

Progress Report
IDN ccTLD String Selection Criteria and Requirements

IDN ccPDP Working Group 1

29 November 2010

Progress Report IDN ccTLD String Selection Criteria and Requirements

This is the progress report of the IDN ccPDP working group 1 (WG). The WG met regularly by telephone conference since the ICANN Brussels meeting. Notes of the meetings can be found at: <http://ccnso.icann.org/workinggroups/ipwg1.htm>.

The goal of this report is to inform the community about the progress made to date by the WG and to solicit input and feedback on its work.

It would be most helpful if the comment and input is submitted by 14 January 2011. You can submit your comments at: idnppwg1-progressreport@icann.org. Submissions will be archived and can be viewed at: <http://forum.icann.org/lists/idnppwg1-progressreport/>

The IDN ccPDP WG will continue its work during this consultation period.

1. Background and Progress to Date

Purpose of the WG

The purpose of the WG is to report on and identify a feasible policy for the selection and delegation of IDN ccTLDs associated with the territories listed in the ISO 3166-1 (IDN ccTLDs) within the framework of the IDN country code Policy Development Process.

Scope of activities

In meeting its purpose, the WG shall focus on, without limitation, examination of the topics raised in joint GAC-ccNSO Issues paper and comments received on that document. It shall also take into account the proposals and recommendations of the IDNC WG and the Implementation Plan based on the work of the IDNC WG.

As this WG will undertake its activities within the framework of the IDN ccPDP, the limitations on the scope of a ccPDP, in particular by Article IX of and Annex C to the Bylaws, shall limit the scope of the WG's work in a similar manner.

If issues outside this scope become apparent to the WG, the Chair of the WG should inform the ccNSO Council of the issue so that it can be taken into account and dealt with more appropriately.

Progress to date

Currently the country codes used to designate the ccTLD string for a Territory are the two letter codes obtained from the ISO 3166-1 list designating the Territory. As this mechanism could not be used for the Fast Track, a three-stage process for the selection of an IDN ccTLD string for a Territory was proposed.

- Stage 1: String selection in Territory
- Stage 2: Evaluation of proposed string
- Stage 3: Delegation of IDN ccTLD

Throughout the first two stages criteria and requirements were included as decision points for the selection and evaluation of selected IDN ccTLD strings. Up and until the Brussels ICANN meeting, the WG has been evaluating and reviewing processes and criteria and requirements at the same time, and has reached agreement on some of the

overarching principles and criteria and requirements, whilst others needed to be discussed and reviewed.

The WG agreed to discuss the criteria and requirements for the selection of IDN ccTLD string first and once consensus was reached on that, it would focus on the processes and procedures for selection of IDN ccTLD strings and, in parallel, start its discussion on the variant management issues. The WG also agreed that its starting point would be the criteria and processes developed and adopted for the Fast Track (IDNC WG Final Report and Implementation Plan),

At this stage of its work the WG seeks input and feed-back from the community on the criteria and requirement as proposed, in particular on the aspects noted.

The WG has started its discussion of the process and procedures and will continue to do so during the consultation period on the criteria and procedures.

Section 2. Overarching Principles

The purpose of the overarching principles is to set the parameters within which the policy recommendation should be developed, interpreted and implemented. They take into account the experiences of the IDN Fast Track Process and subsequent discussions. They have been developed to structure, guide and set conditions for the recommended policy.

Association of the (IDN) country code Top Level Domain with a territory. Under the current policy for the delegation of (ASCII) ccTLDs, the two letter ASCII codes associated with the territories listed on the ISO 3166-1 list are eligible for delegation as a ccTLD. The broad acceptance of the use of the ISO 3166-1 list suggests that a relation with the listing of a territory on the ISO 3166-1 list should be maintained for the selection of IDN ccTLD strings.

(ASCII) ccTLD and IDN ccTLDs are all country code Top Level Domains. (ASCII) ccTLD and IDN ccTLDs are all country code Top Level Domains and as such are associated with a territory listed on the ISO 3166-1 list. Whilst there may be additional specific provisions required due to the nature of IDN ccTLDs (for example criteria for the selection of an IDN ccTLD string) all country code Top Levels Domains should be treated in the same manner.

