

Agenda item 7: Proposed letter to the Board

The ICANN Board of Directors requested the ccNSO (and GNSO for that matter) to provide input and feed-back on the implementation of the Recommendations from the Report on User Experience Implications of Active Variant TLDs. The Board resolution is included in Annex A of this note. In accordance with the recommendation of the ccNSO Council Triage Committee, the ccNSO Council requested the Joint ccNSO-GNSO IDN WG (JIG) to prepare a statement.

In June 2013, the co-chairs of the JIG submitted a proposed letter to the ccNSO and GNSO Council for adoption at their respective meetings during the ICANN Durban meeting. The GNSO Council adopted the letter. The ccNSO Council deferred discussion and adoption until its next meeting.

To date the GNSO Council has not submitted its letter, awaiting further decisions by the ccNSO Council.

As to the subject matter, the recommendations contained in the proposed letter and Annex are in line with and reflect the proposals in the ccNSO Recommendation on IDN ccTLD's, including the periodic review.

Next Steps

Upon adoption of the letter, the chair of the GNSO should be informed, and the chair of the ccNSO submits the letter to the Board on behalf of the ccNSO Council. A similar letter (Annex C of the JIG submission) will be submitted by the chair of the GNSO.

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Annex A: ICANN Board of Directors Resolution 11 April 2013

Excerpt from Board Resolutions

IDN Variant TLD Root LGR Procedure and User Experience Study Recommendations

Whereas, IDNs have been a Board priority for several years to enable Internet users to access domain names in their own language, and the Board recognizes that IDN variants are an important component for some IDN TLD strings;

Whereas, the Board previously resolved that IDN variant gTLDs and IDN variant ccTLDs will not be delegated until relevant work is completed;

Whereas, since December 2010 ICANN has been working to find solutions to ensure a secure and stable delegation of IDN variant TLDs, and the IDN Variant TLD Program benefited from significant community participation in developing the Procedure to Develop and Maintain the Label Generation Rules for the Root Zone in Respect of IDNA Labels and the Report on User Experience Implications of Active Variant TLDs.

Resolved (2013.04.11.13), the Board directs staff to implement the Procedure to Develop and Maintain the Label Generation Rules for the Root Zone in Respect of IDNA Labels [PDF, 772 KB], including updating the gTLD Applicant Guidebook and IDN ccTLD Process to incorporate the Label Generation Rules for the Root Zone in Respect of IDNA Labels in the respective evaluation processes.

Resolved (2013.04.11.14), the Board requests that, by 1 July 2013, interested Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees provide staff with any input and guidance they may have to be factored into implementation of the Recommendations from the Report on User Experience Implications of Active Variant TLDs [PDF, 1.38 MB].

Rationale for Resolutions 2013.04.11.13 – 2013.04.11.14

Why the Board is addressing the issue now?

IDN variant TLDs have been a subject of interest for several years to a number of IDN users. The IDN Variant TLD Program has been working with subject matter experts in the community to develop solutions to enable a secure and stable delegation of IDN variant TLDs. The Program has concluded the work on two key components of the solution: the Procedure to Develop and Maintain the Label Generation Rules for the Root Zone in Respect of IDNA Labels and the Report on User Experience Implications of Active Variant TLDs, hereinafter referred to as the Procedure. The Procedure is now ready for consideration for adoption as the mechanism, between other things, to evaluate potential IDN TLD strings and to identify their variants (if any). The recommendations from Report on User

Experience Implications of Active Variant TLDs are now ready to be implemented with any input and guidance that interested Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees may have.

What is the proposal being considered?

The Procedure describes how to populate and maintain the Label Generation Rules for the Root Zone in Respect of IDNA Labels, which is expected to become a key component in processing IDN TLD applications. The Procedure requires participation from the relevant communities as a central component. The Procedure includes safeguards to ensure maximum community participation of a given linguistic community and avoid dominance of a single interested party, and requires technical experts involvement to ensure technical and linguistic accuracy on the contents of the Rules. The Report on User Experience Implications of Active Variant TLDs includes a series of recommendations to enable a good user experience with IDN variant TLDs.

What Stakeholders or others were consulted?

The development of the Procedure and the Report included full participation of several members from the community. Both documents also went through two public comment processes and a number of public presentations where feedback was gathered.

What concerns or issues were raised by the community?

There were concerns raised about the idea that variants in general are inappropriate in the root zone, though, allowing that some specific case might be acceptable. There were also concerns about conflict resolution and governance of the Procedure. However, by having a requirement of consensus within and between panels the conflict resolution issue would seem to be mitigated. In regard to the governance of the Procedure, it is foreseen that having the integration panel under contract with ICANN will allow removing a panelist that could be behaving in a non-constructive manner.

Concerns were also raised that the issues raised in the Report may frighten readers away from supporting variants and the Report does not highlight the risks (problems and security issues) if variants are not supported or activated. However, in order to ensure a secure, stable and acceptable experience, these issues need to be called out for the respective parties to work on. The need for variants is well articulated by the individual issues reports, so that issue outside the scope of the current study.

What significant materials did Board review?

A Board paper and Reference Materials detailing the proposal, the Procedure to Develop and Maintain the Label Generation Rules for the Root Zone in Respect of IDNA Labels, and the Report on User Experience Implications of Active Variant TLDs.

What factors the Board found to be significant?

The Board found that the Label Generation Rules for the Root Zone in Respect of IDNA Labels will improve the current process to evaluate IDN strings by using a pre-approved, deterministic process to define which code points are allowed in the root. The Board also found significant that the rules are a key component to consistently identify the variants of applied-for IDN strings. The Procedure has the participation of the relevant communities as a core feature. In addition, the Recommendations aim to enable a good user experience in regards to IDN variant TLDs.

Are there Positive or Negative Community Impacts?

Adopting the Procedure and consequently the Label Generation Rules for the Root Zone in Respect of IDNA Labels will benefit future TLD applicants by enabling future applicants to check whether the string they are intending to apply for is allowed. The Rules will also allow the deterministic identification of IDN variants for the applied-for strings. Implementing the Recommendations will enable a good user experience with IDN variant TLDs.

Are there fiscal impacts/ramifications on ICANN (Strategic Plan, Operating Plan, Budget); the community; and/or the public?

No fiscal impacts/ramifications on ICANN are foreseen by adopting this resolution.

Are there any Security, Stability or Resiliency issues relating to the DNS?

The adoption of the Rules and the implementation of the Recommendations is expected to have a positive impact on the Security of the DNS by having a technically sound process with multiple checkpoints, including public review, of the code points and their variants (if any) that will be allowed in the root zone and the deployment of measures avoid user confusion regarding IDN variant TLDs.

Is this either a defined policy process within ICANN's Supporting Organizations or ICANN's Organizational Administrative Function decision requiring public comment or not requiring public comment?

This is an Organizational Administrative Function not requiring public comment.