HYDERABAD – Registry Service Provider Certification
Monday, November 07, 2016 – 15:15 to 16:45 IST
ICANN57 | Hyderabad, India

FRANCISCO ARIAS: Hello, everyone. This is Francisco Arias, ICANN staff, Senior Director of GDD Technical Services. We are about to start our session on RSP Certification, Registry Service Provider Certification.

This is the agenda for the session. I will do a brief introduction on the topic and then we have a panel here to my left. Then I have a small set of slides in regards to the high level concepts as we have it now, and then we'll have a Q&A session.

So let's start. A very brief introduction why we are here, why we are discussing this topic. We are here exploring the concept of Registry Service Provider Certification Program. This is intended to be a collaborative effort with the community to identify the problems that we want to solve. We in ICANN have already identified some problems we would like to solve. We have also heard from you in the GDD Summit and other feedback that we have received from registry operators and registry service providers in regards to how things work or don't work at the moment.

As you know, we have I think at the moment it's close to 1,200 gTLDs delegated in the root. We have been doing this for three years, the New gTLD Program, that is, so we have some experience here and some issues that we would like to solve.

So let's start with the panel. The first panelist is Jeff Neuman here to my left. He is the co-Chair of the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process Working Group in the GNSO. So, Jeff?

JEFF NEUMAN: Thanks. I'm one of the c0-Chairs and Avri Doria is the other co-Chair, and so we're both eager to listen to feedback and to work with Francisco and everyone else here to try to progress this issue.

The reason I am on this panel is that in the Subsequent Procedures Working Group PDP, we're tasked with looking at the 2012 New gTLD round and working on ways in which to improve, refine, or develop new policy recommendations for New gTLDs and starting with the premise that in 2007 the GNSO passed the policy which was approved by the Board in 2008 that said that there will be a process for introducing new top level domains in a predictable manner, etc., and did not just imply that there would just be one round of New gTLDS and that's it.

Prior to the PDP being commenced, there was a discussion group that brought out a bunch of issues related to the New gTLD application and process and beyond. And one of the areas which the discussion group thought should be explored and which also came out of the ICANN Staff Implementation Review document was this notion of a potential Registry Service Provider, some people call them Backend Service Provider, Certification or Accreditation, and we'll talk about some of the benefits in the next slide.

But essentially, I wanted to stop and note that although we say certification here, there have definitely been some discussions within our PDP Working Group and specifically sub-Team 1 or Worktrack 1 that's responsible for this particular issue about calling it certification or accreditation. Some of the issues we'll talk about at the end involve things like whether there should be an agreement or not be in an agreement with ICCAN and certification, does that imply an ongoing process, etc. So we're saying certification in this session, but please note that we're not trying to imply anything by using the word certification at this point.

So what are some of the benefits? I'm going to have to use my screen here too because my eyes cannot really read that far. Actually, I can.

EN

One of the problems that came out in our discussions was that there was a lack of predictability in terms of when a registry applied in the 2o12 round, there was uncertainty by these registry operators as to whether their technical backend was going to pass the evaluation. So you had large brands in a lot of circumstances or even others that applied for generic top level domains looking through the existing set of registry operators or backend registry operators and just hoping on blind faith that since some of those backend registry operators provided services for existing TLDs that they would pass. But you also had new players that would come in that were probably pretty sure that they would pass the evaluation but obviously didn't know 100% whether they would pass.

So one of the benefits of having this pre-approval certification process would be that if the backend was certified, the front end registry operator would know that at least his technical operations would pass the evaluation and that would be one last thing he would have to worry about and really focus on business and then operational evaluation, financial, etc.

In addition, you know what happened in the 2012 round is that if there was a backend operator that supported multiple backends. Whether that was, let's say, Neustar who supported over 300 or even Google that had 99 of its own, it had to go through that evaluation 99 different times, in some cases having

different evaluators and the results may not have always been exactly the same on the technical analysis, although usually pretty close.

There were some measures put in I think with JAS advisors who oversaw the evaluation process. I think the two evaluators were KPMG and E&Y and I think JAS advisors had tried its best to ensure consistency, but there wasn't complete 100% consistency.

The other issue is the problem that the discussion group thought this could solve in the working group also was that the evaluation of all these applications was incredibly slow. It was inefficient to evaluate a registry service provider hundreds of times, and of course each evaluation came with a fairly a high price tag. So if you didn't have to do that evaluation more than once, you would believe that the price of $185,000 would significantly drop.

So again the benefits would be hopefully a quicker processing of the applications, especially if these pre-approval certifications were done in advance. In addition, if this RSP certification program involved a demonstration element where you had to prove that you were qualified, then in theory you could avoid all of the PDT testing which happened after the agreement was signed but before delegation.

Now IANA does do a couple of its own tests which interestingly enough the PDT test duplicated. So you're not going to avoid that, but you will avoid pretty much almost all of the other tests that you have to undergo.

We would think that this would potentially reduce the number of people that ICANN needs to review an application. We talked about lower fees. In addition, if we came up with the certification program, although not a subject for our PDP but certainly something Francisco will talk about and Samantha as well, is that if you came up with this program for TLDs going forward, certainly you could apply all the same logic to when a front end operator wants to switch out its backend operator. So all of this can help with portability and competition.

Lack of choice and diversity. During the process of preparing your applications, there seemed to be a limited set of Registry Service Providers that were available for front end registries to select from. Although that pool has now increased because of this new round and some that have developed their own, the reality is that absent some sort of certification program and a new entrant in the market, a new entrant in the registry operator market or the front end registry, really has only a limited pool of registries to choose from that it knows for certain would or theoretically should pass the evaluation process.

Having a program where you could voluntarily opt to become pre-certified would potentially increase the choice in backend providers and allow others to get into the market. So the hope would be to encourage — open your door to new entrants, help with geographic diversity engagement by helping to see if we could get providers in the global south to come forward and become pre-certified.

Additional benefits too, we think that having this certification program could increase the security and stability, especially depending on what criteria were developed to certify the registry service providers. We think this is one that was identified by the group is improve the secondary market for top level domains.

So these are all the benefits. I should say from the start or from here at least that this is not yet a policy recommendation of the PDP Working Group. We believe that there is a significant amount of support for some type of program, details obviously to be worked out.

At least within the working group, we do have a proposal that was just submitted by Donna Austin in Neustar, some potential mechanisms of how to move forward with such a certification or approval process. I think there are certain elements of that that some have had some issues with. But overall, I think the

EN

proposal's a great way forward and gives the working groups something to work from in order to develop more finite proposals.

Like I said, this is being done by Work Track 1. Although the policy process has begun and it is already well into its work, the group is still open. One other thing I should point out is that it certainly has been a discussion within the group that if there is an agreement from a policy a perspective of having such a program, it is not necessarily that group, that sub-track 1, that would actually work to develop the criteria, that would work to develop all of the implementation details which Francisco will talk about later on here.

