
ICANN84 | AGM – GNSO: RySG GeoTLD Group Membership and Community Outreach
Monday, October 27, 2025 – 10:45 to 12:15 IST

SUE SCHULER

Hello and welcome to the meeting of the membership of the GeoTLD Group. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Community Participant Code of Conduct, the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior, and the ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy. Please observe the following guidelines to participate in this session. I will also post them in the chat for your reference. Only questions posted in the Zoom chat identified as a question will be read aloud during the session as time permits and when directed by the chair of this session. If you wish to speak, please raise your hand in Zoom or otherwise as directed. When speaking, please state your name for the record and speak clearly at a moderate pace. I will now hand the floor over to Nacho Amodoz.

NACHO AMADOZ

Thank you very much, Sue. This is Nacho Amodoz from dot-cat along with Josu Walino from .eus, Ronald Schwaerzler from .wien, and others representing the ExComm. And thank you very much for joining our session, our community outreach session. You know we always keep this session in the ICANN agenda to touch base with all the members and anybody that is interested in the geos. We have an agenda for today that is going to be touching upon many of the

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things that we've been discussing during the year because they are evolving and because the impact for the group and the members of the group is very relevant. This is the outline of the agenda. This is intended to be a free-flow conversation. So please chime in and raise your hand anytime. Add any other topics that you want for the AOB. And please don't feel constrained. And don't feel that these are the only topics that we can cover today. We have an hour and 15 minutes, I believe. So that should be more than enough to go through what we have in mind but also to cover anything else that you want to raise. This is the list, just to give you a very, very, very small snippet of what we are going to be discussing. First of all, it's the next round and the AGB. We had a meeting with the GAC. That will be the first thing that we are going to go to. Second: NIS2. And this has many implications, but we have a concrete aspect that has been dealt by dot-wien and that will be covered by Ronald to let you know how the efforts to work with registrars are evolving. Then we have the SEO research, which you know is an ICANN grant project, and we have updates. This is a two-year long project, I think, that is affecting several members that are participating but that the group is involved in as such. And for that we will have Bea from the dot-cat, which, if he's not in the room, will join soon. And then we also have our Evergreen UA local initiative update where we are covering what members are doing and how our relationship with ICANN is evolving. And then again, there's AOB for any of you to raise any topics and the reminder for the elections and the timeline. There's another thing that I would like to add now, which is to highlight that there is an [NTIA] booth at the second or third

floor (third floor), in which we are part of, because we are collaborating with the registries and the brand, and this is all managed by Sue, to try to bring the [NTIA] to be present during the ICANN meetings or for any other potential new applicants, so that that they know where to go if they need to understand how to navigate the first steps when they are becoming part of the ICANN world. All right, let's go for the first topic, which is the next round, the AGB and specifically the Geographic Names Panel Review, which has been our pain point, our main pain point, with the AGB since the last version was published. You know what's the issue here. There is a geographic names panel review in the applicant guidebook. Every name that is determined to be a geo name being applied for in the next round is going to go to the Geo Names Panel Review. And the estimation of the cost was set at between 18,000 US dollars and 25,000 US dollars. This is outrageous. We think that this is absurd. This Geographic Names Panel Review was also in the 2012 round. It didn't have any cost associated with that. This came a bit as a surprise for all of us. We weren't expecting this, and we've been trying to bring this to the attention of every ICANN constituency since it appeared. And we've been, I think, very successful. One of our natural partners on this, we think, is the GAC, because at the end of the day, it's going to be the governments that are going to say, "Yes, we endorse, or we are not opposed, to this application." So we've engaged the GAC extensively. We've had a very good response from the GAC.. We've had presentations with the GAC. We've had calls with the GAC leadership. They were a bit surprised and didn't quite believe what we were telling them. But

then they did once they saw the kind of language and they rallied behind our points, and they got behind our public comment that we posted when we had the opportunity to do that. And they also did a similar comment. So on Saturday, in order to keep this engagement with the GAC alive, but also to keep this topic alive and not let it die, we also insisted on that. And we told them what it was about. You know that in every ICANN meeting there's new GAC members who know nothing about how ICANN works and the structure, but you also have reliable, more constant GAC members that know what's the story and that are following ICANN policy with very much detail. And in those we rely to get support for these kind of issues that we have. And in this case, we went again through what does the AGB say, how it works, what was our comment, and how we think we need to keep this in light so that this gets eliminated, the cost all reduced, reduced to a point that is similar to what we saw as the price tag for the brand because the brand price tag is now \$800. So ICANN needs a brand TLD to pay 800 US dollars to confirm that it is brand. They don't confirm that they are a brand by paying, but ICANN is going to [inaudible] the cost that it requires for them to validate that there is a brand with \$800. And we're always making the joke ... That was a joke by Ronald. He says, "It's going to be significantly cheaper if we pay an ICANN staff member a business round trip to whatever city or region it is, introduce them to the mayor or the governor of the region so that that mayor can say, 'Yes, I am the mayor of the city of Barcelona and, yes, I confirm that I signed this letter.'" Yeah, and then the GAC laughed. Now we don't laugh when we are thinking about how this

