
ICANN83 | PF – GNSO: RySG GeoTLD Group Membership Working Session and Community Outreach
Tuesday, June 10, 2025 – 15:30 to 17:00 CEST

SUE SCHULER

Hello and welcome to the GeoTLD Group Membership Working Session and Community Outreach. My name is Sue and I'm the 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. When called upon, virtual participants will be given permission to unmute in Zoom. On-site participants will use a physical microphone to speak. Please state your name for the record and speak at a reasonable pace. I will now hand the floor over to Nacho Amadoz.

NACHO AMADOZ

Thank you very much, Sue. This is Nacho. Ronald is here by my side. Josu is not because he is attending his NomCom duties, but he will be joining us later during the meeting. We have a pretty packed agenda, so I guess that you already know what's the outline. We sent it by email. We're going to start with the ICANN staff. Thank you very much, Katrin, for making it happen. They are going to give us a presentation on the AGB and the next round, and you will have some time for questions and answers. That's correct, right? Thank

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you very much. If you don't mind, we can start already with that and use the time for more important things than listening to me.

LARS HOFFMANN

Thank you for having us here. We have the leader of the program in the room, Marika, over there, Marika Konings. We have Michael Karakash, who is online. If you're in the Zoom room, you see the video. Michael, you'll be disappointed to hear that you're not on the big screen yet, but maybe we can change that around. No, I'm joking. It's going to be the presentation on the screen in the room. Michael will talk us through the geo-evaluations, and Marika is going to talk about fees, and I'm here to make up numbers. With that, back to Michael.

KATRIN OHLMER

Okay. So, briefly, maybe as an introduction, to give you some background. So, as a background, we have some GeoTLD members who are pretty active in the next round, and some are more just on the informational side. To give you some background, we started in 2015, with this whole process of evaluating the last applicant round and determining what to improve for the next round. And this session today marks kind of a result of this whole evaluation and development phase with launching the Applicant Guidebook, and we're interested in getting feedback on the Applicant Guidebook, especially from the GeoTLD side. I think there was not too much of representation from the Geo side, so if you ever see things which are not that great in the Applicant Guidebook and the

process overall, you can reach out to me or to ICANN Org, or you can just file a comment during the comment period, because I think we should, as Geos, be represented in this whole next round very well. And I think we are good examples how GeoTLDs benefit to the whole gTLD namespace. And of course, we are interested in getting new members on board in the GeoTLD group, so if there are any interested parties, you can reach out to the ExComm or to all members wanting to explore how the GeoTLD group helps to share best practices and experiences. And with that, I would like to hand over to Lars.

LARS HOFFMANN

Thank you so much, Katrin. You can hand over straight to Michael. He'll take on for me. Thank you.

MICHAEL KARAKASH

Perfect. Thank you, Lars and Katrin. Hi, everyone. My name is Michael Karakash, and I support the Policy Implementation Stream of Work for the next round. As Lars mentioned, I'll be walking you through the topic of geographic names and leaving some time for questions and answers to allow you to collaborate a bit. Perfect. So let's start with the next slide, please. Perfect.

So to begin, I'm going to give a quick high-level overview of the processes that are involved in the geographic names. So again, applicants for gTLD strings must carefully consider all the interests of governments or public authorities. It's very important. And a

reminder, we're going to show a lot of information here, but an applicant should review all the requirements specifically in the applicant guidebook because it goes into more details there, and there's different criteria and requirements for all of the other subcategories that we mentioned. There's two processes. We'll go into more details in the following slides, but just to put it up here for now, there's the geo names identification, and that happens during string evaluation. And then there's the geographic names review, and this one happens during application evaluation. Again, we'll go into further details later. Next slide, please.

One very important point to begin with that we want to reiterate and make sure everyone is aware of is the applications for strings that are country or territory names will not be approved as they're not available for the next round. And here, a string is considered a country or territory name if it meets the following criteria you see here. Again, we use the ISO 3166-1 as the standard. So if it's an alpha-3 code, if it's a local code, if it's a long-form or short-form name, or any translation of those in that 3166-1. Also, if it's exceptionally reserved, a short or long-form name associated with that. If it's a separable component of a country name from the separable country names list, and that is in the appendix in the applicant guidebook, so you can see that physically what's listed there. And if it's commonly known country name recognized by international organizations. Next slide, please. So now we know what you can't apply for. So these are what are considered geographic names. So a geo name and its allocatable variant label,

we want to make sure that that's clear. It has to meet these criteria. It's the name in any language of a capital city of any country or territory listed again in the ISO 3166-1 standard. It's the name of a city or region where the applicant declares that it intends to use the gTLD for purposes associated with that name. Again, the intent is very important when it comes to a city name. We can provide more information regarding that later. If it's an exact match of a subnational place name, and these include counties, provinces, or states listed in the ISO 3166-2, and it's a name or could be a name listed as a UNESCO region. And these are listed explicitly in the footnotes in the applicant guidebook. Or it's in the standard country or area code for statistical use, M49. And again, we link to this in the applicant guidebook so you can see exactly what qualifies under these categories here. Perfect. Next slide.

So what do you need to submit to make sure your geographic name is meeting all the requirements? A question we sometimes get is who can apply for a geo name? So as is the case for all other, as in generally in the applicant guidebook, any established legal entity such as a corporation, organization, or institution can apply for a geographic name. And then again, applicants that wish to apply must provide documented support. And here, the documentation, these are very important. Documentation must be dated no more than 18 months prior to the application submission. It must clearly express the relevant government or public authority support or non-objection to that specific application. And it should demonstrate that the government or public entity understands

what string is being requested and how it's being intended to be used. And then failure to support or provide support or non-rejection will result in denial by the geographic names panel, who will be doing the reviewing. Perfect. Next slide, please. Perfect. As I mentioned before, there are these two processes. We'll be looking at them closely now. The identification portion, geo names identification, happens again during string review. And this is when the GMP—geographic names panel—that is selected by ICANN will evaluate every string to determine whether it's a protected geo name. Even if it's not marked to be a geographic name, it will be covered to ensure that nothing was missed in that. During geographic names review, the GMP will determine whether each applied for string represents a geo name, verify the relevance and authenticity of all the documentation provided. Again, if it's a country or territory name, it will be denied. But if it's the other criteria listed below, it could be evaluated. It will then confirm if all the required documentation from the relevant governments and authorities are provided as well, and that the communication is legitimate. They can also do their own research to ensure the information you're providing is accurate. Also, in the applicant guidebook, in the appendix, you will find a sample letter of support or non-objection to help guide you in requesting that information to ensure you're following the right procedures for that. Next slide, please.