So the hope is, at least for personally speaking but not in my official capacity as co-Chair, would be that once the policy recommendation comes to have such a program that we take that and move to another group, which could have some of the same volunteers, but another group to really work on the implementation that's outside of the PDP process. I don't know who I hand this over to now. I'll hand it back to Francisco.

FRANCISCO ARIAS: Thank you, Jeff. The second panelist is Jonathan Zuck, Chair of the Competition, Consumer Trust, and Consumer Choice Review Team also known as the CCT Review Team. Jonathan?

ICANN|57
HYDERABAD
3-9 November 2016

JONATHAN ZUCK: Thanks for inviting me part of the panel. We're looking at the effectiveness of the application evaluation process, and where the team found itself focusing a lot was in areas where the process was inadvertently discriminatory, made it more difficult for applicants sort of outside the ICANN bubble or applicants from the global south to participate in the process. There were a very small number of applicants from the global south, and so we've looked at that from a number of different perspectives.

I wanted to just give you three things that are findings that I think are relevant to this discussion. The first is if you listen to Jordyn's overview of the competitive landscape, one of the things he talks about is the benefit of the current industry structure, the fact that there is this tiered structure to the industries that involves registry service providers, registries, and a built-in distribution channel via registrars means that the notion of a minimum viable scale is a little more manageable than it might have been otherwise. In other words, the relatively small registration registry has a higher chance of survival in an area where they're not having to build up so many fixed resources. So the efficiency of that backend market, I think, plays very well into the survival rate of smaller registries.

A second topic of conversation that came up was via a survey that is currently open of applicants that's being conducted by Nielsen Research, and they're just talking about people's experiences with the application process and what their frustrations were and things like that.

One of the things that has come up is the Letter of Credit and the level of overhead associated with that and that many of them had difficulty putting it together. In some instances, it appeared it was even illegal for them to produce the documents that were required by ICANN. So if there was some way to shift some of that burden over to the RSP Program, again, I think it would decrease friction in the applicant pool and allow more applicants to participate. So that's something that came up.

Finally, there was a study that was conducted by AM Global that went out and interviewed cohorts to the applicant pool in the global south. It looked at the characteristics of the companies and entities that did apply for new strings in the current round of New gTLDs and tried to find similar entities in the global south to interview to ask the question, "Why didn't you apply?"

And so it's a little interesting exercise to try and prove a negative, but again there were some issues associated with understanding the business model and the short timeframe through which applicants in the global south had to ramp up in

order to participate in the program. A process in which the overhead of applying was minimized and was specific to just being a registry and then the RSP was an established program that they were informed about, etc., would eliminate enormous portions of the complexity of the application process as well as the cost, as Jeff mentioned, that would allow other entrants from the global south to participate.

Those are three areas that have come to our attention that lead us to be cautiously optimistic about the notion — and Jordyn may want to speak further — but the notion of some sort of a registry server service provider certification or accreditation or something like that to deal with some of these issues, as I said, of nonintentional discrimination of the application and evaluation process.

FRANCISCO ARIAS: Thank you, Jonathan. Our third panelist is Samantha Demetriou. She's the Vice Chair of Administration for the Registry Holder Group where a team of registry representatives is working on recommendations that will fit into the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures PDP. Samantha?

EN

SAMANTHA DEMETRIOU: Thanks, Francisco. By way of a bit of background, in addition to the larger policy development process that's gong on that Jeff is co-chairing, starting at the last meeting in Helsinki, a group of Registry Stakeholder Group members under the direction of Jordyn Buchanan, who has now been made an honorary fourth panelist because we keep talking about him, to get together to look at some of the issues that are top of mind for registry operators and Stakeholder Group members that could be addressed going into the next round.

And so more specifically than policy recommendations to fit into the PDP, we're also really looking at some issues that we see as more implementation issues that can be resolved a little bit more quickly than say through a full policy development process.

In that spirit of the focus on implementation, I'll also give you a little bit of background about my personal story. I work for a consultancy that supports a number of dot-brand applicants, and so we've kind of been through the same process that has been described of helping them find an RSP, helping them change RSPs.

In my experience, the process currently to switch backend registry service providers is a bit weird and it's a change. If you were still an applicant before you had signed the registry

ICANN|57
HYDERABAD
3-9 November 2016

agreement, it looked one way. Now if you change your backend registry provider before you delegate, it looks one way. It looks different if you're trying to do it after delegation.

As we move into maturity phase of the first round of the new gTLD program and as more and more strings are delegated, there's definitely a need, I think, for there to be more clarity about how to switch backends and just a little bit more visibility into the process of the transition in addition to just evaluating people on the same kind of application questions.

So in addition to looking forward into future rounds, I definitely think there's a real current implementation need that's impacting 500 registry operators at the present time.

FRANCISCO ARIAS: Thank you, Samantha. The next part of the session, I have a set of slides that describe the high level concept of what we are currently calling RSP certification. I should say that we are not set on the name. We just are using the term that most people seem to be using.

I guess the important bit of what I'm going to present now is we have a list of issues that we have heard from the community and that we have discovered ourselves in the ICANN organization, and we would like to find a way to solve those for the existing

registry operators. So with that in mind, let's go to the presentation.

We are proposing four guiding principles in exploring this concept of RSP Certification. The first one is to increase competition. We would like a program that increases the competition in the industry. This according to the ICANN Bylaws.

Second, we would like to improve the security and stability for the gTLDs, also in line with the Bylaws. Three, we would like to reduce the burden on registry operators and registry service providers and, number four, reduce or at least maintain the cost to the industry when doing this.

These are the high-level guiding principles. Now in the next level of detail, these are the initial set of problems or the objectives — if we put it in a positive way — that we would like to achieve with this program.

I want to emphasize this is the initial set of problems that we would like to address. We would like to work with you, with the community, to identify eventually a final set of problems that we would like to tackle.

First thing we have listed here is that we would like to improve the process associated with changing RSPs. As Samantha and others have mentioned, there are areas of opportunity in how

things currently work and we would like to do that. For example, we would like to improve the security and stability when doing RSP changes to ensure, for example, there is cooperation between the gaining and losing RSP so that end users are not affected. We would also like to reduce the cost when switching RSPs to make it easier to have competition in the industry.

There is another thing we would like to explore in this program. It's something that has been mentioned before by registry operators and RSPs. Currently, the emphasis or how things work is we do a setup test before doing delegation of a TLD or before allowing the change for an RSP. So we would like to explore moving from that way of thinking to more of an ongoing monitoring instead. So having a programming which we monitor how things work in the RSPs or in the technical operation of the TLDs so we can have an early detection program, let's say, of issues and address them as quickly as possible.