Preserve security, stability and interoperability of the DNS. To the extent different or additional rules are implemented for IDN ccTLDs these rules should:

- Preserve and ensure the security and stability of the DNS;
- Ensure adherence with the RFC 5890, RFC 5891, RFC 5892, RFC 5893 and ICANN IDN guidelines;

The IDN ccTLD string should be non-contentious within the territory. Delegation of an IDN ccTLD should only be possible where the IDN ccTLD string is non-contentious within the territory. This is evidenced by the support/endorsement of the relevant stakeholders in the territory for the string.

With regard to this principle the WG noted:

Demonstration of non-contentious within a territory will be further explored as part of the discussion on processes. Parameters for such a process are:

- A “sufficient minimum” is needed in support. Unanimity is NOT required.
- The relevant Government / Public Authority needs to be involved as a key-factor (“has to be taken very seriously”) and at a minimum express its non-objections
- The process should allow minorities to express a concern i.e. should not be used against legitimate concerns of minorities
- The process should not allow a small group to unduly delay the selection process

An application for two strings in same language and for the same territory could be considered competing and both strings could be considered to be contentious in territory depending on the circumstances (for instance if both are supported by a different branch of government). In principle this needs to be resolved in territory, before any further steps are taken in the selection process.

Based on feed-back received so far, the WG would appreciate further dialogue with members of the GAC who have expressed a concern regarding the procedural requirements for documentation of adequate community support. It is noted that for procedural purposes the following cases should be distinguished:

- Request for the full or short name of Territory (as defined in Decision E)
- Other cases, where additional documentation is required.

A suggestion was made that documentation could also be documenting the consultation process in Territory.

The procedural requirements for documentation of non-contentiousness may need to be reviewed in the context of confidentiality and transparency requirements.

Ongoing Process. Requests for the delegation of IDN ccTLDs should be an ongoing process and thus open to enter when ready. Currently the delegation of a ccTLD can be requested at any time, once all the criteria are met.

Criteria determine the number of IDN ccTLDs. The criteria to select the IDN ccTLD string should determine the number of eligible IDN ccTLDs per Territory, not an arbitrarily set number.

Section 3. Agreed Criteria for the selection of an IDN ccTLD.

A. An IDN country code Top Level Domain must contain at least one non-ASCII character.

For example, *españa* would qualify under this criteria and *italia* would not. *españa* contains at least one character other than [-, a-z, 0-9], while still being a valid domain name.

A different way of expressing this is that the IDN ccTLD must be a valid U-Label that can also be expressed as an A-label. It cannot be a NR-LDH Label.

For more formal definitions of these terms, see RFC 5890.

B. Eligibility only if name of territory listed on ISO 3166.

To be eligible for a ccTLD string a country, dependency or other area of particular geopolitical interest must be listed on the ‘International Standard ISO 3166, Codes for the representation of names of countries and their subdivisions – Part 1: Country Codes’,

or, in some exceptional cases already assigned as a ccTLDs and listed as an exceptionally reserved ISO 3166-1 code element¹ (hereafter referred to as: Territory or Territories).

C. The IDN ccTLD string must be a meaningful Representation of the name of a Territory

The principle underlying the representation of Territories in two letter (ASCII) code elements is the visual association between the names of Territories (in English or French, or sometimes in another language) and their corresponding code elements².

A visual association between the IDN country code string and the name of a Territory should be maintained. An IDN ccTLD string has to be a meaningful representation of the name of the Territory. A country code string is considered meaningful if it is:

- a) The name of the Territory; or
- b) Part of the name of the Territory that denotes the Territory; or
- c) A short-form designation for the name of the Territory, recognizably denoting the name.

Decision D. The meaningful Representation of the name of the Territory must be in a Designated Language of the Territory

The ccTLD string should be a meaningful representation of the name of the Territory in an “designated” language of that Territory. For this purpose a “designated” language is defined as a language that has a legal status in the Territory or that serves as a language of administration (hereafter: Designated Language)³.

This definition is based on: “Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names”, United Nations Group of Experts on Geographic Names, United Nations, New York, 2002.

The language is considered to be a Designated Language if one or more of the following requirements is true:

1. The language is listed for the relevant Territory as an ISO 639 language in Part Three of the “Technical Reference Manual for the standardization of Geographical Names”, United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (the UNGEGN Manual) (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/default.htm>).
2. The language is listed as an administrative language for the relevant Territory in ISO 3166-1 standard under column 9 or 10.

¹ In exceptional cases code elements for Territory names may be reserved for which the ISO 3166/MA has decided not to include in ISO 3166 part 1, but for which an interchange requirement exists. See Section 7.5.4 ISO 3166 – 1 : 2006.