extra cost adds to the already increased cost that we have now. But I think that we made the point clear. And we also think that by using this humor in this example, they understand the absurdity of it all because what we told the GAC is we don't understand why ICANN needs this amount of money to verify that the public administration exists and that this is official. They have a house inside which is the GAC. And we understand, and we also discussed, that there may be exceptions. This was verbatim expressed. But the exception shouldn't make the rule. The rule shouldn't be, "All of you are going to be complicated cases. You are going to have to pay 25,000 US dollars for us to verify that whatever government is a government in a country that exists and that that person is the mayor." It is simply absurd. We got good responses because we got good engagement with the GAC leadership and the GAC staff to keep these sessions a permanent fixture in our engagement with the GAC. And we had responses from the European Commission, Switzerland ... who else was ... Colombia, the Netherlands, and I think India. Now at some point we also discussed how this price tag came to be. And they asked us, and we said, "Well, we don't know. You should ask ICANN. We don't know what vendor has said this is the price tag or how they are coming up with this figure." We think it's absurd. We have expressed that. We understand that from policy you cannot deviate at saying that this is going to be this costly. It's not policy. It's just an estimation made by staff, and we are completely opposed to that. So we have a good response and then we have an exchange where we also were told by ICANN staff that this was only an estimation, that this is only a cap. And our

position here was a bit forceful saying, well, yeah, whatever, but this is what's written now and this is what we have to work now and this is what it is in the paper now. So we cannot just rely on this going down because the principle of having to pay that much is absurd by itself. I think that this is all something that the members are in agreement on. This may be affecting some of us, may not be affecting some of us because not everybody in the group is thinking about applying or working with other people applying for a new TLD. But I think we have to stand by this principle and try to make this cost disappear. So this is the update from our engagement with the GAC. We discussed other topics. We had to hurry through the other topics because there was a bit of a confusion. Our session was programmed, but it followed a session on the Applicant Support Program that also had some discussion because the members of the GAC wanted to understand how this have worked, and that was a bit longer than we expected. But I think overall we had a good session. We covered this topic and we covered another one that Ronald can provide an update on, and that will be the next one. If there are questions, please go ahead.

ANDREAS MUSIELAK

Thank you, Nacho, for the update. Andreas from TLDBox. My question is, do we have a commitment from the GAC Chair to somehow convey the message towards ICANN? Because that's the important part, yeah?

NACHO AMADOZ

Yeah, we have. They raised the issue. They clarified, and by “they,” I mean the GAC. I think that Switzerland said, “We are going to be commenting on this again.” I think it was the European Commission that said that they already said that in the communiqué and in the public comment. So we have the commitment that they are going to be on top of that. And as we go around these days, we are going to wrap them again in the corridors and say, “Don't forget about that. We need you to be there because ICANN is going to pay attention to you.” Probably is not going to change that because the GeoTLD group is saying it, even though we think that they should. But when the GAC is saying it, that is a different story, and we know it. So we'll see what goes on. At least we should try to get them to understand what is the principle. And one thing is for the individuals working on the staff to understand that. Another one is to make it an established principle that the rule shouldn't be the exception and that the cost is outrageous and at least have an explanation on how they came up with this cost. This is something that you are always saying, Ronald. If you say from 18 to 25, everybody that sells the service to you is going to say, “Okay, at least it's going to be 18.” They are not going to say, “Yeah, this is just 2,000 euros,” which again, let us show you the public communication from that city council saying, “Yes, we endorse this application and yes, this is the city council mayor himself (or herself) saying, ‘Yes, we are behind it.’” So we'll see. We'll see. But we are committing a lot of time to this because we think that it is a principle that we need to get them to

understand, and we need to change that outcome because that is not admissible.

RONALD SCHWAERZLER

Okay, next slide. This is Ronald from dot-wien/dot-cologne. Just as was last mentioned, the Switzerland GAC said it will make to the GAC communicate under important topics or whatever. So he promised it. Let's hope it does. Yeah. RRA amendment for NIS2. I think we first talked about this on our GeoTLD meeting in London last August/September on this template provided by Thomas Rickert. And the idea behind this was to get, let's say, a blueprint with checkboxes—"I'm a thin registry/I'm a thick registry/I'm in Europe/I'm not in Europe"—or something like this. And it should be approved as a whole by the registrars. I had talks with registrars, Owen Smigelski, and the one woman leading the RRA Amendment Group, and they said a clear, "No, we don't demand a general formula that is open to anyone and any combination. But if you submit you"... And they said "you" as in dot-wien, and I said, "I'm doing it for in on behalf of the GeoTLD group. We will look at this very specific one. And if we agree on that"... And this is the success story: they agreed on it last week. So I will show you what is in this agreement, in this amendment that is agreed to by the Registrar Stakeholder Group, and you can use it as a reference. You did the same for the dot-wein, dot-koeln, dot-cologne, [dot-tyro]. And it will be waved through on the express path. So no more check by the registrar as long as you take, let's say, the identical one. Next page, please. Next slide. So who is affected by NIS2? I think you all