We would also like to create a direct channel between ICANN and RSPs. This is also something that has come up and has been raised to us by RSPs. For example, if they have a change in their, say, IP addresses or some other technical parameter, suppose someone has 200 TLDs and they want to make those changes. At the moment the way things formally work, we don't have a relationship with the RSP so all these changes have to be done

individually per TLD. So you can imagine it's a bit of a burden there and a clear opportunity to improve the situation.

We would also like to reduce the financial administrative burden of the registry operator but doing this while maintaining the security and stability at least, if not improving it.

One of the things that was mentioned by Jonathan Zuck, the COI, the Continued Operations Instrument or the Letter of Credit as it's also called, we'd like to explore the possibility of getting rid of this instrument which is where it's used now to potentially fund the [Evorom, the money is sent back into the] registry operator program that kicks in if there is failure that goes beyond a certain threshold defining the contract.

So we'd like to explore the possibility of getting rid of this requirement, but while doing that we need to keep in mind that we don't want to affect the security and stability of the system. So we need to have in place something else, some other measures, that allow us to keep the security and stability at the same level as we have now or improve it, if possible.

With that in mind, I guess the next bullet is what I just said. We would like to reduce the risk of failure. Finally, we would like to clarify expectations on RSPs so that they know what they can expect. For example, if there are new entrants, so that they know

EN

what they have to comply with in order to be in the market on an ongoing basis.

So these are the initial set of objectives that we would like to propose for an RSP certification program.

The concept, important key points here, we think we can have an RSP certification program if we make this an optional program. So in other words, RSPs that for some reason are not interested in being part of this program, we think we should leave that option available and they will continue to use the existing processes and procedures. On the other hand, if they choose to be part of the RSP certification program, they will get the benefits but of course also the obligations that could be included in such a program.

I think the rest that is in the slide is a set of details on how we think things could work. I don't think we need to cover this here.

So tentative timeline. Please, I'm saying tentative timeline is just to set something so that we have something to aim to. We think that we could start work on this program with the community — and more of that in the next slide — starting next year, and we think this will be done in three phases.

The first phase in the top line, we're calling that the framework development. This is the work with the community to agree on

EN

the big questions, and more on that later too. So six months developing the framework for an RSP certification program.

The second phase, which is the third line — I'll talk about the second line later — the third line which is the second phase that's the program development [per se]. So that's developing the details on the program based on the high level decisions made in the framework. We are tentatively thinking that it will take about a year to do. Of course at this moment, we don't know what it is, so this is even more tentative than the framework development.

Finally the fourth line that will be third phase, it's the program deployment, which is once we have the program developed, it's to launch it to have the first RSPs certified, for example, or have any other thing that needs to be ready and, of course, this is also tentative.

So going back to the line number two, that's the other component. This is one of the objectives that I mentioned before is we think we could move from the idea of doing pretesting to do more ongoing monitoring. So in order to change that concept, we think we will need to develop a system to do technical monitoring. This is [inaudible] for example the [inaudible] monitoring system that we already have that deals with only performance issues.

But there are other requirements that currently exist for gTLDs that could be motored on a day-to-day basis. For example, ensuring there is compliance with the DNS or DNSSEC standards, ensuring that IPv6 requirements in the contract are followed, that kind of stuff. That's what we have in mind with technical monitoring on an ongoing basis as opposed to have a testing before allowing a change, for example.

As I mentioned at the start of the presentation, this is an exploratory conversation and at this point we have more questions than answers. This is an example and just a limited set of the key questions that we have compiled so far. Again, this is coming from our own experiences and from what we have heard from the community in the GD Summit in the summer and other conversations we have had.

By the way, these will be the kind of questions that will be agreed during the development of the framework. So for example, what will be the approach to solve the problems identified? Do we indeed need a certification program? Do we do it through third-party certification? Does ICANN do the certification or something else?

The benefits of the program. We need to reach agreement with the community on what are the final sets of objectives that we would like to achieve with this program. Impact to registrars. I

don't mention registrants here or end users. Reason being I'm assuming – and probably we should make it that explicit – that there should be no impact to the registrants and end users.

The registrars, they probably will be impacted in one way or another since they have to connect to the RSP. So if there is a change, there is probably some impact on them. We need to explore that and if indeed there is an impact as we think there will be, we need to find a way to mitigate that.

Another thing to consider is that initial certification criteria. For example, there are already a set of RSPs that are operating the gTLDs. Do we grandfather them or do they have to do the certification in order to be considered certified? So another question that we need to agree on.

Levels of certification. This has come up in discussions with some of the current players in the industry that some people think there has to be different levels of certification – something like, I don't know, silver, gold, or whatever, something. Or maybe it's related to the capacity so someone that is certified to be able to manage a number of TLDs or a number of domain names or something else. So we need to explore whether there has to be levels of certification or if it's just one level. We need to reach agreement on that.

The criteria to sustain the certification, the frequency if there is going to be some recertification yearly basis or something else or no other certification as long as you don't fail, for example. That's another thing we need to find.

Enforcement mechanisms. This is also an interesting question: should there be a contract between ICANN and the RSPs? Should we use a looser model or something else? But probably there has to be some way to enforce the obligations that potentially an RSP will have.

One of the key pieces of feedback we have received from almost everyone is that the community doesn't like the idea that the ICANN registration will go and, in secret let's say, develop a certification program and then come back and "here it is," present it to you. So instead of that, we would like to as it was suggested by most of you that this program should be developed together with the community.

So in that sense, we would like to do an open call for participation and we're planning on doing this after Hyderabad. Do an open call for participation to have a working group that will do weekly meetings, will review documents, a model similar to what is used in the Implementation and Review Teams. This is of course not a policy implementation per se, but we would like to build on a model that already exists.

We are not expecting to have a predefined number of participants. However, we would like to have a core set of members that work consistently in the development of the program. This is to avoid inefficiencies. If, for example, you have people that come and go or people that come at the middle of, I don't know, three months after you started the discussion, it sometimes becomes difficult to keep the momentum and progress on discussions.

Of course, we would like to have diversity in the group. We need to have the different points of views – registries, registry service operators, registrars, end users, security community, technical community, etc.

We also anticipate that there will be multiple opportunities for wider community input on this public comment and maybe more than one. We also think this should be developed in an open and transparent manner, so the standard stuff – recordings, presentations, materials published, mailing lists [archived that can be] openly available to anyone to read.

This is it for the slides. With this, I would like to open the microphone for questions. I have this microphone for those of you that are not at the table. Joe and Jordyn?

JOE WALDRON:	Thanks, Francisco. I appreciate the overview and the discussion. I guess I'd like to start though with just understanding where we are in the process of moving forward on this. I know in the announcement about this session, it talked about ICANN and the community exploring the development of a program and yet you have a timeline. You're pretty far down the path of having a program and starting a working group. I'm just wondering how this fits into the standard processes. Where are we in terms of deciding even if this is the right thing to do, or are we going to develop this and then decide that we don't want to do it?
FRANCISCO ARIAS:	Thank you, Joe. I think perhaps using the RSP certification name is causing some confusion here, and that's of course our fault but we couldn't find a better term to use. What we have as of now is a set of problems that we would like to solve – the objectives, improving the way the RSP process works and exploring getting rid of the COI, etc., all of those problems.