So we provided a few scenarios that will result in extended evaluation. The first one is what if you don't provide all the right

documentation as you submit your application and some documents are missing. So if that happens, applicants are given 90 days from the date of notice to resolve that issue. There's only one opportunity to resolve and correct any issues regarding missing documentation during a round. And if you're unsuccessful through that process, you can't provide more documentation, you're open to reapply in a future round, but not in that same round. If there's a conflicting support for the same geographic name, for example, multiple applications for an identical or a confusingly similar string from different governments, that would lead to contention resolution. However, there's other, again, to remind you, there's auctions and there's CPE, community priority evaluation, for those who are familiar with that. If they had elected to pursue CPE, they would go through that process. Perfect. Next slide, please. And I believe for these two slides regarding the fee structure, I'm going to hand it over to Marika.

MARIKA KONINGS

Yeah, thanks, Michael. So I also wanted to cover fee related into geographic name applications. Michael already gave the details of what goes into that geographic name identification, that first part that is part of the gTLD evaluation fee and carried out for all strings. But once the string has been identified as a geographic name as part of the applicant application evaluations, a third party provider will be responsible for carrying out the geographic name review. And again, you see here the activities that are involved in that. I think Michael already covered those on the previous slide. Maybe

we can jump on to the next slide, which then kind of explains the approach we've taken on this one. So our intent is for the final AGB to be able to include a will not exceed price, because we do want to give certainty to applicants on the cost they can expect or the maximum cost that they can expect. But at this point, we don't have sufficient information to say we think it's going to be X. What we did include at the moment an estimate that is really based on looking at what the costs were in 2012 and basically applying inflation to that. And also because, again, there were some cases that were more complicated than others. So making some extrapolations there, which basically brings us to a range of 18,000 to 25,000. But as I said, that is not yet informed by any RFIs or information we have from actual providers that will be able to do that work. So what we're currently in the process of doing is conducting a request for information, and we hope on that basis we'll be able to give you a much more refined estimate. And as I said, we would like to set it as a does not exceed, but obviously still at the end of the day, we will charge you what the actual cost is that we will be able to negotiate with the provider. But it will not exceed a certain amount, because as I said, we do want to give certainty to applicants on what they need to plan for in the worst case. But as I said, obviously as through an RFP process and negotiations we'll have, we of course aim to obtain the best price possible. So I hope that helps explain what's currently in the AGB. But for the final AGB, as I said, we hope to have that detail in there to be able to give the do not exceed price. And I think that gets us to the question part.

NACHO AMADOZ Thank you very much. Yeah, I think there might be a queue already mounting up, because this is quite a surprise. Ronald, I don't know if you were the first one. Yeah?

RONALD SCHWARZLER Okay, if I got it correctly, any application will have the geographical names panel evaluation during string evaluation.

MICHAEL KARAKASH This is what your colleague said. Sorry, that's the identification. The identification. Yes, yes.

RONALD SCHWARZLER And then if I apply for a GeoTLD, and let's make it easy, Vienna, which everyone knows is a geographical name, and then I have support letter, blah, blah, blah. The GeoTLD application will be 250, not 227.

MARIKA KONINGS If the price for geographic name evaluation would end up being 25,000.

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- RONALD SCHWARZLER So we have to tell our clients if we apply for a GeoTLD, it's 227 plus the bonus you have to pay, because you are in the famous group of GeoTLDs, which is hard to justify. Thanks.
- SUE SCHULER Elaine Pruis asks, what happens if an applicant accidentally applies for a Geo name? With no intention to use as a Geo, do they get swept up in the Geo panel review?
- MICHAEL KARAKASH Yes, thank you. So yes, even if an applicant doesn't intend to use it, but they qualify as a Geo name based on the information there, unless it's a city name, and there's no intent there, then yes, they'll be swept up into the geographic names review and need to provide the documentation. However, if it's a city name, and there's no intent to use it, then they won't have to qualify there, but it will be evaluated by the GMP to ensure that there's no intent there to use it for it. Thanks.
- NACHO AMADOZ Thank you very much, Michael.
- UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER Yeah, what I'm interested in, I'm [inaudible] by the way, you say if there is no intent to use it for the city itself. Is there a definition of that? I mean, you talked about Vienna, let me talk about Rotterdam, as in my own country, if I would apply for the

.Rotterdam TLD and I would not put any intention to use it for the city in there and just leave it as it is, and hope that it will automatically be used by people from Rotterdam, companies from Rotterdam, what kind of argument does ICANN have against that, or how does that fit in this process? Because it is very easy to say I do not intend, but is that a way out of those 25k on costs or less? The question, in fact, is whether or not the intention, what happens if you do not explicitly write your intent to use it for the city, but looking at the TLD as a string, it is obvious that it is for the city. Is that something that ICANN have thought about?

MICHAEL KARAKASH

Sure, that's a great question. We did talk about a lot of different scenarios, possibly, but one thing we say in the applicant guidebook regarding intent is that the geographic names panel may potentially communicate with the signing entity, the government or public authority, to confirm the intent in that situation. But if there's no intent, they do have the right to do their own research to ensure there's other processes to prevent that. But for city names specifically, it does come to what the applicant is saying. However, they will be caught in the review portion if they do interpret that there is intent there, that if the applicant says there isn't. So the fee would come into play in that portion, but I'll let Marika potentially respond regarding that if there's any more you would like to add.

MARIKA KONINGS

No, I think you said it rightly. If they end up in the review, the fee will apply.