² See ISO 3166-1: 2006 Section 5.1

³ The limitation to Designated Language is recommended as criteria for reasons of stability of the DNS. According to some statistics currently 6909 living languages are identified. See for example: http://www.ethnologue.com/ethno_docs/distribution.asp?by=area. If one IDN ccTLD would be allowed per territory for every language this would potentially amount to 252*6909 or approximately 1.7 million IDN ccTLDs.

3. The relevant public authority in the Territory confirms that the language is used in official communications of the relevant public authority and serves as a language of administration.

The WG notes:

The term “Official Language” causes confusion, in particular if an administrative process in country is in place to grant a special status to a language, albeit that language would not be granted a status as “official language”. The example of Sweden was discussed, in particular that over time additional languages were designated for administrative purposes. Under 3 above additional IDN strings would be possible, assuming all other criteria are met.

The question arose whether the WG should also focus on a script requirement. It was however noted that the script requirement naturally flows from the adopted definition of an IDN (see A. above) and will also be part of the discussion on IDN Tables and therefore to focus this part of the discussion on languages is a logical approach.

Included in Annex B are the procedures and documentation used in the context of the Fast Track process to demonstrate a language is “Official” is included. In Annex C the process and documentation regarding meaningfulness are included.

The term official language will be replaced by designated language. The definition of designated will be the same.

Decision E. If the string applied for is not the long or short form of the name of a Territory then evidence of meaningfulness is required.

Combining Decision C and D above: a selected string is considered to be a meaningful representation of the name of a Territory:

1. If the selected string is the long or short form name of the relevant Territory in the Designated Language as listed in the UNGEGN Manual, Part Three column 3 or 4 version 2007, or later versions of that list;

or

2. If the selected string is not listed in the UNGEGN then meaningfulness should be adequately documented. This is the case when:

- (i) the selected string is not part of the long or short form name of the Territory in the UNGEGN Manual in the Designated Language or

- (ii) an acronym of the name of the Territory in the Designated Language or

- (iii) the Territory or the Designated Language do not appear in the UNGEGN Manual.

If such documentation is required, the documentation needs to adequately authenticate:

- the meaning of the selected string in the Designated Language and in English and
- that it meets the meaningfulness criteria.

The documentation needs to be provided by an internationally recognised expert

In Annex C the description of the documentation for meaningfulness as currently required under the Fast Track process is included. If such documentation remains to required it will be included in process section for further discussion.

Decision F. Only one (1) IDN ccTLD string per Designated Language.

In the event of more than one Designated Language in the Territory, one (1) unique IDN ccTLD for each Designated Language may be selected, provided the meaningful representation in one Designated Language can not be confused with an existing IDN ccTLD string for that Territory.

(According to IDNC WG Final Report: In the event that there is more than one Official Language in the Territory, it may be possible for the Territory to use the Fast Track for the delegation of one IDN ccTLD in each of those languages.)

It should be noted that other requirements relating to non-confusability as included in this document, with for example other TLDs, are applicable and should be considered.

The WG noted that the view was expressed that IDN ccTLD's, (as are ASCII ccTLD's) are introduced to provide general accessibility (at the top level of the domain name system) through an authoritative national TLD for those for whom ASCII script is inaccessible (for example linguistically or in practice). IDN ccTLD's are not introduced to support specific economic or other interests or purposes.

The following clarification was suggested and accepted:

In the case one of these languages (or the language) is expressed in more than one script, then it is allowed to have one string per script, although the multiple strings are in the same language.

The WG notes that this decision may need to be reviewed once the issue of variants has been addressed and decided. As noted by one of the members of the WG: "Variants is a separate problem/issue from my point of view, and I do not want them mixed. What is a script, and what is a langue are both well defined (script as the definition by Unicode Consortium and Language according to the definition in the document we are working with).

Decision G. The selected IDN ccTLD string must abide to all Technical Criteria for IDN ccTLD string.

The selected IDN ccTLD string must abide to the normative parts of RFC 5890, RFC 5891, RFC 5892 and RFC 5893 and normative part of draft-liman-tld-names-03.txt (see Annex A).

The WG notes that the validation whether or not a string meets the technical criteria is a process step.

Decision H. The IDN ccTLD string can not be confused with any combination of two ASCII letters [letters a-z] as or to be used by ISO 3166/MA (section 5.2 of ISO 3166-1:2006).