We think we need to have something like RSP certification and, like I said, we are not set on that but we would like to work with the community. For example, the first thing is to define what are the set of problems that everyone agrees that we should solve. And regarding the timeline, like I said, it's very, very tentative. It's just to have something to aim to.

JOE WALDRON: Can I follow?

FRANCISCO ARIAS: Sure.

JOE WALDRON: Let me just follow up. I think when I ask where we are in the process, I guess let me ask it a little bit more specifically. Is this related to the subsequent rounds discussion? Is this independent of that? Is it something that's expected to go through the GNSO? I'm just trying to understand the structure of what's initiating a new program that ICANN will have another certification mechanism for some new program when I don't think that we have agreed on what the objectives are at this point?

FRANCISCO ARIAS: Thank you for that, Joe. The way we see this implementation is independent of the PDP that is ongoing. However, there could be some coordination in that regard, and Jeff would you mind to [address that]?

JEFF NEUMAN:

Just to also dovetail on that, ICANN has the sole discretion on approving changes to backend providers so they've got to develop something. But with respect to the front or the subsequent procedures, we've been discussing this issue in Work Track 1 and actually one of the — okay, she's still here before I point it back there. One of the work track co-Chairs Sara Bockey is behind me and, oh, Christa Taylor is back there as well so there are two co-Chairs.

The way the group has been kind of leaning at this point, it seems to be although we have not yet put this out as a recommendation, but it seems to be heading to some sort of program. The fear we have is that we're working with overlapping subject matter and to the extent that we could try to coordinate those at the same time taking into consideration some of the unique issues you have with the New gTLD program and the future and also dovetailing on the existing process that's going to be developed anyway, we think trying to coordinate that effort is a good idea at this point.

In the end, sure, a policy recommendation could come out that says we don't want this program for future TLDs at all. That, I guess, could be an outcome, but I think in order for efficiency and to not start working on this program two or three years from now, working in conjunction with what Francisco is actually doing I think sounds like a good idea.

FRANCISCO ARIAS: I have Jordyn to my right, a remote question, and then Werner. Jordyn?

JORDYN BUCHANAN: Thanks, Francisco. It's Jordyn Buchanan with Google. I have a lot of things to say and questions, so I'll chunk them up and let other people go in between.

I guess I'll start with this first question of the interaction between the staff-led effort here and the GNSO process. My personal opinion, and Jeff's already heard this a number times, is that the PDP is significantly over scoped and working on a bunch of issues that are clearly implementation as opposed to policy. Don't need policy. There's already perfectly adequate policy that says that there has to be a reasonable technical evaluation.

The current PDP process is a reasonable technical evaluation. This is a reasonable technical evaluation. You don't need new policy in order to address this issue. You just need the staff to do the perfectly sensible thing they're dong, which is to recognize there is an efficiency problem with the status quo and work to address it.

And so I would certainly suggest that you guys should just stop working on this and recognize that the staff's already adequately addressing it and the current policy is completely adequate in order to address this.

But to your point, Joe, I feel like I have not heard anyone say that they love the current PDP process. I think it's sufficient to ensure that there's some level of technical capability that's consistent with the requirements of the contract in place. But certainly all of the inefficiencies that were described by Jeff and Francisco earlier I think absolutely resonate to me and I think if ICANN says they would like to tackle these inefficiencies within the process, make the program cheaper, more robust and more likely to identify or more likely to prevent registry failure, I don't know why we would possibly encourage them to delay one second.

We should start working right away. They should start asking people for expressions of interest in participation not after Hyderabad but in Hyderabad and let's get working on this. That timeline is way too long, but I think there's things that we can do to compress and I'll talk about those after I let some other people have some time at the mic.

JEFF NEUMAN: Just to respond, Jordyn, you and I have had this discussion. Obviously, everyone in the community doesn't share your view

on what is the policy but in the end of the day I don't think it matters. I think if the Policy Group can quickly come up with a recommendation that says that there should be a program, I think we end up in the same place so I wouldn't spend so much time fighting against it.

I think the policy process will work itself out and hopefully make the recommendation on a fairly expedited timeframe. But even at the end of the day, if there is a policy recommendation to have this type of program for future TLDs, we're at least working in conjunction so we don't have overlapping implementations so I don't see a harm.

MICHAEL FLEMMING: Michael from GMO. This may not be the place to ask this question. It might be better to ask within the PDP Working Group itself, but I believe you said that there will be coordination between both, correct? If that's the case, do you think of a liaison between both groups and such? I think the PDP might come to a conclusion obviously before this timeline concludes its work.

JEFF NEUMAN: On the second point, I'm not sure the PDP will be concluded before this would but anyway that's something we'll take back

within the PDP. It's going to be an open call for volunteers, so it's definitely likely that we'd mentioned it to Work Track 1 that if you want to participate in that group you can as well. But we'll get together with the group and decide what the best way forward is, whether there's a liaison or whether just anyone can participate.

FRANCISCO ARIAS: Thank you. I think we have a remote question.

[CHRISTOPHER BARE]:   Yes, we have a remote question from Sarah Langstone of Verisign: "I'm very surprised to see a timeline shown to solve an issue that I am not sure we all agree exists. Can we see some statistics with regard to how PDT tests have evolved since the program was launched?"

"Francisco, can ICANN provide statistics that show how many RSPs had a technical issue that would have caused the RSP to fail PDT after they had passed the first pre-delegation test? If you equate the first successful PDT test with a successful accreditation in any potential future RSP program, whatever it looks like, the statistics collected over the last few years would show if an RSP had any testing issues once they had passed their

first test. Can we see these statistics? They can be anonymous, of course."

FRANCISCO ARIAS: Thank you. Jeff, would you mind to address the first question, and then I'll address the rest?

JEFF NEUMAN: Yes. On the first question, Sarah — thanks for the question — I know a lot of these discussions have happened within the Subsequent Procedures Working Group and talking about the benefits and the needs, so we can certainly make sure that you're provided with the transcripts and the recordings and the discussions. A lot of them are on the Subsequent Procedures wiki, which is public. But certainly, that was the very first thing that the working group had set out to do is to determine whether they believed there were issues and problems and whether there would be benefits by having such a program.

That said, I will turn it over to Francisco Arias on all the other questions of statistics available.

FRANCISCO ARIAS: Thank you, Jeff. So, Sarah, yes we certainly have information on the performance of PDT. I don't have it with me at the moment,

EN

so we can provide it later and certainly inform the development of the program with these statistics. I think next is Werner.

