bug or not.

JUSTINE CHEW

Sorry, I keep forgetting to say my name, Justine here. So, what you're saying is ICANN Org will then take on the role of evaluating a challenge.

SARMAD HUSSAIN

I think that's the verification of the correctness of the software, yes.

JUSTINE CHEW

Okay, so then you provide for that as an explanatory note as well. Just to make sure that whatever the intention of the recommendation is being implemented faithfully, but in a different way that was described in the recommendation.

MICHAEL KARAKASH

Perfect, thanks, Sarmad and Justine. Oh, we'll definitely add that and we'll share it in an upcoming IRT subtract call to show how that has been incorporated. Thank you. Perfect. So, those were all the recommendations in the Applicant Guidebook, but now I want to show the few recommendations to confirm with you all that they

are not relevant to include in the Applicant Guidebook, but we will definitely implement them through other mechanisms here.

So, on this slide, we have 3.10, 3.13, 7.9, and 8.1. So, 3.10 was the fee structure associated with future applications that include variant labels and variant label applications from registry operators of existing gTLDs must be consistent with the principle of cost recovery reflected in the 2012 Applicant Guidebook and affirmed by New gTLDs Subsequent Procedures PDP. So, again, these are important recommendations, of course, but there's no language that needs to be included in the Applicant Guidebook to cover this as it's conceptually throughout the entire Applicant Guidebook.

3.13, a future registry operator applying only for allocable variant labels of its delegated primary gTLD must incur a discounted base application fee. ICANN Org will decide on this discount based on what it considers to be proportionate to any costs associated with evaluating the application and consistent with the cost recovery principle. Again, similar. 7.9, after the registry transition process or change of control process is completed for gTLD and its allocated and delegated variant labels, the successor registry operator can apply for the other non-delegated allocatable variant labels of that gTLD in accordance with the same entity principle pursuant to final recommendation 2.1.

REC 8.1. No ceiling value for delegated top-level variant labels from a variant label set is required. As necessary as existing measures in the root zone LGR to reduce the number of allocatable top-level

variant labels, as well as economic, operational, and other factors that may impact the decision to apply for variant labels will keep the number of delegated top-level variant labels conservative. Any questions or comments on these? Perfect. The next one's, oh, was that a comment? No. What was that? Okay.

So, 8.2, in order to encourage a positive and predictable registrant experience, ICANN Org must, during implementation, create a framework for developing non-binding guidelines for the management of gTLDs and their variant labels at the top level by registries and registrars. Perfect. 8.5, the sequence for delegating the applied for primary gTLD string and the applied for allocatable variant labels that pass evaluation should be determined by the registry operator.

8.6, any delegated gTLDs and their delegated and allocated variant labels, if any, not validated by a proposed root zone LGR update, must be grandfathered. In other words, the proposed update will apply to future New gTLDs and their variant labels and will not be retroactive. There will be no change to the contractual and delegation states of the delegated gTLDs and their delegated and allocated variant labels which predate the proposed root zone LGR update and are subject to the version of root zone LGR when those gTLDs and variant labels were initially applied for upon the finalization of the application process.

And then 8.7, for all future versions of the root zone LGR generation panels and the integration panel should follow the stability principle in the LGR procedure and make best efforts to retain full

backward compatibility with delegated gTLDs and their delegated and allocated variant labels, if any. The LGR procedure must be updated to specify the exceptional circumstance to the extent known to the GPs and IP that could result in a proposed update to the root zone LGR not being able to retain full backward compatibility. Any questions on those ones?

Pretty straightforward. Perfect, and the last three that we've noted here, 8.8, in the unexpected event where a proposed update to the root zone LGR is unable to retain full backward compatibility for validating any delegated gTLDs, as well as their delegated and allocated variant labels, if any, the relevant GP must call out the exception during a Public Comment period and explain their reasons for such exception. The Public Comment period should also include the elements in the following implementation guidance, which I didn't include there, but it's also not relevant to the AGB.