LARS HOFFMANN

Michael, correct me if I'm wrong, but I think the Rotterdam example is probably a good one. So it's probably difficult to make a case how you would apply for .Rotterdam gTLD and claiming it has nothing to do with the city of Rotterdam. So obviously last time around, there's the famous .SPA example. That's a much easier case to make where you can see a case can be made one way or another. And so I think that's also, and it goes to the cost of the geo panel as well. You come obviously from the point, well, I'm working with the city of Vienna, the mayor is having dinner with me, but I'm working with the right officials. Why do I need to pay money to certify they're the right people? The cost is also there to make sure that we don't know everybody who applies, and so to make sure that the people who do apply for Vienna are the right people. So to a degree, yes, it is bothersome, I understand that, to the cities that want the TLD. They have to pay extra, but it is also can be regarded as a protection to make sure that TLDs are not allocated to people who would like to operate in a way that maybe is not aligned with the city government or another regional government. Probably not something that is helpful in some cases, but but I think that's a consideration to make here as well.

MICHAEL KARAKASH

And just to add, that would help clarify this really quickly. There's two portions that under the city names you'll see in the applicant guidebook. And the two qualifications are if it's clear from the applicant statements within the application that they would use. Applicants will use the TLD primarily for purposes associated with the city name. And then this one will catch it regardless. B says the applied for string is a city name as listed on official city documents. So if Rotterdam is used in an official city document, it will automatically be, even if there's no intent there, it will be caught with that. And it will be subject to geographic names review.

NACHO AMADOZ

Before moving to Louis and then Benjamin, we are going to be showing our teeth on this constantly, I guess. But that doesn't mean that we don't appreciate you coming over and giving us the explanation. But for us, it is very hard to understand how it is that we must pay more for something that was done before. And I understand the rationale in estimating the cost. But \$18,000 to check one government is one government is a bit difficult to understand. So, Louis, you were next, I think.

LOUIS HOULE

Well, anyway, my first question, you were talking about the same thing. We were talking about the same thing. How can you have the intent of not being 3166? I have one example there. I don't know if it's helpful, but there's a sports shoe brand that is called Munich. Their intent, if they apply, is to use it for their own brand purposes.

But Munich seems to be the Spanish version of Munich. So there could be conflicts there. I understand that there could be conflicts, legitimate conflicts that need a resolution. But in some cases, they may find themselves having to judge what's the situation. So I understand that.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER

Fair enough. Second question, how can you spend \$28,000 or \$25,000 to check that information there? We've been doing that in five minutes. Let's be serious. I don't remember for a fact what happened, but \$25,000 for this? I just can't believe it.

MARIKA KONINGS

If I could just respond. This is just a rough estimate applying inflation based on 2012 numbers. We're really hoping, and I think there you can probably help us as well. When we put out the RFI, if providers can do this in a very easy manner, the costs are not going to be like that. But we do need, of course, providers to come forward and offer these services. Because as I said, in certain cases, this may be really straightforward. You can confirm. You can see it online. But we're also in jurisdictions where that may be much more difficult. And again, the fee is, of course, a balance between the complex easy cases. And I know that may not sound fair, but that's how kind of the fee is built up. I know there's a number here, and that may look shocking. But as I said, it will really be informed by the end of the day what we get back through the RFI. So I'd really like to encourage you as well. If you know of organizations or

companies that do this, because, again, we're probably not the only organization that asks for this kind of material, encourage them to apply. And if you know that they provide good service and good cost, that will get translated here into what the fee will be.

NACHO AMADOZ

We have a line, but let me just throw a stupid idea. Could the GAC help with this? And the governments involved with ICANN, could they help saying, yeah, this is from my government?

MICHAEL KARAKASH

So I can take that. We do have a reference to looking towards your GAC representative to assist you with this. However, it's not a replacement. It's just to assist an applicant to locate who might be that relevant government or public authority. But again, it has to be reconfirmed by the geographic names panel during that process.

NACHO AMADOZ

Yeah, my question was the opposite. Could ICANN rely on the GAC for this? I mean, we rely on the GAC if we need it. Sure. Thank you. But I don't know. Maybe there are reasons. And again, this is a stupid idea. But the GAC seems to be here. Not all countries are represented in the GAC. I understand that.

MICHAEL KARAKASH

Yeah, that is definitely a great question. Based on the subsequent procedures working group and the policy recommendations, it explicitly mentioned the geographic names panel that has to be in that position. So we were bound by those policy recommendations while ensuring that they're being implemented accurately. So while the GAC can assist, it can't be a replacement, unfortunately.

NACHO AMADOZ

Thank you for the answers. And also, thank you for your patience with us. But this is very hard to understand sometimes. [inaudible]

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER

[inaudible] Just one comment about the price. We are dealing with public authorities, or we are public authorities. So we need to have a price. We cannot say, okay, you could apply for a TLD, but the price could be around. It doesn't exist with public authorities. I'm French, and it's very, very terrible to work with public authorities in France. But you cannot say, maybe you could have \$35,000 more. We don't know. Okay, but what do I have to put on the public market? So we need a price, a standard one. Okay, it will be this price. So maybe the idea of the GAC could be a good way to certify the application. But if I remember in 2012, I had to give a mail from the foreign minister. And I put a copy of the French Constitution to prove that Alsace is Alsace in a way. And so it's managed by the region of Alsace. And I said, one hour is enough to check if [inaudible] it's okay.

So another comment is that, what kind of internet do we want for tomorrow? Okay, because, okay, next year, maybe I could apply with a region or four geos. And I will have additional fees. And another way, we will have a startup, six months old, based in Bahamas. We don't know where the funds are coming from. And they will pay less for their TLD than a 500-year-old city in Europe. Come on. So it's easier for mafia to build a TLD than for a city? This is the feeling. It's less expensive if you are a generic based in Bahamas, building a TLD for scams and spams. Come on.

NACHO AMADOZ

We have to shape this feeling. Sorry, [inaudible], to interrupt. Into the public comment, we have to provide, again, in a constructive manner. First, Marika's reply, then Werner, and then you.