know. If the registry is within the EU, there is no doubt any transaction that is done within this registry is affected by an NIS2. And this is the scope of this RRA agreement. It is for registries that are inside the EU. If you're dot-Quebec, it's not much of a difference, but you don't have it on any transaction, just the ones that are coming from European registrars or registrants. The most complicated thing (and this is why the registrars did not want to go through it immediately) is, if you have, for example, a registry like dot-shop located in Japan, a US-based registrar like GoDaddy in the US, and the registrant coming from Austria for this one domain, the dot-shop and the GoDaddy registrars are bound to NIS2. And this makes it really complicated. So in our case for .paris, for.wien, .bzh, et cetera, there is no doubt about it. Every transaction, every registrar who is dealing with us, every registrant, is under NIS2. Next slide, please. So NIS applies too, and this is text copied out of the EU directive, top-level domain registries and domain name service providers, which are registrars and their resellers. And what we said in (the next slide, please) our RA amendment is, "Scope and applicability: Registrar shall make reasonable effort to check whether he is affected by NIS2. Registry shall cooperate in good faith and provide timely information whether some laws have changed and if applicable inform the registrar." So it's not a must for us, but we should, if we take notice that something has changed, inform the registrars. But the last sentence says clearly responsibility for compliance with local law lies with each party. So even if we forget to inform the registrar, it's the registrar's duty to assess that it is bound to NIS2, which is unquestioned in our case

because we are a European registry (“we” meaning wien and most of our members). Next slide, please. The next thing that we had heavily discussed or had extensive discussions about was the database of the registration data. The directive says we “have to hold registries and registrars.” We “have to collect and maintain accurate complete data, and this shall not result in duplication of collecting domain name registration data.” So both registrars and registries have to have data and maintain accurate [data], but do not duplicate it towards the registrant. So what made it to the RRA amendment (next slide, please) is ... This is the text exactly as it is in the RRA amendment [“]to [avoid] duplication of data parties[“] agreed debt data collection, obligation set forth in”—blah blah blah—“or corresponding national transposition shall be performed by registrar to the extent that such collection obligations apply to registrar.” I did not understand the part of the sentence following “performed by registrar” until yesterday. I attended a session occasionally and said that what the registrars mean with accuracy is contactability. I think it's somewhere in here. So they verify whether the email address is a valid email address and if someone responds to this email address, it is not about as it is today (for example, in Denmark) where they would check the idea or go having dinner with the registrant or something like this. So this second part of the sentence was very, very important to the registrars, and I think that it is related to their definition of accurate data. I'm okay with that because NIS obligations are somehow risk-based, and I as a CEO, accept that risk for a registry being under NIS2 obligations in Austria, if I can prove such a document, that

they are performing regular tests whether the domain name is accurate, meaning the contact data is accurate, meaning the email address that is given is a valid one someone is responding to. I as a CEO take that risk. Okay, so this is what made it into the RA agreement. Next slide, please. And then the third thing is, if you get a request for telling the data to the legitimate access seekers (law enforcement bodies, et cetera), this is what the Article 28 says: The entities (TLD name registries and registrars) shall reply without undue delay at the latest within 72 hours. And this was somehow interpreted, especially by the registrars, [that] they can choose whether ... Let's say a Spanish registrar registered the dot-wien domain name said, "Okay, I relay this query to dot-wien directly." No, that's not the law. The law says in Spain, if you get a query, you have to answer that query. You cannot choose. So the Spanish registrar cannot say, "Go to the dot-wien registry in Austria." So it is out of the question that the one who has got the query has to answer the query. Next slide, please. And finally, this made it to the RRA amendment. "Each party shall respond to lawful requests according to"—blah, blah—"national implementation. If a request is received from relevant local authorities and deemed to be lawful, the answering party will use reasonable best effort to inform the other party at around the same time the requester is sent, including listing the data elements submitted to the requester." So this was especially brought in by large registrars. They say, "Hey, we are monitoring (or having) in our database millions of domain names." And if there are coming multiple requests for different TLDs, it's not about the one or two that come for dot-wien, but if we forget to

inform you about this request, we don't want it to be in breach of the RRA amendment. They will not send us the data that they have answered, but we have answered with giving the name, the email address and the telephone number. And we have to rely [on] that it's the same that we have in the database. So again, it's somehow a softened thing. They will use reasonable best efforts to inform us that there was a query on dot-wien. I had in the agreement, if there is a query to a dot-wien domain name, you have to inform me because I want to know. It's very likely that the local authority will also ask me about this data. For the sake of getting the signature under this RRA agreement, and knowing our Austrian law enforcement bodies, they will all the time go to the local, to the registry, and not ask the Spanish or French or UK or US-based registrar. So it was fine for me in accepting this to get the signature under this RRA agreement. Next slide, please. Yeah, I think that's it. As you see, there is no provision in this RRA agreement for how we get the data. Let's say you, you call the registrar, you send an email and he has to send it via email within 72 or 48 or whatever hours because we are a thick registry. We already have the data. So if you're not a thick registry, this RRA amendment would not work for you because then you have to have provisions. How will you get the data in case there is an inquiry? Because on intention, you broke the connection of getting data via EPP. This is what the thin registry is about. So be careful, but I don't know if any of our members are thin registries. If you're a thin registry, this RRA amendment will not work for you because then you don't have the data. Then you have to make provisions in case of an inquiry. How do you get the data?