The WG notes that this criterion originates from the IDNC WG and Implementation Plan. The WG also notes that it was introduced to minimize confusion with existing or future two letter country codes in ISO 3166-1. This is in particular relevant as ISO 3166 country codes are used for a broad range of applications, for example but not limited to marking of freight containers, postal use and as a basis for standard currency codes.

Decision I. Delegation of IDN ccTLD must be in accordance with current practices for delegation of ccTLD's

Once the IDN ccTLD has been selected and evaluated there are no additional requirements relating to the delegation of an IDN ccTLD. The delegation of an IDN ccTLD should be conducted according to current practices for delegation of ccTLD's. This also implies that practices for re-delegation and retirement of ccTLD's apply to IDN ccTLD's. In particular if a Territory would change its name and require another IDN ccTLD to reflect the changed name, the retirement policy for ccTLD applies to the existing IDN ccTLD.

Decision J. String Confusion with other TLD

The WG notes

The current language in Fast Track Implementation Plan was adjusted for overall policy.

If a string resembles another visually then it is likely to cause deception or confusion. For the likelihood of deception or confusion to exist, it must be probable, not merely possible that confusion will arise in the mind of the average, reasonable Internet user. Mere association, in the sense that the string brings another string to mind, is insufficient to find a likelihood of confusion.

String confusion issues can involve two or more strings that are identical or are so confusingly similar that they cannot coexist in the DNS, such as:

- Requested IDN ccTLD strings against existing TLDs and reserved names;
- Requested IDN ccTLD strings against other requested IDN ccTLD strings; and
- Requested IDN ccTLD strings against applied-for gTLD strings.

Contention situations between IDN ccTLD requests and new gTLD applications are considered unlikely to occur. Assessments of whether strings are considered in conflict with existing or applied-for new gTLD strings are made in the DNS Stability String Evaluation Panel for IDN ccTLD requests and in the Initial Evaluation step for new gTLD applications. The following supplemental rules provide the thresholds for solving any identified contention issues:

A. A gTLD application that is approved by the ICANN Board will be considered an existing TLD in inter-process contention unless it is withdrawn. Therefore, any other later application for the same string will be denied.

B. A validated request for an IDN ccTLD will be considered an existing TLD in inter-process contention unless it is withdrawn. Therefore, any other later application for the same string will be denied.

For the purpose of the above contention rules, an IDN ccTLD string request is regarded as validated once it is confirmed that the string is a meaningful representation of the name of the Territory and that the string has passed the DNS Stability Panel evaluation.

Annex A

TLD Label Syntax Specification – from draft-liman-tld-names-03.txt

This relaxes the existing specification to allow TLD DNS-Labels to be well-formed A-Labels, but places restrictions on their corresponding U-Labels. That is, not every well-formed A-Label is a valid TLD DNS-Label.

The ABNF expression that matches a valid TLD DNS-Label is as follows:

tld-dns-label = traditional-tld-label / idn-label

traditional-tld-label = 1*63(ALPHA)

idn-label = Restricted-A-Label

ALPHA = %x41-5A / %x61-7A ; A-Z / a-z

Restricted-A-label is an A-Label as defined in RFC 5890, converted from (and convertible to) a U-Label that is consistent with the definition in RFC 5890, and further restricted as follows.

A Restricted-A-Label is a DNS-Label which satisfies all the following conditions:

1. the DNS-Label is a valid A-Label according to RFC 5890;
2. the derived property value of all codepoints, as defined by RFC 5890, is PVALID;
3. the General_Category of all codepoints in the label is one of { Ll, Lo, Lm, Mn } (see RFC 5892).

Annex B Language and Script Criteria

The conditions for allowable languages and scripts to be used for the requested TLD string are as follows:

The language must be an official language in the corresponding country or territory, and have legal status in the country or territory, or serve as a language of administration. The language requirement is considered verified as follows:

☐ If the language is listed for the relevant country or territory as an ISO 639 language in Part Three of the *Technical Reference Manual for the standardization of Geographical Names, United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names* (“UNGEGN Manual”) (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/default.htm>); or

☑ If the language is listed as an administrative language for the relevant country or territory in the ISO 3166-1 standard under column 9 or 10; or

☑ If the relevant public authority in the country or territory confirms that the language is used or served as follows, (either by letter or link to the relevant government constitution or other online documentation from an official government website):
used in official communications of the relevant public authority; and
serves as a language of administration.