MARIKA KONINGS

Yeah, thanks. And maybe just to add, as one of the reasons why it's structured this way, is the cost recovery nature of the program. So we've looked at, as well, in other cases where there are specific evaluations that need to be carried out for a specific type of applicants, there is an additional cost involved. As that, you know, we know this number is shocking. It may not end up there because, again, we are outlining very specifically the activities that need to be undertaken. And as soon as we have that feedback from the RFI, we will be able to confirm that it did not exceed number. And they said that will give you, then, hopefully, the certainty. Because, again, it's always, I guess, nice to hear that you actually have to pay

less. We say that this is the ceiling. It won't be absolutely not more than that. But there is a chance that it's actually lower because, of course, we will still need to contract after the RFI with the provider.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER

I have a proposition. We have 0.0 something percent of abuse on [inaudible]. Okay? Maybe you could make a discount for such TLDs. Okay? For annual ICANN fees.

NACHO AMADOZ

Okay. Point taken. I know there are some interjections. Let me just interject myself with the work of the day, which is timeline. Do we have a timeline for these so that we can get the final figure that [inaudible] was asking for? Estimated timeline?

MICHAEL KARAKASH

Yeah, I'm just actually looking at Michael because I think he's working on the RFI if we have an estimated date for when that will go out. Michael, do you know?

MICHAEL KARAKASH

So, right now, we're working to meet in August, a September deadline for the RFI. But we are in the beginning stages of that to work with the vendor management team to ensure that we're meeting all the prerequisites. So, once we have more information, we can communicate that.

NACHO AMADOZ

Thank you very much. Louis, you wanted to follow up very quickly, very quickly on this?

LOUIS HOULE

You want us to be constructive? If there's an application that comes from Canada, you just phone Canada Post and you ask them if that two-character has any letters that have been delivered there. You will have your answer.

NACHO AMADOZ

Okay. Werner and then Dirk. I don't see anybody else in the room.

WERNER STAUB

Werner Staub from CORE Association. I happen to have quite a bit of experience with ICANN accountability processes, you know, years spent like that, and to be told that, sorry, you're not a party to the proceeding. And then ICANN losing the proceeding, and the people winning the proceeding being a party acting in bad faith. So this has happened. And essentially, this is a situation that illustrates what we're currently dealing with. In trying to find an external party who is going to price a service like that, that party will try to price their legal risk in making any decision whatsoever. This is going to be so prohibitively expensive that they will, of course, not be able to do something below the indications that you just gave. But also, it doesn't save ICANN at all from any problems

with it. The only thing that's going to happen is that after that, there's going to be another proceeding, and ICANN will have precisely the problems that it attempted to avoid by outsourcing such a decision. So a decision about what is a geographic name is purely a decision where ICANN's capabilities are the best in the world. There's no organization better placed to come up with a decision like that. ICANN has staff, ICANN can provide procedures, the expertise is in the community, whereas any other provider would have lots of trouble doing this. So we just should have given up the idea that anything just would have to be outsourced and priced because it is just a distorted pricing mechanism, the only thing that we could get there.

NACHO AMADOZ

Thank you, Werner. Dirk?

DIRK KRISCHENOWSKI

Dirk Krischenowski, for the record. I will refer on the Rotterdam example. If there would be a brand Rotterdam for [inaudible] or whatever, and that applies for that string, in the last round we had a dozen city names from Norton to Lancaster to Java that had applied and were all going through. And I'm curious what I would suggest in the criteria for the geographic name, as you said in these public papers and on public use by the government, that Rotterdam could be subject to a geographic names panel. But if you have the application for a brand, it's not really clear in the guidebook if you have a brand, a city brand, applying as... No,

someone is applying for a brand Rotterdam. What will happen at the end of the day? Will it go through the geographic names panel or is there the idea to, oh, it's a brand, it goes through anyway, regardless if it's a city brand or not?

MICHAEL KARAKASH

Thanks, that's a good question. We do acknowledge how within the city name section in the application guidebook, we recognize that a city name could be a generic term as well, not just a brand name, but also a brand name and they're not unique. But again, those two criteria do apply. Again, the intent comes into play, but if Rotterdam is on an official document, even if it's a brand, it will be pulled into the geographic names review. There's no special geo category for brands that we are acknowledging.

LARS HOFFMANN

Michael, just to add to that, and correct me if I'm wrong, so if there was a brand.rotterdam, .perfume.rotterdam. I think there's Munich brands as well. There's a lot of those things, exactly. So if it is a brand, it would pass through, because I think the intent there is very clear. In that case, the Rotterdam case is maybe a little bit, if it wasn't a brand, it was just a quote-unquote private, I mean, it's not possible, but like an application from a commercial applicant who just claims to be not wanting to do anything to do with the city of Rotterdam. But if it was the Torino brand, he wouldn't make an application without Torino, and it's clear from its application that the use for the TLD, then yes, the TLD would be allocated to that

brand based on that. I mean, and the brand will make the opposite complaint, right? So if the city of Torino applies, they will obviously get .torino with the right support, and then the brand would not be able to get that in the next round if it's been delegated already at that point. The same way that .spa is the example from last time, it's been delegated, the city of spa is not able to apply for .spa anymore, right? The TLD is delegated based on the policy that we have at the moment, that's how that will play out.

NACHO AMADOZ

Thanks, Lars. Thank you very much.

KATRIN OHLMER

Katrin Ohlmer for the record. So I would like to share one observation based on this price estimate. So if you compare the different categories of top-level domain applicants, you get the impression that if you apply for standard TLD or if you apply for .brand, it's cheap. And if you apply for more cumbersome TLD, which might better fit to the goals of ICANN, like a community TLD or a geo-TLD, then it's much more costly. I mean, we know the proposed costs of a community application. And while I fully understand this concept of price recovery and cost recovery, I think the optics, if we go outside of our ICANN community, are somewhat discerning and looking like it's about money-making and it's not. So I ask myself, where's this balance between public interest and private interest? So I would like to share that. .

MARIKA KONINGS

Yeah, thank you. I definitely appreciate that feedback and would definitely encourage you as well to provide that through the public comment form.

NACHO AMADOZ

[inaudible] was first, and then you, [inaudible].