9.1, a given variant label must have one of the following label states at any one time, delegated, allocated, withheld same entity, blocked, or rejected. If the same terminology is used for certain label states and new gTLD application states, their respective definitions must be consistent. And then 9.3, that shows the various transitions a variant label may go through, from blocked to withheld same entity, from withheld same entity to blocked, from rejected to withheld same entity, from withheld same entity to allocated, from allocated to withheld same entity, from allocated to delegated, and from delegated to allocated.

So, we have the spirit of all of these within the other recommendations in the AGB, but these are not to be included in the Applicant Guidebook. Any questions or comments on these? Are we in agreement that these are not to be included in the AGB, but Consensus Policy recommendations? Justine?

JUSTINE CHEW

I think that's fine. Sorry, that's Justine. Yeah, some of it is embedded in spirit in other parts of the AGB. The ones that are meant for the GP and IP, I presume they're going to go to the, in some documentation form that is specified for the GP and IPs, right? For the transition states, can someone confirm that these ones are still okay? There are no changes required for the attention of the IRT? Okay, I'm not hearing things, so I guess it's--

SARMAD HUSSAIN

So, this is, this is Sarmad. So, I think there is, we can, these were, I guess, verified and discussed in IDN EPDP phase one, but we can take that back. There's actually another project which is getting kicked off within ICANN, which is looking at delegation, contracting and delegation level details. So, we can maybe, Michael, bring it up there just to, as you're saying, re-verify it and see if there are any feedback we can bring it back. Thank you.

MICHAEL KARAKASH

Perfect, thank you, Sarmad. We'll definitely bring that back and we'll add it to the agenda for a future Sub-Track call. And thanks, Justine, for your comments. Oops, sorry about that. Okay, and just

briefly on phase two, I just added this slide here just to mention that Org is currently working on the phase two recommendations. I know this subtract is focused right now on phase one to incorporate it into the AGB as that was priority with the timeline, but this is in the works and a lot of progress has been made. So, we'll be updating you all soon regarding phase two. And, yes, Justine.

JUSTINE CHEW

Thanks, this is Justine. Can you just remind me, please, any of the recommendations under phase two compulsory for the new round?

MICHAEL KARAKASH

Oh, nothing that would impact the timeline to include, yeah, to confirm that. Perfect. So, any other questions regarding any of the topics or any of the slides? This is a big milestone as we've incorporated the recommendations into the Outlook and Guidebook so we can check that off and help the next round team proceed with their work without adding any more roadblocks, which is good. So, if anything comes up also regarding these topics, definitely use the mailing list or any other mechanism to reach out to us with your comments and thoughts on these recommendations. But to show you what the upcoming sessions are during this meeting, there are two more sessions.

During ICANN82, we have a community input objections and appeals session. This one is tomorrow at 16 UTC, same time as

today, 9 a.m. And then we have one the following day at 22:00 UTC regarding outreach, engagement, and communications. These ones are full IRT sessions, and we encourage you all to attend and provide any feedback or comments you have during those sessions as well.

And then you can see that we have other topics coming up throughout the month of March and April, and those are down below with the Base Registry Agreement and CPE being hot topics that we are working diligently on to ensure that those are finalized and in front of the IRT for review. So, I know we ended a little bit earlier. We did anticipate that, but the floor is open also for AOB if anyone wanted to add anything that was on their mind regarding any of these topics. Sarmad, yes.

SARMAD HUSSAIN

Thank you. This is Sarmad. Just to also note that there is a session which will present details on string similarity evaluation tomorrow morning in case you're interested. Thank you.

MICHAEL KARAKASH

Oh, yes, unfortunately, that is at the same time as an IRT session. So, for those who don't attend the IRT session, you could attend the string similarity session. Both great topics, both intriguing. You can choose. But if there's nothing else, we'll be giving you back 30 minutes this morning to work on other things. I know it's a packed meeting schedule and you all have other things to do, but thank

you all for attending. For those not in the room and in the Zoom room, thank you. And we'll be connecting soon. Thanks.

MICHAEL KARAKASH

Please stop the recording.

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