Languages based on the Latin script are not eligible for the Fast Track Process. That is, the requested string must not contain the characters (a,...,z), either in their basic forms or with diacritics.

An example of a letter confirming that the language used is official is included for guidance;

Sample: Documentation that the selected language(s) is considered official in the country/territory.

The IDN ccTLD string(s) that is requested through the Fast Track Process must be in an official language of the corresponding country or territory. A language can be demonstrated to be official if the relevant public authority in the country or territory confirms that the language is used in official communications of the relevant public authority and serves as a language of administration.

This is a guiding example of what such correspondence can look like:

To: ICANN 4676 Admiralty Way, Suite 330 Marina del Rey, CA 90292-6601 USA

[location, date]

Subject: Confirmation of Official Language for ICANN Fast Track

This letter is to confirm that language X (ISO 639 code = XX) in conjunction with script Y (ISO 15924 code = ZZYY) is used in official communications by the government of “country 1” (ISO3166-1 code = AA) and serves as a language of administration.

Sincerely,

Signature from relevant public authority

Name of individual

Title of individual

Name of department or office

Postal Address

Telephone

Email address

Annex C Meaningfulness Requirement

The IDN ccTLD string(s) must be a meaningful representation of the name of the corresponding country or territory. A string is deemed to be meaningful if it is in the official language of the country or territory and if it is:

The name of the country or territory; or

A part of the name of the country or territory denoting the country or territory;

or

A short-form designation for the name of the country or territory that is recognizable and denotes the country or territory in the selected language.

The meaningfulness requirement is verified as follows:

1. If the requested string is listed in the UNGEGN Manual, then the string fulfills the meaningfulness requirement.
2. If the requested string is not listed in the UNGEGN Manual, then the meaningfulness must be substantiated by the requester providing documentation from an internationally recognized expert or organization.

ICANN will recognize the following as internationally recognized experts or organizations:

- a. National Naming Authority – a government recognized National Geographic Naming Authority, or other organization performing the same function, for the country or territory for which the IDN ccTLD Fast Track request is presented. The United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) maintains such a list of organizations at:
http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/Authorities_listJan09.pdf
- b. National Linguistic Authority – a government recognized National Linguistic Authority, or other organization performing the same function, for the country or territory for which the IDN ccTLD Fast Track request is presented.
- c. ICANN agreed expert or organization – in the case where a country or territory does not have access to either of the above, it may request assistance from ICANN to identify and refer a recognized experts or organization. Any expertise referred from or agreed to by ICANN will be considered acceptable and sufficient to determine whether a string is a meaningful representation of a country or territory name.
This assistance can be requested by contacting ICANN at idncctldrequest@icann.org

An example of a letter from an international recognized expert or organization, confirming the meaningfulness of the requested string is attached for guidance;

Sample: Documentation that demonstrates the requested string(s) is a meaningful representation of the corresponding country/territory.

The IDN ccTLD string(s) that is requested through the Fast Track Process must be a meaningful representation of the corresponding country or territory name. A string can be demonstrated to be meaningful based on a report from an internationally recognised linguistic expert(s) or internationally recognised organisation that the selected string meets the criteria

This is a guiding example of what such correspondence can look like:

To: ICANN 4676 Admiralty Way, Suite 330 Marina del Rey, CA 90292-6601 USA

[location, date]

Subject: IDN ccTLD string meaningfulness report developed for [A-label/U-label]

This report has been developed for: [insert contact details for the requester]

In the expert's opinion the string [A-label/U-label] constitutes a meaningful representation of the country/territory name [insert name]. The detailed information relating to this assessment is as follows: Country/territory name = [insert] ISO 3166-1 code = [insert] A-label = [insert] U-label = [insert] Meaning of the name (string) in English = [list] ISO 639 language code = [insert] ISO 15924 script code = [insert]

In the expert's opinion, the requested IDN ccTLD string is considered a meaningful [acronym/abbreviation/other] of the country/territory name. In the evaluation of the meaningfulness of the string the following justification has been used:

The string is officially recognized as the name of the country by the government/public authority per the following decrees: [insert explanation]

The string is used as a second level domain name under the ISO3166-1 ccTLD for Country 1 and is registered to the government of Country 1. [insert other justifications as applicable]

[Insert signature from linguistic expert(s)/organization]