WERNER STAUB: Werner Staub from CORE Association. I think the staff deserves to be congratulated for moving forward on this idea because there is a need for action. That being said, we are in this context in danger of making a mistake because the better is the enemy of the good and we might actually delay a good thing that it could just go ahead because we want to also address the improved thing at the same time.

So one way would be to address the things that indeed, as Jordyn has mentioned, could already be done, such as what I would call provider identification. Service Provider Identification would be a good thing. I think there's no policy needed to identify somebody who offers a service and give them access to at least show who they are rather than my using the credentials with the name of the employee of my customers to communicate with ICANN. This is inefficient.

The second one is if we actually start a process, it might be a good idea to have staggered deliverables, not have to wait until the end of the process because some things might become clear early on and staff should be enabled to just move ahead with those ones.

ICANN|57
HYDERABAD
3-9 November 2016

JEFF NEUMAN:	Thanks, Werner. I think that it's an interesting model that we have here. As someone who used to work for a backend provider, I completely understand your views and, yes, they absolutely should talk to the registry service provider and deal with them on a one-on-one basis and all that stuff. Totally agree.

Unfortunately, the model that we set up from a legal liability standpoint is that the funding registry operator is legally responsible for all the activities that the registry service provider does behind it. So we do need to figure out a way where, yes, that communication can take place and things can be done, but that it doesn't negatively reflect on the front end registry operator if there's anything that's done that would in any way in any form put the front end registry operator in breach or in violation of its existing contract.

Now for Google, it might not matter because they're both the front and the backend and it doesn't matter, but for the brands and everyone else, there is definitely a reluctance to give complete discretion to the backend provider to deal directly with ICANN because it's the front end operator that's on the hook. I think it's easily solved, but it's something we need to work through.

.

EN

WERNER STAUB: Maybe we should distinguish two elements in this. One of them is whether a registry operator wants to avoid liability. And they should not be forced to interact directly if they don't want to. They can still go though the identity of the customer. But it would certainly helpful for our customers to be able to say, "We have appointed this person, this party to interact on our behalf." Of course, they must be responsible just like any professional must be responsible.

FRANCISCO ARIAS: Thank you, Werner. Jeff?

JEFF ECKHAUS: Thanks. Jeff Eckhaus from Rightside. Like Jordyn, I have many, many thoughts and things to say on this and I'll try. I won't ramble on, or at least I'll try not to, but I want to hopefully address one question you asked which was: should existing registry providers be grandfathered in? I think to me my answer is a resounding yes.

As somebody who's gone through PDT over 200 times, I believe, or maybe 220 times we've gone through PDT, I feel like we've already jumped over the hurdle and have qualified as somebody who's certified. And now I feel we would have to go through this again and we'd be disadvantaged if we decided not to go ahead

EN

and get certified because maybe somebody would say, "Oh, they're not certified with this new process, this new procedure," and I feel like we're sort of being held hostage and we're going to have to pay fees, do an extra amount of work for absolutely no additional benefit for what we've already gone through and that we've already been certified and we're already running two hundred and twenty something new TLDs on our platform at this time.

So I just wanted to be clear. On that process I think it's a big issue for the existing providers that you're asking them to put up money, go through a whole new rigorous set of processes which we've already done in the past for really no additional benefit for us. So it's like we're being held hostage to do something like that. I'll leave that point and then probably raise my hand again. Thanks.

JEFF NEUMAN: Thanks, Jeff. I think there are some good points there. I think you've made a lot of assumptions. You've jumped a lot of steps through payment of fees and stuff, but I think that's certainly something we've definitely heard. Obviously, I don't think that as an existing provider you have to jump through every single hoop to get certified for something you're obviously demonstrating on an ongoing basis.

So that just needs to be balanced a little bit with not giving you an unfair advantage either. I think all that could be worked out, and I completely hear you on that. As someone from a former backend provider, I sympathize with that as well.

FRANCISCO ARIAS: Okay. Jim?

JIM GALVIN: Thank you, Francisco. Jim Galvin from Afilias. I'd like to ask a point of clarification. We keep throwing this word around about certification and/or accreditation. I agree with the idea that there are clearly some technical issues that can be resolved. Those of us who've done many PDTs and had many TLDs have experienced many of these things, and I know that you have too, Francisco.

What I find interesting is there's a certain overlap in the benefits that you and Jeff put up on the screen as you were going through the presentations here. And you're calling it a certification program and yet I felt for the most part, Francisco, the stuff that you had put up there aligns with what Jordyn was saying.

There are some implementation things and technical details that it's probably reasonable for ICANN to just go forward and

do. I don't know why we would call it certification or accreditation. They're just process improvements. Seems like a perfectly sensible Implementation Review Team kind of thing to go off and do. I'm wondering if that's your intent or are you, Francisco, actually proposing that there should be a certification? You're labeling it in a funny way just to put that context on it but is that necessary.

And it feels like Jeff you seem to — I feel like Francisco is not saying it's a certification program because he's listing things that wouldn't really fall in to that category, and Jeff you are calling it a certification program and you've got some other interesting benefits that you're trying to put on top of it. There's not a perfect overlap in benefits.

So I guess my clarifying question is: are we talking about a certification program? And if so, what is the origin of that versus just dealing with process issues which seem like an ordinary thing to want to take care of? Thanks.

FRANCISCO ARIAS: Thank you, Jim. We don't have a better name for this, and we'll be more than happy to call it something else if you have a suggestion. We're just using the term that we have heard the community use for this. For us the important bit is the set of objectives that we would like to achieve with this which

hopefully we will agree or most of the community will agree that are a good thing to do.

So we have a set of problems we would like to solve. We're calling that for now the RSP Certification, but we don't care about the name so please give us suggestions what we should call this thing. Thanks.

JEFF NEUMAN: Thanks. Jim, I don't know if you were around for the beginning of the presentation. I said that very issue about not wanting to use the term certification, but that's just what was used on the slides. Even within the subsequent procedures PDP, we have a lot of issues in providing it with a label because the use of the term accreditation and all that could mean, in some people's mind, having a legal contract.

If you use the term certification, then in theory you could be certifying that someone is able to do something and therefore potentially absorbing legal liability by certifying they can do something if in the end they can't.

So if anyone comes up with a better term, please pass it on and we'll use that term. But I just want to bring up, because I feel like it's getting such pushback, I want to thank actually ICANN staff in this situation. I'm always very critical but I want to thank them

for this because they foresaw areas of conflict or overlap and rather than just working on a process themselves without looking to the community for advice and for input, they saw the overlap, they came to the community, they're putting out their arms saying, "Hey, guys we see that you could be dealing with some of these same issues. Why don't you help us?"

I don't know if that means it's slowing down the timeline, but I actually think they should be commended. This is the first time I've seen ICANN staff not go into their own silo to develop a program and then all of a sudden — I think the fear from Subsequent Procedures Working Group is since we're working on a kind of similar idea, we didn't want to be stuck with something that we didn't have any input on it at the beginning.