So it is for EU-based geoTLDs being a thick registry, and you can immediately have a copy, a Word document, whatever you want from me. It's the one that I've just introduced to you, and you can use this as a reference or you can put in your name or whatever you want. It's a geoTLD activity that learned me some legal aspects to shoot during the past weeks. So thank you for giving me the opportunity to raise my legal from at least amateur level to some medium level. I'm not a lawyer, but I'm really happy with the outcome in the end. And it was a complicated process. So feel free to contact me if you want to get this kind of ... Or we can distribute it anyhow, like we ... Some people just distribute it to you. Use or refuse it. Okay.

NACHO AMADOZ

Ronald, I would say that you are way above the medium legal level. We can give you a certificate from the GeoTLD Group. And we also have to thank you for leading the effort here, because it's been a commitment of some hours that is taking you, with discussion with registrars that are not always easy. As you said, this is a blueprint that is going to be useful, and, in many circumstances, not only, I think, for those that match these three, and that is because of the second element I wanted to highlight, which is there are many things going on now at ICANN that may also affect how this is treated by registrars, the urgent requests discussion, how this is evolving over the discussion with mutually legal assistance treaties that the GNSO been discussing internally but also with the GAC, how accuracy is going to be integrated into the DNS Abuse Small

Team and how this is going to be framed looking onwards. There are many things (not only NIS2) that are touching upon these elements. So this is not only focused on NIS2, even though it has been motivated by NIS2, because those affected by NIS2 are going to be very serious about how they clarify how this is going to be handled, because as you said, it is a risk-mitigation-based approach. So you need to document and establish in contractual arrangements what are your obligations going to be, how are you ensuring that these obligations are being supervised and how you are meeting those requirements. So this is, again, I think, very important work for the group and for the members of the group, which sometimes are two different things. I mean, you can use, but also the group is leading the way in indicating how this transforms into reality with the arrangements and the agreements with registrars. I don't know if there are any questions. I don't see any. Dirk?

DIRK KRISCHENOWSKI

Dirk Krischenowski from dot-Berlin. So anyhow, as a registry, if you have data, you have always data of the registrations, even if the data are redacted. In that case you can be a thin registry. You have redacted data. That's data, actually. And then the amendment would also apply.

RONALD SCHWAERZLER

I had a talk with Beth Bacon, not as the Registry Stakeholder Group's chair, but for PIR. They want to have a similar ... And I think

Beth is in there. She's here? Yeah, she's here. And I think they want to have a similar kind of agreement with the registrars not being forced by NIS2 because they are based in the US? Yeah. And this is the last example that I gave, and probably the registrar is from Australia, but the registrant is from Austria. They don't have ownership data, so...

UNIDENTIFIED MALE

Welcome to the table.

BETH BACON

I'm working. Okay, thanks. I'm Beth Bacon. I'm from PIR. If it's a minimum data set (because "thin" is a bad word; we don't say that anymore), we physically do not have the data. It's not that it's redacted. We don't have it. So it's not there. The only thing that you would have is a field that says redacted, but that's just because that's the way that the silly old format is required. But I simply don't have it. So for us, it's not an issue.

NACHO AMADOZ

I would add a comment there because I think there's a nuance. Sorry, there was a question before? Go ahead. So one thing is being a thin registry where there is not the possibility for a registrar to provide you the data. And another one is that the registrar decides that the data that is going to fit into your system just says redacted for privacy. So you are still thick and then you cannot reliably provide the authorities with the data because you cannot say to a

law enforcement request, “The data”—or at least that is my view—“that I have”—I have the obligation to have accurate and reliable data according to NIS2—“that I’m feeding you, Spanish police, is registrant name redacted for privacy, registrant email address redacted for privacy.” I think that that would put you in a difficult spot with the law enforcement agency. But that is different than the situation in which you are a thin registry and you say, “Data does not go through this wall because I’m not accepting that, and your request, your create domain EPP command, will fail if it does not adjust to the fields that are going to be allowed in the system.”

MARIANNE GEORGELIN

Yes, this is Marianne Georgelin for dot-Paris. I have just two remarks. The first one is that as geoTLDs, we should really be careful on this minimum-versus-full data set and make sure that we are in full data set, that we get all the data. We need them sometimes because we have registration policies very clearly (it's the case for.biz, for example, or even for .paris) stating that you need to live in this region or whatever. So we need this information. So we have to make sure that we collect this information from registrars. That's the first point. And the second one is that in this initiative, which is very interesting, it always referred to NIS2 as if it is a law. It's not the case. It's a directive, so it's not really existing as a reference. What I mean is that each country has to provide a transposition. Then that's where it's a little bit tricky because I believe that one size does not fit all there. And we're waiting for the French transposition, for example, and it's still getting us some real

headaches because it's already getting off the ... So I would wait a little bit before putting some very general statement, although I understand the need and why is it done. It's definitely to help. And so that's no problem here. But we need to make sure also that in each country ... It might be slightly different on some points, so maybe wait a little bit and make this analysis after.

NACHO AMADOZ

So what we have in the text is NIS2 directive or its local transposition. So the text is clear, but the measures might be different—the measures to be needed, yeah.