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER

My question is not related to any fees. So if we can finish that topic first, maybe.

RONALD SCHWARZLER

So just as a comment to brand applying for a geo-name, let's take the Munich one. And the city of Munich also apply. They will go into a contention set. Yeah? And the city of Munich will lose it, because no city is allowed to use money for an auction. Yeah? We must be very clear of this. In case there is a contention set with a geo-name, the brand will get it. And this is a disadvantage, which you cannot solve, because the city is not allowed to use the money for—But it is the case, as far as I got this.

NACHO AMADOZ

Let me just make a small joke. Maybe we could get a third party panel to evaluate if administrations can go into auctions, and then

see how we can fund that. Yeah, sorry about that. But I couldn't miss that one. [inaudible] first.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER

Thank you. My question is on a completely different topic. One of the categories of blocked domain names is the names that are on the separable country names list. We found that that list is outdated, or at least is heavily depending on the ISO 3166 list, which has some outdated items in it. My question, Mike, I think to you is, how strictly is that list followed? Or is there any feedback possible in a public comment period?

MICHAEL KARAKASH

Thanks for that. We recently worked with the IANA to update it to the most, it should be updated based on ISO. But if you're saying ISO 3166 is outdated, then ICANN doesn't have authority for that. However, we base all of this list on the ISO list. However, on our end, it's as updated as could be. However, you're happy to provide your comment during public comment for us to look at it further. I hope that answers your question.

LARS HOFFMANN

Sure. Just on the example for the city and the auction, I understand that predicament. And do I personally think that sounds right? But this is a policy issue. If we went in here as ICANN, it's not our role to say the city should have the priority, or the brand should have the priority. If you sit in the brand TLD group, they will probably have a

different opinion, right? And so if the community were to tell us in the next round, we develop policy whereby in such a situation, the geographic name has priority over this, because they can't go into an auction that will be immediately in the next applicant guidebook. But I hear the concerns, but the multi-stakeholder model does not allow us to just make these kind of policy judgment calls. And rightly so, I think.

NACHO AMADOZ

We understand, and we apologize for focusing our frustration on you guys. And we really thank you, Michael, Lars and Marika for coming and we thank you Katrin for suggesting this session, which has been one of the most relevant sessions that we could have later and for making it happen. Ronald, one last comment?

RONALD SCHWARZLER

I already told Lars. In the presentation of the AGB version last Tuesday in the morning, there was mentioning that cost recovery, blah, blah, blah, blah. And it's based on 1000 TLD applications. And if there is more applications, we'll get a refund. So rough estimate, let's say 2000 applications. It will go down 50%, right?

MARIKA KONINGS

Unfortunately, no. No. So to kind of fine tune a bit what you said. So basically, the implementation costs are based on 1000 applications. It's kind of a safeguard to make sure that we recover those costs. And that's based on the current estimate of 70 million

that it will cost to implement. So if we receive more than 1000 applications, we will have recuperated or ICANN will have recuperated those costs. And a volume refund may be applicable. So again, 70,000 of each application goes on top every plus 1000. Again, I can't give you an exact number because, of course, it will depend at the end of the day on the number of applications received, what the actual implementations cost are by the time we launch the program. But, yeah, it's good to point it out. There will be a volume refund as soon as we hit, in principle, the 1000 applications. Well, I think you can make a bit of calculations. As I said, if we assume 70 million spent on the application, 70,000 per application is dedicated to that. So with 1000, we have that recovered. So, again, 70,000 times splitting it over the number of applicants. But, again, it's a very rough...

RONALD SCHWARZLER

And about 50,000 could be recovered if we have double that.

MARIKA KONINGS

I'm not going to state any numbers here.

NACHO AMADOZ

Okay, then. No more hands, no more questions. All happiness in the room. And thank you. We really thank you for coming here. And we will have lots to discuss and talk about how we gather all these points and provide them in the public comment. Thank you. Thank

you very much. Thank you, guys. Thank you. Good. So, that was easy.

And coming to another easy one, which is NIS2 implementation and registration data updates from members. This one took long, but it was a good discussion, and it was a very important point for the members of the group, right? So, we will have to work from here to see how we shape this into the public comments and that we made it with a strong voice as a group. NIS2 implementation and registration data is supposed to be a follow-up of where we are on this issue, both in terms of what's going on at every national jurisdiction and what you are seeing, to see how can this help the group foresee or cope with what might be coming in the different areas, but also on how this is affecting how we deal with the registration data that we are going to end up having, how we are working with the effort that we initiated with Thomas Rickert, so that we could have a template to provide to the registrars so that the process to get any RRA amendments, if that was needed, which in many opinions it is, could be more streamlined than the regular procedure.

I can say where we are on the NIS2 thing in the case of Spain, and the TLDs affected by this, which are many in the room, .GAL, .CATS, .Barcelona, .EUS, .Madrid is also a member, it's not in the room, but they are public administration, so they cannot be fined, so they don't really care that much, but the ones that can be subject to review by the public bodies in Spain, we are all going through the process of getting certified in a security certification that is

Spanish, but that is based on the root of ISO 27001. .CAT has already been certified, the others are going through the process, I don't want to speak for the others, but you do that if you think that there's any additional thing to add, and we are seeing that we have a bill that has not yet been turned into law, that already outlines the connection between meeting the requirements of NIS2, and this security certification national scheme that is in place since 2012. As I said, this follows very closely the measures of control of the ISO 27001, so we are all more or less going to be in that position, and the bill to transpose NIS2 to our national jurisdiction makes a clear reference to being certified on this, and then that it would suffice to meet the requirements of NIS2. I don't know what's the case in the others, but now this comes at the same time that we are also updating the registration data policy, and the deadline for that is 21st of August, and this could impact on that because this is going to be affected by all these debates that we are having about authentication and provision of the data of the registrants, and for that .CAT in concrete, but this is something that we are sharing with all the others to see how we can make things better. It's us doing an outreach effort to tell registrars what are the changes, not yet any amendments to the RRA, and I think that's wise because the law is still not there, and we don't know how are we going to modify the RRA by the law if that is needed at all. So this is the situation now. Ronald, you had your experience that you have been going through.