For those that are interested in having input, if we could work together with ICANN staff, wow, that would be a first. That would be great. So it's not developed in silos. I don't know why it seems like we're just going ahead, so I at this point sympathize with ICANN staff. They're almost damned if they do and damned if they don't.

JIM GALVIN: Quick follow-up?

EN

FRANCISCO ARIAS: Sure.

JIM GALVIN: I agree with you, Jeff. I want to than Francisco and staff for coming forward and doing this. I think it's outstanding what Francisco had put up here, but Francisco asked for another name and so my quick comment to that was go back to what Jordyn said.

We already have plenty of policy and rules about technical evaluation and technical services, so let's just continue to call it that. Let's not try to change and add anything extra. This is just for staff. They're asking to engage with the community to improve processes that exist today and leave it at that. There's nothing new to add here. That would be my suggestion. Thanks.

FRANCISCO ARIAS: Thank you, Jim. I have next, Jordyn.

JORDYN BUCHANAN: Thanks. I want to first of all highly endorse Jeff's comments about thanking staff for a) identifying the problem and b) engaging the community earlier on in this process. I don't actually think in this case it needs to slow the process at all. I think we can move with alacrity, and the community on a

narrowly focused set of issues like this ought to be able to make rapid progress.

I'd also like to highly endorse Werner's comments. Without beating a dead horse, I think we want to avoid the problem here that the Subsequent Procedures PDP has, which is trying to solve all the problems at once. You don't need to.

On your initial slide of here are the possible benefits that we could get out of this, you don't need to get all four. If you get any one of those without reducing any of the other four, that's still good. And so if we can make incremental steps that improve along each of those axes, we should make those incremental steps as quickly as possible. So for example, getting the contact information so you know who the RSP is and having the direct line of communication with that. You don't need to do all of this in order to get that benefit, right? You could do that as a stand alone thing.

Separately from that, you could make it so a given RSP had a…

FRANCISCO ARIAS: Sorry to interrupt you. We have been asked if we could speak slowly so that people can understand better what we're saying.

JORDYN BUCHANAN: I'm not very good at speaking slowly, but I will do my best. Separately from the communications channels, you could say that after having passed PDT for a given provider for a given bundle of registry services, that that registry services provider was already approved for additional TLDs offering the same set of registry services and so you didn't have to replicate the PDT process and that would provide some of the efficiency elements.

And then subsequent to that, if you wanted to have an ongoing, recurring evaluation process, you could do that as well, but you don't necessarily need to get to that point in order to get that first step in the efficiency process.

And as you were describing the ongoing process, I was scratching my head thinking, "How is that different from SLA monitoring? Is it just a more robust version of SLA monitoring or is it testing different factors that wouldn't be included in what we think of as SLA monitoring?" And so I think that's a whole separate discussion of whether we should just make the SLA monitoring more robust or whether we need some ongoing recertification checker tune up or something like that.

But I don't think we need to — you don't need to build out a giant new set of tools and get through this recurring process in order to achieve some of the efficiency improvements. So I would certainly endorse the notion that Werner said of let's

work incrementally, let's go step-by-step through this process and get the benefits that we can get as quickly as possible. I think you would find yourself starting to show things that would be beneficial for the community a lot earlier than 2018 if you took that approach.

FRANCISCO ARIAS: Okay. Thank you, Jordyn. I have in the queue Sarah, [Jen], [Rick], and Kal. If I'm missing someone please raise your hand. Sarah is remote so, Chris, will you please read?

[CHRISTOPHER BARE]:   Yes, we have a comment and a question from Sarah Langstone of Verisign. The comment is in reference to her prior question: "Thank you Jeff and thank you Francisco. I'm not surprised to see details of the conversations, but I am surprised to see a draft timeline and so many assumptions around the creation of a potential program.

"The question: Assumptions are made around a certification program reducing costs for the applicant. If an RSP has to pay to enter accreditation, then those costs would likely be passed to the applicant anyway. I wanted to say if that had been considered and learn more about how the cost elements had been calculated."

FRANCISCO ARIAS: We don't have a program developed at this moment. We only have questions. We don't know what would be the criteria, the conditions, etc., so I think it's a little bit early to be thinking that this will be a costly program. As a matter of fact, one of the objectives we have is to at least maintain the [costs to the] industry if we cannot reduce them.

Next in the queue I have [Jen]. Would you like to join us in the table?

[JEN CHA]: [Jen Cha from KNET]. Just one quick comment and one question. Why don't we just simply use a term like backend service provider certification? Just use a new word [like a] registry service provider, something like that. Just a quick comment.

My question is that in the slide you showed a lot of benefits of accreditation. I just want to know how those benefits are identified. You did research, you did survey, or just observation from some experts? And did you have any shortcomings, because by accreditation we add a layer to a registry service. Did you find any shortcomings besides benefits? Thank you.

FRANCISCO ARIAS: Thank you. Regarding the suggestion, I think [Roland] may have a — do you want to quickly answer on that? Okay, noted. Maybe I'm misunderstanding the sense of those that are not very comfortable with the term. I think certification is the word that is causing the problem, but maybe I'm wrong there.

Regarding this other question, where did we derive this set of problems to resolve? This is coming from ICANN. The ICANN organization experience in these three years of dealing with the delegation and changes of RSPs of the 1,200 existing gTLDs plus input from the community in the public comment of the — I forgot what it's called — the Review Report on the New gTLD Program and the GD Summit in Amsterdam that we had in the summer. We had a session on this topic and we did a brainstorming session with those present in the Summit, and we got a series of input on that regard.

[JEN CHA]: I'm especially concern [about] one benefit you mentioned that this will increase portability of backend registry operator, simplify ICANN process to change backend operator. So my concern is that what's the current difficulty or obstacle for backend operator change? What's the reason behind to say we accredit more registry service operator that will simplify the whole process? That's just a number increase, right?

EN

JEFF NEUMAN:	Thanks. I'll start and then turn over to Francisco. Under the current agreement, ICANN has the right to review any changes to any material subcontractors, and part of that review ICANN has determined is to basically do a technical analysis to make sure that the technical provider has the ability to accept the switch.

And so what ICANN has done has come up with a bureaucratic process of filling out forms and then paying $5,000, I think. Maybe it's $4,500. It's a very long process.

I don't think the intent for Francisco is to increase the number of providers. That is actually a benefit of the subsequent procedures moving forward for new rounds — sorry I shouldn't even say rounds — for new application windows, but for the existing it helps in that if someone could say that they were preapproved to be switched or to receive a switch, then they wouldn't have to undergo that technical analysis yet again.