MARIANNE GEORGELIN

Because it won't be “or.” It will be the local only. You see what I mean? And that's why it's ... Because if someone is referring to Article 28 of the NIS2 directive versus the transposition, it might be different.

NACHO AMADOZ

One additional follow-up comment, which is you are completely right. I think that's the reason why the reference to the national transposition was included. And when that comes into force, I think that leaves no doubt that it is what you said. I mean, we had a discussion in Leuven about whether the directive was a legal act or a legal guideline. So that is obscure legalese. It is a legal act in my view. That doesn't mean that it is [that the] vertical effects apply to individuals. It does not, but it is the vertical effect that

applies on the state. And then you will have exactly what you said. What does your national transposition law say? But it is also not a “but”. It is an addition because what I'm going to say doesn't hinder anything that was said before. It is a comment. I think that Article 28 is the one that is going to be most uniform across jurisdictions, don't you think? It's just a comment, because I think it's very clear, right, what is required.

MARIANNE GEORGELIN

Yes. But then there's always some way to make things complicated. And the last thing that we've seen in the French project of the transposition is, for example, that they're expecting some regulation that will come after to describe the verification process. That's not good.

NACHO AMADOZ

So you are having concrete, substantive verification procedures mandated by a regulation. Wow, that is going to be tricky for registrars, huh? Thank you. If you have updates on that, please feed them to the list because it is good to see that: how is it going firsthand? And I think it's very informative for all of us. And if anybody has the chance to discuss this with the appropriate bodies in their national jurisdictions that have mandate to transpose, I mean, they are coordinated. They should be coordinated. They are not coordinated. And then you can help them by putting pressure on them saying, hey, this is going to be tricky. Yeah, I know it's a theory. Let's aspire to be able to do that. I see only my hand, and

I'm going to lower it down now. Any other comments, updates or suggestions on this topic? Now, again, this is something that we are doing because we think it is in the benefit of the group, and we have to thank Ronald for the time he has taken to do this and also to not [raise] but take the stage and discuss this with registrars. Good. We come back to the slides to see what's the next topic, because I think it's the grant program, yeah? Yeah, so that's you, Bea. Do you have some slides that you want to share? Thank you.

BEATRIZ GUZMAN

So this is an update of our project for the GeoTLD Group for ICANN grants. As some of you may know, we presented and we get awarded with one of the ICANN grants to do International Research to design an open-source methodology that allows determining how traditional (let's be specific: how Google) and artificial-intelligence-powered search engines treat geo-territorial domains. It's a project of 23 months that started on May 2025 and that will end on April 2027. Dot-cat is the lead of the project. We are working with an implementation called Human Level, which is an expert in SEO. We are working with 11 domains, and we have the support of the GeoTLD Group and the ISOC Catalan chapter. So just to remember and just for the record, we're going to conduct a study or we are conducting a study in two parts. First part is a comparison with a theoretical verification of the positioning of the TLDs in their language and in traditional search engines. This means that we are going to create a standard and lab environment where all the domains will have the same age, the same SEO probabilities, to be

in the first or in the second or in the third position when you do a search in any traditional search engines. And then we will do an observation, which is the second part of the study, which is a practical verification. That means that we are not going to use artificially created websites, but we are going to use real websites, and we will compare how these websites perform against competitors that will offer exactly the same information in artificial-intelligence-powered engines. So, we're talking about prompts, we're talking about real domains that will be monitored and we are talking about definitions of artificial systems that will be tracked. In the first part of the study, as you can see, this is the structure and the infrastructure of the methodology. We (and I'm taking an example of dot-cat, but it's exactly the same for all the 11 domains involved) will create, or we are registering right now, 10 new domains created with semantical neutral content and semantical neutral names so we can track with a specific keyword which domain performs better or which one is in the first, second or the third position when you do a search of a specific keyword. And we will create specific content for different files with different language. Every TLD was asked to provide the two competitors against who they want to be compared and to indicate which language are they interested to be compared with. So we're going to create all of these archives. And once all of these three group of three domains are indexed by Google, we will start to measure the position of these domains. When we talk about the study with artificial intelligence powered platforms, we want to test the real situation with real websites, with real conditions, looking for

websites, real websites, on each TLD, looking for their competitors that offer shared keywords, and looking at how they perform against the other ones. Here you have another example for a.cat domain, and the competitor under.es, and here you can see the part they share, the shared keywords, and then you can see how they perform when you do a search in traditional search engines and when you do the search in ChatGPT. So this is the second part of the study. So our progress so far: at the beginning of May, we established our calendar and we're doing good progress. All our milestones have been completed in time, so we are proud of that. And what are we doing right now? We're working in the registrations of the domains and the index monitor process. This is the tricky part because it's not on our hands. It all depends on Google indexation. Take into account that now Google is very strict regarding the indexation process. So this will take time. We're working on that. All the domains have been informed on that. And you will know as soon as we get some triads of indexed pages. We're working on that. And you will receive also information about this infrastructure for the artificial intelligence part. Also, we're working in the first interim report because we got the first amount of money from ICANN, but we need to get the second part. We have five parts of payment from ICANN, and it all depends on our reports. So we are working right now in our first interim report, which will be delivered within the first week of November, to present our challenge, our KPIs and our progress and, of course, the budget control. So this is the important information for you. There are a lot of large language models. Every day we have new news about new