RONALD SCHWARZLER

So following our last year's meeting in London, you probably remember that Thomas Rickert presented us or had problems presenting us the baseline of an RRA agreement that everyone could use. It was somehow a blueprint. You just had to tick what is applying for you, full dataset, minimum dataset, and he expected the registrars to accept that and sign that and anything is good. I had a talk to the registrars, this group who does sign or evaluate these RRA amendments in Seattle, and they clearly denied to accept from a form or a blueprint for RRA agreement. They encouraged me to send them a special version for .vienna, Köln, Cologne, Tyrol, so the four TLDs that we are running, and the provision is within two weeks, you must submit it to ICANN. ICANN has to submit it to this RRA amendment acceptance or evaluation group. They have to answer back within 30 days, and on the 29th day, they came back to ICANN telling we need additional 60 days. ICANN granted these additional 60 days. After 59 days, and I'm not joking, it's really on the day before they had to deliver, another email, we need additional 30 days because we have involved lawyers and whatever. So to me, it seems they are delaying it. They are just not able to accept the RRA amendment that is 100% based on the Thomas Rickert proposal that every one of you has seen during London or got afterwards.

Next date is, I think, 24th, something like this, of July, when I will get the next information, which will hopefully be accepted. What happens if they decline it, I don't know yet. If I get something acceptance, as promised, you will get my version of full data set,

and according to national law, you have to send owner contact, tech contact, if available, admin or something. So you have to verify, according to NIS2, the data accuracy, etc. And when you then will send in an RRA amendment, you can refer to a similar one that had already been granted, which will make the speedy process then. The first one was expected to be cumbersome, but delaying it... That's stupid. No, stupid is the wrong word. 30 days notice, 29 day I can't do it, and then again 60 days extension, and the 59th day say we can't do it in time. This is somehow not fair, let me say it that way. They could have asked back, they could have asked for reasons, no communication, just saying we are not able to do it within time. So, sorry, no news on that other than waiting.

NACHO AMADOZ

Okay, if anybody else wants to provide any update on how is it going and what they are seeing, this is the moment. We don't see much update for that.

RONALD SCHWARZLER

One addition from my side. Registrars are contacting the registries to ask, so what is your plan, how are you going? And we answer them without sending the RRA amendment, which is not freed now, and telling them we will need it for data set. So the same thing that is in the RRA amendment, and we didn't get any negative feedback. So they are willing to send this, but obviously not agreeing to an

RRA amendment. So not yet a problem with not getting the data that we demand, but not getting the RRA version or solution.

NACHO AMADOZ

It is clear that there are two circuits here, right? One which is the registrar working with you or any of the members of the group saying, hey, clarify to me how we are going to proceed. And then another one which is the registrar, the registrar stakeholder group that are driving this process to review the RRAs, because probably your local registrar is not participating in that. They are just giving the green light to whatever the people driving the process within the registrar stakeholder group are doing. So maybe what we could also do now is to see how we reach out to the registrar stakeholder group saying, hey, let's not delay this any longer, because it's going to be for the benefit of everyone, because we will have this certainty, this clarity that we're providing, and also the legal document that covers it. So with that, we will try to get to them. Good. So again, a very joyous topic that we very happily covered. Now we are really going to a topic that will hopefully be on a different note, and that is an update from .CAT and from Bea on the great success that .CAT had applying for the grant program. So Bea, all yours. There are the slides that we provided, so they should be on the screen, and you take it from here.

BEA

Hi, this is BEA from .CAT. So as you may know, .CAT domain submitted a proposal for the ICANN grants program titled

Assessing GeoTLD Performance for Enhanced Internet Accessibility and Open Source Methodological Approach. Sorry, I need to read it because it's too long. But, well, we are proud to announce, to officially announce that the project has been selected as one of the 23 initiatives to receive funding in this first cycle of ICANN grants. So next slide, please.

Yeah, this is the general information about this project. It's a 23-month project, and at the end of the day, what we want to do, it's an international research to design an open source methodology that allows to understand and determine how traditional and artificial intelligence-powered search engines treat geo-territorial domains. We represent a large diversity on internet, on language, cultures, and geographical localizations. So this project, also .CAT domain is leading the project. The success of the project lies on the support and the commitment of the 12 domains involved in this project. So it is important to thank the support of the 12 domains. We are working with DOT Barcelona, DOT bzh, DOT CAT, of course, we are in alphabetical order, DOT Cologne, DOT Eus, DOT Gal, DOT Hamburg, DOT Koeln, DOT London, DOT Quebec, DOT Scot, and DOT Wien. And we have the support of two strong organizations, as the GeoTLD group itself, and the Catalan chapter of ISOC Internet Society. Next slide, please.

We're going to, from .CAT, we're going to lead this project, but the most important thing is that we rely also on the experience and knowledge of a well-known SIO consultant in Spain. And during today and tomorrow, we have been meeting with him to catch up

with all the domains and recollect all the information that we need to create an architecture of the study to success on our proposed. Next slide, please.

This project is very, very relevant right now because artificial intelligence is reshaping the way we search information in the web and how the results are presented in the web. So as we represent cultural, linguistic, or regional identities on the web, we are, we could be not correctly represented in the way as a traditional and artificial intelligence-powered search engines present information. So this project seeks to detect the situation for each TLD and to have a global vision of what's going on with our domains in the way that technically results are presented. Next slide, please. So what does the success look like for this project? Well, we will succeed if we are able to identify if the domain TLD is a factor that could have any power to see how the domains and how the information is presented in the web. But also, we also want to create a replicable methodology and power TLD registries with actionable insights and at the end of the day, to offer more information to end customers so they could have or they could make informed decisions about their digital identity online. Next slide, please.

Okay, we're going to do this study in two phases. First of all, we need to create a comparison, a clean comparison, so the only relevant factor that will affect a positioning, the positioning of a website is based on the domain. And the second part of the study is based on observation on how real websites indexed and with good old content are treated by artificial intelligence search

engines and we will look for competitors that could offer the same kind of information and see who is getting more traffic from artificial intelligence search engines. Next slide, please.