An example is, and I'll use Verisign as an example, let's say that today someone says that they want to switch to Verisign. Verisign would go and have to do this. Actually, the front end applicant would have to do a technical evaluation of Verisign once today. But let's say in two weeks someone else says, "We want to go to Verisign." This would enable ICANN to say, "Okay, well, we've been through this once. They are now preapproved

ICANN|57
HYDERABAD
3-9 November 2016

to go through it again without having to pay the additional $4,500, without filing out all of the paperwork." It would just make it a much smoother process thereby making it easier for a front end registry operator to switch backend providers.

SAMANTHA DEMETRIOU: Thanks. I also want to add that the current process actually, we're almost towards a program of a certification because the current process asks if you're switching to a backend provider that already provides backend services for gTLDs. So it's a different application if it's someone who's not, like if it's a new entrant, I believe. Christa is probably going to correct me if I'm wrong.

KRISTA PAPAC: Almost or generally yes. The way that this works – and I've been trying to manage or pay attention to three sessions so I'm sorry if I'm repeating something if somebody already said – the contract refers you or has a link to the registry transition process. The registry transition process has a grid in it that talks about the different — the registry transition process in general says that evaluations will be conducted when there's these sort of changes and that the same level of due diligence – I'm paraphrasing so it's not the exact language – but the same level

of due diligence that was used in the New gTLD application program will be applied.

But then the grid goes on to say based on if it's a new registry operator, a new backend, there are a bunch of different factors, the level of due diligence that should apply and it's not my favorite wording. It's something like small, medium, or hard, you know what I mean?

So what happens and what Samantha is referring to is that the reason we ask is this somebody that's providing registry services is because it tells us where on the grid they fit and the level of due diligence. They've already been subjected to quite a bit of due diligence.

For instance, like the technical specifications that were provided in the application, you wouldn't need to – I don't want to speak about the process because I'm not a process person – but whereas if it's somebody who's a brand new entrant, there are things that they've never been evaluated for. So it was, I think, intended to recognize some efficiency and then this is obviously trying to take that to the next level. I hope that was helpful.

SAMANTHA DEMETRIOU: It is because that's exactly what I'm getting at. At this point, the process is still a little bit convoluted, right? The different flow

charts and if you're this kind and if it's a Tuesday and if you're — I don't know, whatever. I see that as actually a major benefit, just streamlining all of that.

And especially as someone who does work with dot-brands. We have a set number of providers that we work with, but I'm sure at some point between now and the next ten years when the RRA comes up there could be a desire to change.

And the clients that we've worked with so far it's been, yes, kind of a crazy process to the point where in one of the ICANN advisories it actually says — sorry, not an advisory, that's a loaded term. In one of the process documents it says, "Get involved with your engagement manager because this is hard," and I think we can do better thank that.

[KRISTA PAPAC]: Thanks, Sam. I feel like I want to honor my operations colleagues so just if you can let me do that, I'd appreciate it. The process is difficult. It's by far the hardest thing we do as an organization from an operational perspective. We have worked really hard, the operations team has. They have streamlined it just as much as we can absent some of the things you guys are discussing in here today.

So I just want to give them credit for the efficiencies they've tried to build. Now I know you weren't being critical, but I felt like I was shaking my head and I wanted to. But we do acknowledge that it's difficult and the workflow document you're talking about, the reason we put it out there is because we realized how confusing this language and all of this process is so it's kind of a band-aid if you will until we can maybe do some of the things people are sharing today.

FRANCISCO ARIAS: Thank you. I have [Rick], Kal, [Roland] and Jordyn, so [Rick]? Rich, sorry.

RICH MERDINGER: Rich Merdinger here from GoDaddy. First of all, I want to echo the thanks for the staff opening this up because, while it seems like the registry service issue, it's really an ecosystem issue and any of the changes that are made to a single TLD from one registry operator changing to a different service provider will affect all of the registrars that have onboarded that TLD.

One of the concerns that I have is that the amount of time and energy spent at the registrars in order to reconfigure their systems and migrate over so that they can have a seamless support for the registrations could introduce security and

EN

stability issues from the perspective of the registrant. I don't think that this gets enough attention to that.

Secondly, yes I understand Jeff Eckhaus who just had to step out. His point that they'd done 220 PDTs and maybe all of their TLDs behave the same. But the fact that you've proven that you can drive down that road once in a certain car doesn't mean you can drive down it in another car.

So each TLD when it goes from registry service provider A to B may have different characteristics than that other service provider has tested, so from an unboarding perspective or a launch perspective I get that there are efficiencies that should absolutely be maintained. I just don't want there to be an assumption that that is transited to a registry service provider change. There are a great number of other issues that will come into place that will consume time, energy, resources away from actually supporting the registrations that we have today.

So I look forward to engaging with this group and helping to make sure that we have a seamless and as efficient unboarding as possible for the registry operators and registry service providers but that we also include the registry, the other contracted parties which are the registrars and their ability to support the registrants. Thank you very much.

FRANCISCO ARIAS: Thank you, Rich. We indeed have that as one of the key questions in bullet #3. Indeed there are potential impacts to registrars that we need to find a way to mitigate. Thank you. Next I have Kal.

KAL FEHER: Kal Feher, Neustar. First, I'll just pit a cheeky suggestion regarding the name PDT optimization as part of the original PDT Optimization Group a couple of years ago. I think, regardless, we should replace certification with optimization and maybe put technical testing or something in front of it.

Regarding transition between backend providers, Krista mentioned that there's a good position based on whether you're an existing providing or not. How does making a backend provider certified change that good position? Because if we're already tested differently today, do we perceive less testing simply because there's extra certification?

FRANCISCO ARIAS: The intent there is to explore the potential of getting rid of the pretesting completely and instead move to an approach in which we'll focus on monitoring compliance with existing requirements and have some sort of way to have quick reaction on the RSPs to solve any issues if they appear, that kind of thing.

EN

That's the very general idea at this point. Does that answer your question?

KAL FEHER: Yes, I guess it raises a couple more questions which I'll leave for later, but I'm just a little bit concerned that we're mixing optimization if it's with a presumption of certification. Maybe we could separate them and work on optimizing our testing processes because as someone who goes through it quite a lot will certainly benefit with that scale, but at an individual level, I'm still struggling to say how an optimization of a technical process improves or reduces costs individually for a transition.

JEFF NEUMAN: Maybe this is just because we've mixed the two topics together of switching out a backend provider and we've mixed that in with a preapproval process for new TLDs going forward. I think these savings of costs mostly go towards if you have a new TLD process in the future, you don't have to then have, let's say there are 10,000 TLD applications, you don't have to hire KPMG and E&Y to review 10,000 applications uniquely if 5,000 of them are done by one service provider. That's a huge savings of cost.

EN

I'm not sure how much it will reduce costs for ICANN and the switching backend providers, but I just wanted to make that point.

KAL FEHER: So just to reply, none of that actually requires certification but these are just how you implement a particular test. So I'm still a little bit concerned that we're mixing optimization or streamlining of testing with certification.

JEFF NEUMAN: Well, for my part, I used preapproval to try and not use this word certification. I think that's kind of a better term because you're not certifying anything. You're just saying you're pre approved to move forward.