LLMs. So it's not possible to cover them all. So we will focus on those with the highest current usage/penetration in the market and those who has the strongest potential to remain significant by 2027, which is the year we're going to release the conclusions of the study. So we have selected for this study ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini, and DeepSeek. We are going to look for your domains in all of these LLMs. So you will receive the proposed structure for the study, which includes domain under your TLD, competitors suggested under other TLDs, and suggested prompts tailored for each case. But we need your help to approve this structure and your collaboration in localizing the proposed prompts to better fix your specific context. Why? Because we could be very good trying to do it in Catalan, Spanish, maybe English, but we need your help to locate these prompts in your specific language and culture. So we need your help and we're going to be in touch with you within the next weeks. That will end our milestones for 2025. But just for you to remember, for the next year, we will start checking positioning in artificial-intelligence-generated results. We will also check the positioning of the traditional search engines. And we will have time to analyze the correlations between organic and positioning and artificial-intelligence-positioning results. In one year, by this time of the next year, we will have a draft aggregate report and a final conclusion for each domain and also a global conclusion for all the data. And we will start to work with the website and open-source data, base creation, and the translation of the results to each of the languages of the domains involved. And in 2027, from January to April, we will have time to disseminate

the results of the study. So this will be the part of the communication, and that will be the part where all of you will have the opportunity to show these results within your community, and we should be the ones that will present our results in general in forums like this. So this is the progress so far. For any questions or comments, just get in touch with me. Thank you.

NACHO AMADOZ

Thank you very much, Bea, and again, thank you for the significant amount of time you and the rest of the people at dot-cat (not me) are committing to the work and the coordination with all the members. And again, I think this is a big project. The budget is substantial. And the implications that may derive from all the tests, especially with the artificial intelligence environment, I think is going to be useful to the group. You had a question, right, Josu?

JOSUE WALINO

Thank you. Thank you, Bea. Josu Walino from PUNTUEUS for the record. Thank you for the presentation. Thank you for leading the project. I think that there is a point here that is crucial from my point of view because when we started discussing this project like two or three years ago, traditional search engines were the key point, and it changed and included the artificial intelligence. And I think that this is going to be one of the key points in the new [S]EO in the future. My warning here is that from now to 2027, this may change. This may evolve so fast that by the time we have the final result of the project, we may also be a bit behind the real situation.

So what is just a quick comment is just saying I think that you already are looking at it. That's perfect, but just try to be open to include any possible change. Right now we see that ChatGPT already launched Atlas, and we expect that things are moving so fast that probably some things will change in a way that they will affect the result of the project. So if we can have this in mind, it will be perfect. Thank you.

BEATRIZ GUZMAN

Yes, I share with you and totally agree with you. That's one of our biggest concerns. And I have discussed this with the ICANN grants team and internally. And what we can do is work the best we can with the tools we have now and with the situation we have now. This is a quickly-moving environment. It's moving so fast. So it's hard to catch all the change, the quick changes. But we decided that we believe that we are doing science-based, or based science (I don't know) and that someone later on will build upon what we have created. So we believe that this is the first but not the definitive study. And we believe that we are doing the best we can with the tools we have in the time we are. So that's my best honest answer reply.

NACHO AMADOZ

Yes, we can. Yes, we can. Can you leave that presentation, please? Because there are a couple of things that we want to comment on.

JOSU WALINO

Not this.

NACHO AMADOZ

No, no, no. The presentation. Yeah. Can you keep it on the screen?

JOSU WALINO

You can leave us.

NACHO AMADOZ

The last slide. Yeah. Because there are two things I think that we should compare. Last one. And that is the—no, the last one. The last one.

JOSU WALINO

11 questions.

NACHO AMADOZ

Number 11, which is the questions with the umlaut that Ronald noted as a good segue into the UA, because he was asking, “Is that Catalan?” And that was just a joke, because questions comes with [inaudible]. Now, the last one. Go to the last one, please. Yeah, yeah. Stay on the last one. And then the other thing is, your email address has changed, right? Care to comment on that?

BEATRIZ GUZMAN

Yeah. Since June, I guess. [inaudible] dot-cat. It's part of the history of internet, but it's no longer our brand, our commercial brand. We

are now called Accent Obert, which means open accent. It has a lot of sense in Catalan. Maybe “international” is not that self-explained, but yeah, Accent Obert is the new brand for the institution that covers all of what we are doing, not only for the dot-cat domain, but also for another kind of project that we lead to help Catalan to strive in the digital world. So yeah, this is my new email, this is our new brand, and hopefully you can hear soon more about Accent Obert, which is an umbrella brand that covers not only the domain, but also more activities, and that will empower our activity to be more open and have more reach with our actions. Thank you for making me notice this. Sorry.