So, the study, the project, the whole project has two phases. First one, data collection, study architecture, indexing, monitoring and observation. This is going to be from May 2025 to November 2026. And the second part of the study is the final conclusions of the study, individual conclusions and as a group, a whole conclusion that we will disseminate locally and globally because although we don't know which is going to be the results, the final results of the study, we know that if the result says that there are gaps or biases in the way that search engines is treating us, we need to talk about this and discuss this topic with the industry and the big players of the industry. And on the other hand, if the results shows that we have a good position, we should be proud of that and we should spread the voice around our community. Next slide, please. Next slide, please.

So the first parts of the study, just for you to have an idea, there's a lot of study just for you to have an idea. I'm going to talk a little bit about what is TLD, and how it works, and what are the factors that could influence the positioning on sale, and how old is the domain, how the user experience of a website is, and how authority, how many authority does have the domain. We cannot control those factors, and this is why we have created a methodology that will ignore the TLD domain. And we will create, next slide, please.

We will register domains, three domains, one for the Geo TLD domain, the other one for comparison with the ccTLD of each domain, and another one to compare against a gTLD. We will create identical WordPress content, we will create randomized multilingual content language without semantic mark-up, this is very important, so this will allow us to do the observation of the positioning, not based on the root of the content, but only for the keyword that will be in the website that will differentiate language or scenarios of search, and would allow us to determine which extension is presented first, second, or third in our part of the observation. Next slide, please.

So the architecture will be like this. I don't know if it's possible for you to see it, but, for example, of .CAT, we will have ten domains under .CAT, ten domains under .es, ten domains under .com, that will have directories with the three different languages, and that will be indexed. Once we get all this indexed, we can start the positioning search. Next slide, please. And for you to understand the second part of the study, the one with artificial intelligence, next slide, please, we ask each domain involved in the study that identified five websites under its own TLD, domains for end customers, and we will look for competitors that will offer similar content to them, and once we have detected the website with our TLD and the one with the competitors, we will look up for who is going presented, who is presented in better position when you do a search both in traditional and artificial intelligence search engines. This way, we will understand if there are any factors or if

our domain is presented more times in better positions or is not presented at all, taking into account that there are competitors that could offer the same content or similar content that the one hosted in our TLDs. Next slide, please. This is what we asked to the domains. Next slide, please. And next slide, please.

This is the important part, the roadmap. Okay. This is a 23-month study. We started last month in May with a kickoff meeting, and we explained during today and tomorrow we are also meeting with the domains to explain better the study, the research, to understand their concerns, to recollect their information, information that we have asked them, and we're going to validate that architecture. We're going to start to create all the basis of the study, and we'll start to do the observation part. And next slide, please.

During 2026, by September, we will receive a draft aggregate report on the individualized and global conclusions of the study, and once that study is approved by the GeoTLD group for each domain and the group et al, we will create a website for the open source data, and we will translate the results in all the languages of the domains represented in the study. And next slide, please.

In 2027, we will disseminate the results of the study, and we'll finish the project. So we are super happy. We are super proud of having this project on board. We are very thankful for the support of the 12 domains. Without you, there's no project. Simple as that. And we know that we will find challenges in the way, but we believe that

we have a good team ready to work and support any part of the process to make it to the happy end. Thank you.

NACHO AMADOZ

Thank you very much, Bea. This is indeed a great project. We've said that in some other occasions. We will stop saying it now, but again, congratulations for the great success. Congratulations to the group itself, because it's a joint effort. And the way I see it, and I think that this is something that we could share, is that this is an ongoing dialogue and conversation of how this is going to take us forward, if this is taking us forward at all. And this has many representations. How we work together with this, and you have been doing sessions all day, right? So this is starting to be a good sign in the kickoff. This is also a conversation with what we see and how we adapt to the methodology that we need. So this is by no means something that is predefined, because we are going to be learning along the way, right? This is something that you can also let us know when are the points that we need to reconvene again and to discuss how this is going and where we are taking it. This is also a conversation with ICANN, as they have given us the funding to do a two-year project that is finally well-funded to do this research. So this is not anything that has been already predefined and closed. This is an ongoing effort, right?

BEA

Yeah, if I may add something. Of course we had an idea of the methodology when we presented and submitted the project, but

this is why we get the money, to refine the methodology, to adapt the methodology to the new stage, because we presented that one year ago and the result is going to be presented two years later. So we are trying to use the money-wise and the time-wise to adapt the methodology, and I think that, as Nacho said, the project all together, working all together, it's enriching the study, because we're trying to understand the difference between all the domains, and although it's only today that we have been having meetings all day, today I have a different vision of the project, and I hope this could be evolving with the time.

NACHO AMADOZ

And the milestones set, in my view, and you let us know how this is going to work out, but the milestones are set to sit down, see what we have, report to ICANN, reflect on how we proceed further, keeping it up, changing it when needed, so anybody participating in the project, or member of the group, or for that matter, whoever wants to take a look and add, is perfectly welcome to that. Moreover, this is an open-source methodology that, when it ends in 2027, is not going to be over, because this is going to be offered, and this is going to be there for us to keep playing with, and for others to adapt. So I think that the conversation stage is not even at the beginning. We are starting. We are seeing how do we get it from the moment that we have now to what we learn along the way, right? Good. If you haven't reserved your slot with Bea, please do. If you want to know more, here she is. And if you are too shy to ask today, then just write an email for that. Thank you very much,

Bea. All right. No questions on this? No comments? All joy, finally. We are now moving to the UA Local Initiative. Pim, this is you who is managing the project, so please go ahead.

PIM PASTOORS

Thank you. I thought you wanted to say more good news. Taking away my scope. So, yeah, the Universal Acceptance Local Initiative. We have been talking about it for some time. It took quite some time to fit it also in the existing framework. What is it about? With the help of ICANN, we created a framework to help individual members to work on universal acceptance, to have organized local events with their stakeholders. It is something local initiative that already existed in other parts of the world, for example, where there are different scripts. And the ExComm has been also discussing with ICANN to do something similar, but for geo TLD. Therefore, it took some time to really fit it in. We, I think at the Istanbul meeting, got great news that the Geo TLD group could start this up for an initial six months. You saw my emails about that. We already had three events identified. One happened with [inaudible], organized the first local training on universal acceptance. A second one is this month also with .CAT. And there is already a third one in the planning for October by .BZH in Rennes. So that's for the first part.