FRANCISCO ARIAS: That may be an interesting idea. We use that term by the way with the rest of the agencies. We have a list of preapproved for that [experience], so maybe that's another option to consider. I have in the queue [Roland], Jordyn, and Joe.

[ROLAND]: Thanks, Francisco. I haven't heard anybody talk about the risks of this program, and I want to put a few risks that I see on the

table just for the consideration of the community. I agree that there's a lot of waste in the PDP process, but going all the way to certification I think creates some risk, especially it the security and stability area. Because I think if every registry service provider was certified through an ICANN process, then there becomes no difference between a newbie who just passed the test and Verisign who's been doing it for years. There's a huge difference in their capabilities, but newbie registry operators who are going to apply are not going to see the difference. All they're going to see is ICANN approved it, these guys are cheaper, I'm going with these guys. Jeff?

JEFF NEUMAN: Yes, on that I think those are good points. That was also some of the — you're right, all we did is present the benefits so there are risks. But I think there's also a marketplace so as you're courting potential new TLD applicants, you're going to point to your over 20 years of providing the service and you're going to have that inherent advantage anyway.

[ROLAND]:   Where does that get people though? They're approved by ICANN. That's all you need. You don't need that history. You don't' need that investment. You don't need that capacity. You don't need

any of that redundancy. You got ICANN certified, and that's all you need.

JEFF NEUMAN: And how's that different from the way it is today for the new gTLD process?

[ROLAND]: Because the responsibility for selecting a registry service provider and the responsibly to deliver those services consistent with the contract lie with the registry operator not with ICANN. And if ICANN certifies this, buyers have a right to rely on ICANN's judgment related to this registry service provider that they just certified and the liability for failure to perform is going to fall to ICANN.

JEFF NEUMAN: And then again that goes to the term "certification," and that was one of the concerns that was voiced in our group which is if you use of certification, you're creating some loaded term that they have certain capabilities. But that's no different than the new gTLD process was to begin with. If anyone put on paper all the right words, they passed the evaluation. How's that any different? ICANN "approved the application."

[ROLAND]:   Then they eventually had to pass an actual test before they got delegated. So you're right that's a problem, that's a problem.

JEFF NEUMAN: Well, right but I guess that's an overall problem but to the extent that you keep things the same, I think it's no different than just if you wanted a preapproval process for a new backend providers, you could have the same written test and they'd have to go through the same written test. But at the end of the day, ICANN or it's independent third parties did approve the application to move forward and then did PDT. If you could combine that both in a preapproval process where not only did they have to write all the answers to the questions but they also had to do the equivalent of a PDT type thing in that process to get preapproved, that's no different than the way it exists today.

[ROLAND]:   All I'm saying is that certification — and regardless of what you call, it it's a certification process. It's ICANN's approval, it's some shmoozy collection of words and probably marketing people can figure that out, but the long and short of it is that ICANN's going to approve it, right? And ICANN's going to have to stand

EN

behind it, and that's a liability problem for the organization, I think.

JEFF NEUMAN: So let me ask a question. I think it's a good point, but you have now that for you preapprove data escrow providers, ICANN preapproves, dispute resolution service providers. Has that been an issue lately? Has ICANN been sued with any liability? I'm just saying I understand, I recognize it, but it's something that ICANN does already.

[ROLAND]: Well, ICANN will protect itself in the contract, but clueless buyers will rely on ICANN's judgment to make selections because they don't want to do the due diligence themselves and they won't have to anymore because ICANN already did it for them. And that precipitates a race to the bottom where providers with few resources, not much expertise, not much capacity, not much redundancy, not much contribution to stability and security will be seen as the same as folks who are doing all those investments and are doing all that stuff, and that's important to the security and stability of the DNS.

FRANCISCO ARIAS: I'm sorry to interject. We are running out of time. It's only four minutes left. I think this is a very interesting issue. It's another of the key questions that we need to solve, but we need to close. I have two people in the queue, Jordyn and Joe, and with that we close the session. Jordyn?

JORDYN BUCHANAN: Thanks, Francisco. First, just to also react to [Roland's] comment, I'm sure back in '99, Network Solutions would have loved it if ICANN had a special registrar accreditation with gold stars on it so none of the new competitors could come in and have the same level of trust that Network Solutions had at the time. But it turns out that the robust competitive market by a neutral accreditation process has been really good for the competitive market place and really good for consumers.

I suspect that's the case here as well as long as ICANN does a good job of making sure that the technical evaluation is fair and adequate in order to ensure quality registry operations.

Overall though, I find that that this conversation is a weird one where mostly we spent most of the conversation talking about the name of the thing and picking at Francisco's slides as opposed to talking about what are the next steps and the merits of the conversation.

And I certainly take away that Francisco and Jeff have identified a number of the problems in the efficiency of the system today. I've heard general sentiment echoed today here that the current system is inefficient and, regardless of what we call it, there are significant improvements that can be made to the efficiency of the way that we do pre-evaluation testing today. And as Werner pointed out, there are other areas such as communication with RSPs that could use improvement.

I'd certainly like to have us stop talking about names and start talking about progress. Like I said, Francisco, I encourage you wholeheartedly please let's get this started. We don't need to be beholden to those dates that you put on your slide or the project plan. Let's start talking about what the problems we want to solve are, decompose the problem into the areas where we can make fast progress and the ones that are going to take longer, and just start working on this. I think you've done a great job kicking this off, and I hope that people will join you in trying to actually make progress here. Thanks.

FRANCISCO ARIAS: Thanks, Jordyn. Joe, you get the last question.

JOE WALDRON:	Joe Waldron from Verisign. I was going to say something very similar to what Jordyn just suggested. There are significant challenges, I think, in trying to put an entire certification program, or whatever we call it, together because you've got to assume that not every TLD is the same, not every service that's provided by a registry service provider is going to be the same. And we shouldn't be driving toward commoditizing and standardizing and constraining potential for innovation.

But I do think that there are a number of areas where if we prioritize the list of problems that we've seen, there's some low-hanging fruit. If Jordyn's going through the thirty-first time of pre-delegation testing for exactly the same TLDs, just like the Trademark Clearinghouse could waive testing if you've already tested and certified, just waive that. Those are some low-hanging fruit.

So I think if we look for ways of continuing this engagement, because I think it has been very productive and I appreciate being able to have the discussion, we can identify the low-hanging fruit, identify the priorities. But trying to get to the boil the ocean, put a whole new program in place I think is just in that unobtainable region at this point without deferring any progress. Thank you.

FRANCISCO ARIAS: Thank you, Joe. Just finally, next steps. We intend to publish a call for volunteers to participate in defining the program shortly after Hyderabad. And, as I mentioned in the very tentative timeline, we intend to start working in early 2017.

So with that we close the session. Thank you everyone.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]