RONALD SCHWAERZLER

A reminder to the members: we have to rely on accurate data. So the email that Bea sent, I think, two days before on the universal acceptance IDN domains did not go through our list mailers because your old email was there, the dot-cat email. Accent Obert was an unknown email address. It was denied. So I had to go in manually and release it. So remember the registrants’ duty within ICANN: you have to make sure that all your email addresses are correct everywhere. So in this case, I have corrected it. But if you have new email addresses and you want to receive emails from the GeoTLD Group and post on the list, make sure that your email is registered with us because otherwise the list mailer would not allow it.

NACHO AMADOZ

We have to be coherent with our standards.

BEATRIZ GUZMAN

Noted, and thank you. I'm sorry.

NACHO AMADOZ

Thank you very much, Bea. Okay. And with the umlaut and the [inaudible], we go to the UA, and that is you, right, Wim? Thank you. Oh, sorry, David has a question.

DAVID LESVANAN

Just a lighter question for Beatriz. Is it still possible to add a European language model like Mistral perhaps for the study?

BEATRIZ GUZMAN

We considered Mistral so hard, but the penetration right now in the market was too low. So we have limited resources, but we can discuss it later if it is important for you. So maybe we can do a search specific for dot-[bzh] in Mistral if you want to.

NACHO AMADOZ

Thank you very much. Wim, back to you.

WIM DEGEZELLE

Let me share. Thank you. So now we're coming to the update on the GeoTLD Universal Acceptance Local Initiative. We discussed this at our meeting in Prague, but just to give a brief introduction,

what is it? The Local Initiative is actually a cooperation between the GeoTLD group and ICANN; more particularly ICANN's UA staff. The idea behind it is that ... You all know about the Universal Acceptance Day ,and project initiative could ask for some grants/ICANN support to organize a very specific event really linked to that very specific date. Local initiative is actually a little bit broader. It is the idea that the GeoTLD group can help its members, its individual members, throughout the year to organize initiatives or trainings on universal acceptance. That's a big difference because also for the group ... I mean, there are other local initiatives. The element local is very geographic, and it took us some time to work with the colleagues from ICANN staff to realize what we actually want to do is interpret that element local as GeoTLDs and their local communities; so no, not one specific European region, but no, it is the group, with support of ICANN, supporting individual members within their local area with their local stakeholders in setting up a UA training, a UA outreach event, etc. We have the discussion now because we had ... It's a bit confusing because in the beginning of this year (but for ICANN, that's last year's financial year), we started this initiative, and we had two events. I show them there, and then you can see immediately the new colors and logo of former .cat. Well, still.cat but the former—

BEATRIZ GUZMAN

Still .cat for the domain.

WIM DEGEZELLE

So we had two events organized under this initiative; in March, an event organized, a training, by dot-alsace in Strasbourg. And the second event was in Barcelona in June. So that is really the idea. The group can help, but it is actually the individual members with local stakeholders that set up the event. The ExComm had a discussion with the ICANN staff after at the end of the 25 financial year. They were happy. Apparently they were happy because they said, well, it's good the group can continue with the local initiative, start planning for financial year 2026. So the full year means there are more events that the group can support. We received up until now, or we received more, but ... We submitted or proposed two events to ICANN in the past weeks, one by bzh and one by dot-[gal]. There's also a third event by .eus that also fits in this context. We will include it in the local initiative, but it's not one that really requires substantial sponsoring. So we are.. Well you were ...I didn't say that. So we have two events now, one in bzh which is very shortly focusing again on technical training, one by the colleagues of dot-gel focused on also developing materials and analyzing what kind of materials are needed in a context or in the local context to promote universal acceptance. The ExComm is having a meeting with the ICANN staff this week and I think you really hope that at the outcome of this week we at least can confirm the sponsorship for the two events so far, because the one by .bzh is November, so it's very, very close. The important thing here is that the ExComm is still looking for additional ideas. I know there have been some

great ideas already, but we still have a full year to follow; so the rest of financial year 2026, meaning between January and end of June 26. So please let us know. There were some ideas. And one point (and that came from ICANN staff) I would like to mention and see if anyone is interested is that ICANN has been doing an analysis of its own systems, from its website to its contact form, etc., to see if ICANN itself is UA-ready. And there's still, I think, at the end of that process ... But the suggestion was made if, for example, a geoTLD registry would like to do the same. That could be a very interesting project, at least a project that they would be happy to see and afterwards also to present as a case study. I just put it out there. I mean, if anyone is interested, let us know. That's the end of the update. I just want to make one point and come back on the email we shared on the mailing list, collecting examples of geoTLD domain names that use a UA character. For those that are not members on the list, we asked members to submit examples of domain names that are being used with a UA character, for example, with an accent. That was a question we received from also from the UA staff, from ICANN. They actually asked for five examples. We sent them, I think, 30 now. 35? And they're still incoming. Yesterday we had a brief chat. I think, Ronald, you were there too. And they were extremely happy with the input they received. And they say, well, they also want to use it as case studies. When they talk about UA, they often get a positive reaction and then comes a question: but do you have concrete examples? So

they want to use it in that context, and I think it's great if there were geoTLD names there. Any questions?

LOUIS HOULE

We are working on that. I spoke with Sarmad yesterday of exactly that topic. And he's been asking me the same question as you're asking today, so we're working on that.