The good news now is that the ExComm had a meeting with ICANN staff yesterday to discuss what happened, are they happy, how did it work, and what's next. And at that meeting, ICANN confirmed

that this can continue immediately for another 12 months. This means that I will reach out to you to see who is interested in organizing a local event with the support of the Geo TLD group universal acceptance local initiative. And so that we can then present to ICANN and make the full agenda. I think there is one very interesting and I think it's a very useful takeaway from the meeting with the ICANN staff yesterday, is that when they look forward in how they want to approach universal acceptance, they want to focus more on the technical part than the awareness part. One of the difficulties I personally found in working with this topic is that they tried to combine the awareness part, which was often focused at decision makers, at local governments, to combine this message together with the technical training part. And often it was difficult to approach or you didn't really know who to approach to get people in the room. ICANN's idea is to focus more on very concrete, more result-based technical training, meaning that if you can identify a local partner, for example, a local institution or training center, university, work with them, have a training where at the end of the training you can say, look, these are 10 people, 10 students or organizations that really now understand and can apply universal acceptance, that this would be a great project. Luckily, we could refer already to what we were doing, .Alsace, personally also what .CAT is planning and what we already saw in the BZH proposal, that this was the focus members preferred. So that's the main update. We can continue for another 12 months where the group can support local members, members working with local stakeholders. So look out to getting spammed by emails from me,

asking who wants to or who has ideas to organize something. Because the expectation is that somehow we, by the end of summer, we can approach ICANN with a more clear plan on how we will fill those 12 months.

Maybe one point, I will drop it in the chat. We also have a dedicated webpage where we will, on the website, keep information on what's happening, list the events. Also try to put slides in the actual language, because that's another point we made clear to ICANN. Working with the Geos means that you have, at the end of the story, training slides at the end of this month in Catalan, which is an extra point we want to bring to the table. That's all.

NACHO AMADOZ

Thank you very much, Bim. The meeting was really good yesterday. We brought the results that we had from the workshops and the training sessions. They saw that we were taking this seriously, that we were providing the opportunities for the members to try to go in the direction that the UASG wanted. Now the UASG has been celebrated, but it's also removed. But this, as Bim said, doesn't mean that they are not moving ahead. This is moving. This is moving ahead. And they are entrusting us with keeping up the work that we are doing as the local initiative. So this is also a good result of what we are doing. And I think that is it, right? I mean, you know what we need to do. You know who to contact. He is Bim, and he is reaching out to you constantly. Please participate, because I think that we have a good framework to keep working on this. One of the

things they said was that these events need to move the needle just a little, even if it's just to get some part of the people participating in the workshop to understand how they need to do things technically, or what kind of materials they need to produce, or to identify the issues. So they have given us clear guidance in respect to what's the final objective. But I think that we have managed to get them to give us some leeway to allow members to make proposals and to think, okay, this is what we could work, because I have this potential partnership with this university, with this technical body, with this Chamber of Commerce, to do this for that. And we will work it out to show that this was done. So let's use it.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER

Just a question, Bim. We made an awareness session in March in Strasbourg with Benoit from AFNIC. It was very nice. But maybe next year we would like to make a training session. But I cannot do it, because my knowledge is too poor. I don't know if Benoit is able to do a training session. So is ICANN working on a list of speakers to manage such a session? Or maybe they can recommend people, French-speaking people, on those topics? Because I don't know who to ask that if I want a training session, in fact.

PIM

Well, you always have the possibility, or they had already, that you could ask ICANN people to help or to come when you ask it well enough in advance. A point we also made very clear yesterday is that we really need, or the members need, time to prepare. But I

think the point you made is very excellent and something we would ask ICANN is to very specifically ask if there is a list of trainers they can recommend and really make the point in different languages. Or maybe that could be something that comes out of our project too. That we say, look, we have not one trainer, and we present them to ICANN. Look, this is somebody that has been looking into the topic and is available for any other workshop. But thank you for that point.

ANDY HILL

We would love that if you can work with Wim, and Wim, please include me and Sarmad. And I think we're doing something similar with Next Round and getting different people to speak to, things that they have expertise in. And we lean on you for that. We're happy for you to lean on us. I don't know that we have every language covered on this topic, but we do have people that speak many, many different languages, so let's coordinate.

NACHO AMADOZ

We could also get a panel to evaluate the knowledge. No? All right. Thank you. Sorry about that. Thank you very much, Bim. Okay, our prior to last item is the outreach to the GAC. I missed Seattle, so you guys already explained what went on in Seattle. If we need to go back to that, you can chime in any time. The session was good, I think. There was definite interest from GAC members, also from GAC leadership. We are keeping the work up with them, GAC leadership and GAC support staff. We wanted to have a session

here. It was not possible for agenda reasons, and we discussed how to do that in a webinar that we finally have not confirmed, but we are still insisting we are being there. I think that we are getting a good report with them to be present in the GAC agenda. We are going to try to see how do we transform this idea of a webinar into a more regular operation, which was the objective from the beginning so that they have us in their minds. As we all know, the GAC – I always confuse the word. I don't know if it's turnover or turnaround. It's turnover, right, when the people are rotating? The turn rate is very high. So I think they would appreciate us telling them what is a GeoTLD, why it's not a good idea to get a government to participate in action and how can you help us with that, what is going on with the Geo panel. Of course, they are being briefed on that, but we can offer this perspective that we have for them. So on this topic, I don't think there's much else to say at this point. We are still in touch with them. We are trying to get them to get us as our regular attendees. It's not easy, but it's not because they are putting any obstacles in the way, and we have a good feeling about how this is going to evolve leading up to the next round. So that is all I think that we can say, right? Yeah. Good.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]