RONALD SCHWAERZLER

Just a very short call out to the members, to the observers. Please take into consideration organizing a UA event. We have the possibility of helping you fund it. So it will help the group. It will help your community. Especially welcome our programs, let's say, together with universities, with organizations who are multipliers. If you talk to the UA subject to students, five or 10 years later, you will have educated people. So, happy to support that. You don't have to do these events yourself. You can use an organization, an event company, organizing this or whatever. We will help funding it. But I really urge you to think to do such a thing and let Wim know if you are interested in doing this.

NACHO AMADOZ

Yeah, this this can hardly be connected to more registrations, but this doesn't mean that it's not important. And that is the rationale that we are applying to it. And in the end, it is just going to be displaying the possibility for the language to be properly written in domain names. So that by itself, for us, is enough to commit again,

as we said in Leuven, our freedom time to doing this for the benefit of the group because we think it's worth the time. And with that, I think we go to AOB, I think, and the reminder of elections' timeline. So we can go ahead with the reminder and give the audience time to think about AOBs. You take it.

WIM DEGEZELLE

So how slow do I have to talk? Just a reminder that there are elections upcoming for the ExComm. I put the deadlines there. So there's a call for candidates that went out, and there is time till the 18th of November to submit candidates. This can be just done by sending to the mailing list or to the office address. That's the most important. And then the elections themselves are planned for the 10th of December on a virtual meeting. Yeah, in a virtual meeting. And further details: there's also the elections document is available on the website, but actually it's the same deadline; a link to the document that was discussed in Leuven that explains who can vote, who can be a candidate, and so on.

NACHO AMADOZ

Thank you very much, Wim. So, if anybody wants to raise ...

LOUIS HOULE

I just want to tell you that there's a PDP going on with dot-Quebec to solve the problem of having the name with an accent, and it will probably be basically completed by November. And afterward we'll have to see whether we will be able to move or to be parked

by ICANN for the next 10 years. So I think that the Geo Group must be very proactive in that situation because it's the first of probably many other cases that could bring new players in the GeoTLD group also. And so I wanted to mention it and share that information with you.

NACHO AMADOZ

Thank you very much, Louis. This can be done two ways, I think, and both of them can be done at the same time. One thing is for the group itself to get your inputs and then provide that to ICANN to work with you to generate that input. And another thing is (and this is something we've done in the past) to share that input with members and to encourage members to individually, as different entities, provide that same input because in the end, 30 comments or two comments are different.

LOUIS HOULE

Well, as a group, I think that there must be a position that's the support that the group wants to officially provide to that particular PDP situation. And I encourage individual members, of course, because for myself, there is nobody that doesn't know about the situation in Quebec; should they be in the GNSO, the GAC, the IRT group. Everybody knows. And anyway, I think that it's important to mention that we might be the first of many of their names, but I would like to recall that there's one billion users of diacritics on the planet. So we're not alone. Thank you.

RONALD SCHWAERZLER

Thank you. May I just ask you, because I'm sure most of our members are not aware what you are talking about now: you have applied or you are operating .quebec without an accent, and now you want to have .quebec with the accent, and you cannot do this because it would be denied because of being confusingly similar, although you are the same registry operator? And I think that's This is nonsense. It's crazy. There must not be another one operating .quebec because this then could be confusingly similar. But the same entity applying for the accent and the non-accent should be a non-brainer for me. But as you know, I've learned a lot of a lawyer, but I'm not a lawyer. So this is the problem that you are having.

LOUIS HOULE

Yeah. Just for the little story. I wrote the application for .quebec in 2009 or '10. And I wrote myself that we were asking for .quebec with and without the accent. So ICANN knows. So we're kind of 13 years later, and by the book, it was supposed to be solved in some time after the 2012 round. And it's never been done. So this is why we came back for the little story again when I was chair of the organizing committee ICANN 66 in Montreal during the public comment period. I just reminded ICANN that we wanted to have an accent on the name because it's the French name, and the official language in Quebec is French, period. So there's no maybe or not maybe. It's the name that we must have. And we cannot have the name with the accent without having the ASCII name. Good,

perfect. So bundle it so that the same operator will have the ASCII with accent. And this is the whole topic that we are discussing during that PDP and kind of confirming, in other words. So this is probably the only way to go because you can't have two separate operators. This is confusing. And the name is not confusing. It's the same. It's not similar. It's the same name. Quebec and with and without the accent is the same name. So there's no confusion. You can't say we're talking about Ontario here. It's Quebec.

NACHO AMADOZ

Right. Thank you very much. Good. I see no other hands. I see no other topics. Sue?

SUE SCHULER

Just a couple little AOBs. I want to introduce Nikki to your group. Nikki is training to take over my position as the secretariat for the Registry Stakeholder Group. She will officially step in full time in July, and I'll step down to part time and I'll stay with her to help her through the onboarding of NTAG and all that in the second half of next year. But please welcome Nikki just so you know who she is. And the second thing is I would like to take a group photo for your group. So if everybody after we're done here wants to head over to the front of that screen, I'm going to leave your GeoTLD grouping up, and I think that'd be cute in the photo. Okay.

NACHO AMADOZ

Super. Thank you so much. And welcome, Nikki.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]